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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Mr. Cochran,

Please accept this letter as a public comment regarding the proposed Black Hills Mining Withdrawal along Rapid Creek with a very pertinent article published 10-18-2024 also enclosed. With the General Mining Act of 1872 as the law of the land, I question how you can usurp and arbitrarily circumvent that law. By "allowing" pre-existing mining claims in the area, you totally admit that the real authority is contained in the 1872 law. You arbitrarily want to expand your reach because you think you can.

First off, the whole thing is a sham. Claiming this withdrawal effort is in "response to concerns about potential mining" is your grasp at viability to withdraw public ground from exploration, claim filing, and mining as detailed in the General Mining Act of 1872. Regarding the proposed 20,574 acre withdrawal, this "response to concerns" comes from many of the same emotional unscientific groups that will always be against any mining (even quarrying of gravel and limestone!) in the Black Hills and have stymied Edgemont-area uranium mining; even though Cameco's Crow Butte in situ mine in northwest Nebraska has produced about 11.8 million pounds of uranium since 1991 with hurt feelings of environmentalists being the only negative I know of.

Witness the following quote from government website: "The BLM is pleased to work with the Forest Service on this effort," said BLM Director Tracy Stone-Manning. "This proposal WILL help protect a primary source of drinking water for South Dakotans as the Forest Service assesses a 20-year withdrawal." I capitalized "WILL" for emphasis that the fix is in; and regardless of what serfs like me say, the (probably illegal) withdrawal will happen. I rue that my tax dollars are spent to curtail my freedoms endowed in the General Mining Act of 1872 and offer these additional points against this withdrawal:

1. There should be at minimum an exception for small placer miners and their dredges, sluice boxes, rockers, highbankers, and pans. I contend a single decent rainstorm muddies the creek more than a small miner could in his lifetime.
2. Metal detectorists should also be exempt.
3. South Dakota School of Miners and Technology in Rapid City was founded in 1885 expressly to make mining expertise available in the area. Shamefully the region is aggressively anti-mining now, costing potential employment of engineers, scientists, and mine workers. There is also the lost opportunity of potential mine purchases and payroll's economic multiplication throughout the country. Americans once understood the beauty of wealth from the earth. Now most are ignorant of this basic law: If it isn't grown, it must be mined.
4. The BLM used to at least claim to be in favor of a multiple use concept of the land. The Forest Service never as much, but actually think shooting and hunting in the national forest is a privilege, not a right. Why do mines and rockhounds matter less than fishermen?
5. My tax dollars will be further wasted defending this indefensible withdrawal in the courts should lawsuits arise as a result.
6. Current mining laws (federal and state) are science based and sufficient.
7. It's a rush job intended to be enacted while the current (illegal?) administrative exists.

8. Please take note of the 2-page enclosure of the Molly Stage's 10-18-2024 article titled "Our Current Government Is No Longer Constitutional" from AmericanThinker.com You've overreached already.

In summary, I am against this withdrawal. It is an affront to the General Mining Act of 1872 laws, and the fun and freedom of miners whether professional or hobbyist.

Sincerely Yours,

Ray M. Greff

(Article attached)