

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**To:** [FS-comments-rocky-mountain-black-hills-hell-canyon](#)  
**Subject:** [External Email]Newark Exploration Drilling Project  
**Date:** Monday, February 13, 2023 7:22:37 PM

---

**[External Email]**

If this message comes from an **unexpected sender** or references a **vague/unexpected topic**;  
Use caution before clicking links or opening attachments.  
Please send any concerns or suspicious messages to: [Spam.Abuse@usda.gov](mailto:Spam.Abuse@usda.gov)

To whom it may concern:

This email is in opposition to granting a Categorical Exclusion in the Newark Exploration Drilling Project. Allowance of this project is so much more than just granting a 5-year period wherein drilling for gold can be done.

Firstly, this would have a direct impact on the habitation of elk, deer, mountain lions and turkey, to name a few. These animals WILL move out the area. They will NOT stay to have their young, nor raise them on this property with all the disruption to the property. Yes, they all live in the subject area.

Secondly, water usage from a municipal source will most likely be Custer's well that is located nearby. This could potentially use in excess of 3.5 millions of gallons a water per year. What is this going to do to all the surrounding home wells tables and quality of water?

Thirdly, this will grossly devalue the adjacent private property values. Is the government willing to pay out millions upon millions of dollars for such devaluations? Can Custer County withstand devaluing the affected private properties causing the rest of the county homeowners to have rising tax levies to make up shortfalls?

If gold is found, undoubtedly the project will grow ten-fold into strip mining. If the average depths are 1000 to 2000 feet and as far as 3000 feet, mining will go down a quarter to a half mile to extract the gold. It will deface and obliterate the property. The Black Hills is not that big – it will decimate tourism, which is the number 2 industry in South Dakota behind agriculture.

Do you really think the drilling company will be around years down the road to actually reclaim the property back to its original state? More than likely that will never happen. The company will create another corporation and abandon its obligation thus forcing the federal government to do this much like what happened in another gold mine nearby. Moreover, South Dakota does not have enough colleges to create another "underground lab" to bale out a mine.

PLEASE do not go forward with this project. We have already created such a burden on our future generations with national debt. Let's not take the beauty and future enjoyment of our wonderful Black Hills away from them too! Can we please not let the almighty dollar do the persuading, and leave God's country alone?

Sincerely,

Donita Potter  
Owner of [REDACTED]

Mailing address: [REDACTED]