

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Brian Wiedmeier, and I currently reside on a property directly adjacent to the proposed drill sites outlined in the Pete Lien & Sons Exploration Proposal #67838. I am writing to express my **STRONG OPPOSITION** to any and all mining activities in the Black Hills National Forest, especially those taking place in such close proximity to my home.

This proposal directly affects me in a uniquely personal way. One of the proposed drill sites will be clearly visible from my living room window. While the exploratory equipment may be temporary, the site clearing and resulting environmental disruption will leave lasting impacts on the landscape, wildlife, and quality of life for nearby residents.

There are numerous elements of this proposal that warrant deeper investigation and public consideration—far more than can reasonably be addressed in the currently allotted 30-day public comment period. As such, I am **FORMALLY REQUESTING A 180-DAY EXTENSION** to allow sufficient time for review and analysis of the potential impacts of the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project. Specifically:

- One of the roads proposed for improvement has been closed to motorized vehicles, presumably for environmental protection. This warrants further scrutiny.
- We need time to properly locate and assess **ALL** proposed drill sites. To date, I've only been able to confirm five.
- A thorough survey of all roads slated for improvement should be conducted to understand the environmental implications.

In addition to this extension, I am also requesting that a **FORMAL Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)** be conducted. For context, when I applied for a simple 170-foot road access to my property through the U.S. Forest Service, the process took three years and required an environmental impact study, an archaeological study, and onsite inspections.

How is it that a drilling operation of this scale can proceed without undergoing these same rigorous standards?

One of the proposed access roads and associated improvements will irreparably harm a nearby pond that feeds into Rapid Creek and serves as a vital habitat for wildlife and waterfowl. This area **MUST** be included in an environmental study. Disruption to this water source could result in downstream degradation and significant impacts to both ecosystems and water quality.

Over the past 17 years, I have documented more than **60 bird species** visiting my property using the Merlin Bird ID app. Additionally, we routinely observe elk, deer, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, porcupines—and even black bears. This level of biodiversity underscores the critical need for thorough environmental assessment prior to any exploratory or mining activity.

Although this proposal is currently for exploration, it clearly opens the door to future mining operations. Based on the current layout, surface mining could occur **AS CLOSE AS 25 FEET**

FROM MY HOME. A 12- or 24-hour operation under such conditions would render my residence **UNINHABITABLE**.

There are multiple serious concerns associated with a mining operation in this area:

- **Noise pollution:** Continuous use of heavy machinery would make daily life intolerable.
- **Air pollution:** Dust from mining operations—particularly graphite—poses health risks. (Pete Lien already knows that their limestone quarries emit horrible amounts of limestone dust which has been proven harmful if inhaled in significant amounts over prolonged periods of time. Graphite mining will have a similar danger of air quality.)
- **Light pollution:** Around-the-clock operations would require significant artificial lighting.
- **Water contamination:** Local water sources (including the drinking water from my well) could be degraded, requiring daily testing.
- **Safety hazards:** An open pit near a residence presents extreme safety risks.

These impacts would dramatically reduce my property value and quality of life. Should this project move forward, I will be forced to seek legal counsel to pursue compensation for property damage, health risks, and mental distress. I suspect I would not be alone in doing so; many neighbors share similar concerns and would likely join in a class-action effort.

Mining in this area offers no benefit to the local residents—only profit for those who do not live here.

Please take my request for a **180-day extension** and a full **Environmental Impact Statement** seriously. Our community, our homes, and the natural beauty of the Black Hills deserve proper protection.

Sincerely,
Brian Wiedmeier