Comments: 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 (SDMIS) 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 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 Staekholders 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 BHNF 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).

SDMIS'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 BHNF appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and your commitment to ensuring all voices are heard. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,