

June 15, 2023

South Dakota Backcountry Hunters & Anglers

PO Box 11

Rapid City, SD 57709

Dear Mr. Karchut and Ms. Retzlaff,

South Dakota Backcountry Hunters & Anglers fully supports the 20-year mineral withdrawal of 20,574 acres of public lands within the Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek Watershed in Pennington County. The withdrawal would ensure that these public lands and waters and the cultural and natural resources they contain would be protected but would not impact the use of private lands.

We support further expanding the acres included in the withdrawal as this area is a critical watershed within the Black Hills region. Please consider including tributaries above Pactola Reservoir to further protect the water quality. Please consider protecting the Rapid Creek Watershed downstream of Pactola to protect the fisheries and aquifer. Please consider protecting the entire Rapid Creek Watershed as it impacts this blue-ribbon fishery and water quality for fish, wildlife and hunters alike.

We support the use of an Environmental Assessment (EA) for this process. While we understand an EIS provides a more detailed assessment of impacts, because the purpose of the withdrawal is protection, we do not see the need for a full EIS as the impacts from protection are positive.

On behalf of our membership and hunters and anglers across South Dakota, we appreciate you taking these comments into consideration.

Sincerely,

Rochelle Plocek, Board Chair

South Dakota Backcountry Hunters & Anglers