

**SD Mineral Industries Association**  
**224 E. Saint Joseph Street**  
**Rapid City, SD 57702**



October 10, 2024

U.S. Forest Service, Black Hills National Forest  
Attn: Shawn Cochran, Black Hills Forest Supervisor  
1019 N. 5th Street,  
Custer, South Dakota 57730

**RE: Proposed Pactola Mineral Withdrawal – Request to Extend Public Comment Period**

Dear Supervisor Cochran:

We appreciate the Forest Service hosting the virtual public meeting on the Draft EA, resource reports and taking time to answer questions. The South Dakota Mineral Industries Association's (SDMIA) mission is to communicate, educate and advocate for the mineral industries in South Dakota. We focus on informing the public about the mining life cycle, the mining industry, and why America's mineral industries are essential to our modern society, U.S. national security, and a critical part of the U.S. supply chain.

On behalf of our membership representing nearly 1,500 jobs across SD, a majority working in and around the Black Hills, SDMIA kindly requests you consider extending the comment period for an additional 60 days or at the minimum, an additional 45 days. Reasons for the request:

1. Additional time is needed to properly review data contained in each of the fourteen Resource Reports and for stakeholders to provide comments/feedback to the agency on the Draft EA/FONSI.
2. 90-days was provided for the public scoping period which required no review of reports/data.
3. The BBNF extended comment periods for proposed/approved mineral exploration projects.
4. Allows time for the National Forest Advisory Board to include the proposed withdrawal on the agenda for November's meeting and provide input, as they have with all previous mineral withdrawal proposals in the Black Hills. (Comment Provided in SDMIA's Scoping Letter, 6/18/23)

SDMIA's membership represents local citizens working in many different disciplines with professional expertise and diverse backgrounds in the environmental, mining, mineral processing, and engineering fields. SDMIA's members and other user groups in the BBNF appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and your commitment to ensuring all voices are heard. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kwinn Neff". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kwinn Neff  
President, South Dakota Mineral Industries Association

Copy to:

U.S. Senator John Thune  
U.S Senator Mike Rounds  
U.S Representative Dusty Johnson  
S.D. Governor, Kristi Noem  
Pennington County Commissioners/Natural Resource Department