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MAR 28 2023

BHNF/SO

Dear US Forest Service,

I am Lori Thorson, a concerned resident/property owner of Custer County, SD.

I own a home and property on [REDACTED], SD.

I live approximately four to five miles from Upper French Creek and area where the gold mining is to happen. It is actually one of my favorite scenic drives May through October.

My concern is the gold mining that is to start the exploratory drilling in May, 2023.

I have researched to the best of my abilities and have found out there are two ways to mine for gold by drilling and neither way is safe for our environment.

There are too many scenarios that could take place with any drill mining.

First, the area that is to be mined is a United States National Forest preserved area. That area gets closed off every winter as a wildlife refuge. Mining would disrupt what our area has been reserved for...the wildlife and beauty.

Bringing in all these drills and equipment would not just damage our National Forest but has a possibility of destroying our water supply that all connects throughout Custer County and beyond. Let's say they tap into our water supply for our community, which connects to the Custer State Park and then to the Cheyenne River and Pine Ridge Reservation. Are you prepared for the highly possible scenarios?

Not only could the drilling poison our human water supply it could poison the Custer State Park water supply and kill the wildlife, Bison, Elk, Pronghorns, Mountain Goats, Coyotes, Prairie Dogs, Burros and many other wildlife species.

Many of our ranchers and area rural families depend on this water supply to live and raise their livestock.

When they bring in these drills with heavy equipment they will destroy our county roads and that will put a financial stress on Custer County and the residents.

When they set these drills up they need power. Most seem to be run off generators. We all know electrical motors mean a high risk of fires, forest fires. Then there is the possibility of diesel/gas spillages and ground contamination.

Drilling in any form is a high fire risk. It is motors, parts, metal, rocks and lots of spark possibility.

The government has limited the cutting of the trees in the National Forest yet will allow this corporation to come in and cut down trees to set up over 30...yes over 30 drill site pads. That doesn't seem rational at all. The government has taken away the income for our area by limiting cutting the trees and this led to loss of jobs for this area and sawmills closing down. Yet, the government may allow a corporation from out of state to come destroy our area and none of the money stays in South Dakota.

This corporation is from Minnesota and the parent company may be based in Canada. This money would not even stay in our area, state of South Dakota and probably not even in the United States.

WHY...WHY would anyone risk destroying our Black Hills beauty and water supply for a corporations GREED?

If our state government officials think this will raise money for the state of South Dakota they are horribly mistaken. In actuality, it will hurt our economy and tourism that will take funds away from our beautiful state of South Dakota and local economy.

GOLD MINING IN THE BLACK HILLS IS NOT WHAT WE THE CITIZENS WANT!

I think our past President Roosevelt is probably rolling over
in his grave over this issue.

Please put a stop to the gold mining in the Black Hills.

Sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

3/24/2023

Lori Thorson

[Redacted address line 1]

[Redacted address line 2]

[Redacted address line 3]