Data Submitted (UTC 11): 2/24/2023 7:00:00 AM
First name: Eileen
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Rob Holelscher,
I would like to thank you for hosting the meeting about F3 Gold mining, LLC on February 16, 2023. I am looking forward to the next potential upcoming information session.As per our phone conversation on February 14, 2023 I am asking that the plan of operations for mining activities on Black Hills Forest lands NOT be approved. Please deny the Categorical Exclusion. I mentioned when we spoke that I believed there needed to be an Environmental Impact Assessment Statement completed, not based upon the Jenny Gulch data, as you had stated during my inquiry. I actually had questioned if a study had been completed. An Environmental Assessment is extremely important and appears to have been mentioned previously by F3 Gold, 8/11/20 letter doc. I also questioned the number of holes to be drilled on the 37 pads (46 in F3 Gold docs, 8/11/20) with your reply of 4-10? Either way that will require a lot of water usage which I am very concerned about.Just for example, an estimation of the quantity of water used during say a 30 day period, based upon 37 pads would be as follows. Minimum of 5,000 gallons (F3 Gold doc 5,000-10,000 gallons per rig) of water x 37 pads per day equals 185,000 gallons of water per day, or possibly times 2=370,000 gallons! 185,000 gallons x 30 days = 5,550,000 gallons of water! That is for approximately only 30 days! Water is to be sourced from municipal or industrial water source! No one should be able to utilize our water in this manner at any point in time especially an outside company from Minneapolis! They do not have to live with the after effects of excessive water usage! This is a major concern.Being a grateful resident of the Black Hills and having the ability to enjoy all our beautiful outdoor resources makes water usage or even possible industrial contamination, just another point of contention. Mni Wiconi is the Lakota words for Water is Life. The Lakota Tribal Council must be consulted over this action. This obviously has not been the case as evidenced previously and by the tribal declarations at the 2/16/23 meeting. Many Native Americans do not support a Categorical Exclusion. They are the designated care takers of the Black Hills for generations before settlers arrived.I am going to list out some of the many other concerns I have with F3 Gold being issued the Categorical Exclusion*Water concerns with drought.*Air quality issues from large equipment exhaust etc. affecting humans and birds, etc..*Noise pollution from heavy equipment effects upon residents, tourists, and local outdoor enthusiasts. I enjoy the silence of our Black Hills.*Disturbances of wildlife habitat.*Possible effects on private wells in the area.*Heavy equipment usage of local roads and highway lead to deterioration of the roads. Locals and tourists especially will not enjoy driving on truck ridden, unkempt roads.*Dealing with forest fires could be even more difficult with all the heavy equipment in the exploration area and water level/ supply issues.*Visual inspections of water use by F3 General Contractor and Drill Contractor is not acceptable. There is no accountability. Like a fox overseeing the hen house.*South Dakota relies on tourism. Mining is a very small part of South Dakota's revenue. Tourists bring in money. Mining will not create a steady job source or increase income here.*Long term effects on ranchers and individuals cattle, horses and agriculture etc. from pollution, noise, possible water contamination, limited water available due to lower water table etc..*100 feet from known streams will not protect our streams that fish, frogs etc. reside in. Without strong protection for streams wildlife populations can plunge quickly. French Creek is an important part of our ecosystem.*500 feet from any observed Historical site is not a protective measure.*There are too many (thousands) of mining permits already in the Black Hills. The Black Hills should be protected, not destroyed by mining interests. Black Hills are sacred to all people.*What are the plans if gold is discovered? A huge mining project at the site will be even more environmentally detrimental to the land. What about the tremendous recovery issues?* The public was not given sufficient time to respond to the information about the possibility of a Categorical Exclusion. There were not representatives of all the involved parties present to answer questions of residents and peoples concerns, which is not right. Citizens have the right to be appropriately informed of actions that will effect them personally and their environment.I believe the amount of participants against permitting and gold mining in the designated area west of Custer (around 300 individuals) at the February 16, 2023 meeting, should be enough to help you in making the appropriate decision about not issuing a Categorical Exclusion permit for F3 Gold mining, LLC.Thank you for your time and consideration,