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May 7, 2025

Mystic Ranger District Office
Attn: Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project
8221 S. Mount Rushmore Rd.
Rapid City, SD 57702
Fax: (605) 343-7134

To Whom It May Concern,

We are writing to express our support for the proposed exploratory graphite drilling project by Pete Lien and Sons in the Black Hills, under the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project.

As residents and stakeholders in South Dakota, we recognize the critical importance of securing domestic mineral resources, particularly those like graphite that are essential for advanced manufacturing, renewable energy technologies, and national security. The United States currently imports the vast majority of its graphite—an unsustainable practice given growing demand for electric vehicles, battery storage, and defense applications. This project represents a forward-thinking opportunity for our state to contribute to national supply chain independence.


In addition to its strategic value, this project would bring real economic benefits to our region. Responsible mineral exploration and development support job creation, increase state and local tax revenues, and bolster rural economies that are often underserved. Pete Lien and Sons is a long-standing South Dakota company with a track record of operating responsibly and investing in the local community.

We fully support the need to carefully evaluate and respect culturally significant areas, and we trust that the U.S. Forest Service will conduct a thorough environmental and cultural impact assessment. However, exploration and preservation are not mutually exclusive. With proper oversight, modern exploration projects can coexist with the respectful stewardship of our state's natural and cultural heritage.

South Dakota has long been a leader in resource development and innovation. Supporting responsible, domestic exploration—especially by companies rooted in our communities—is a meaningful step toward a stronger, more resilient economy and energy future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important project. We urge you to allow this proposal to move forward under the full guidance of environmental, cultural, and regulatory review.

Sincerely,



Scott Stern
Board Chairman



Daniel Rausch
President