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First name: Les
Last name: Cashmere
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear Rob Hoelscher District Ranger

Attached is my letter addressing the Newark Exploration Drilling Project.

Les Cashmere

2/20/23
Mr. Rob Hoelscher, District Ranger1019 North 5th StreetCuster, SD 57730RE: Newark, Exploration Drilling ProjectDear Sir:
My name is Lester Cashmere. While I live in *redacted*, my wife and I own a house and 18 timbered acres at the intersection of *redacted*, Custer County with an address of *redacted*.

We received your February 8, 2023 notice of this project, on February 15, 2023, only one day before you public meeting. While we do go to our Custer property on a regular basis staying there several weeks each time, we were unable to pack up and leave for the 1,000 mile trip on such short notice to attend the meeting.

We have gas wells drilled on our Oklahoma Ranch property and on sections joining our property. I know from extensive experience the following: (1) Runoff of contaminated injected water is a serious problem for nearby lakes and ponds and creeks that feed them as well as concerns regarding underground water. Due to the slope of the terrain in the 39 drill sites, some contaminated water will make its way into French Creek affecting the City of Custer, Stockade Lake and the Cheyenne River. (2)The impact of people, trucks, equipment, generators, lights on all the night for a year, dust from roads and drill sites, noise, etc. is overwhelming to people nearby (and there are many homes in this area) and will drive all wildlife from the area including the sizeable Elk herd that ranges in the drill site area.

Yes, gas wells drill a larger and deeper hole but with today's efficient equipment can be done in a month or two and are drilled on private land with landowners adequately compensated. This is public protected Forest land where the public is not allowed to drive on the roads in the winter or when overly muddy, trees not to be harvested for commercial purposes, etc. yet you are proposing to allow 39 wells to be drilled, 24/7 for a year! I believe you are way underestimating the environmental impact of this project and that it does not fall under the Categorical Exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act.

We, the public, do not agree with this proposal and request you reconsider and disallow this project.

Les Cashmere

*redacted*