Data Submitted (UTC 11): 4/7/2023 6:00:00 AM
First name: Alexander
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: Good evening, Hell Canyon crew.

I'm Alexander Massa. I am a professional musician, an avid fly-fisher, hiking aficionado, lover of the outdoors, water protector, and the Northern Black Hills Organizer for the Black Hills Clean Water Alliance.

I grew up in the hills, left after high school, and came back in 2020 at the height of the pandemic to caretake for my grandparents, and be closer to nature - I came from Chicago, and also New Orleans, where I lived for 5 years, Winnipeg, where I went to graduate school, and the high seas where I worked on a cruise ship performing for guests nightly.

In the many lives I have lived, I have lived in places where water was absolutely central to how their worlds worked. And then I realized it was central to every single persons life. But the difference was that, in the places I lived, I constantly witnessed gross mismanagement of water, and huge overreach of government to continue that mismanagement.

The part of the country that we have the *privilege* (not right) of living in, is started to see a very large influx of new residents. That means more land is needed, more produce, more water.

We have all seen what happens when mining companies renege on their promises to clean up land - Oil companies, too, while we're talking about it. You drive up to ND and the land is completely destroyed. Left for someone else to deal with. And the people who gave them the right to take those resources out - couldn't care less. We cannot have that happen anymore in the Black Hills. Our children and grand-children will be living with the consequences of the decisions of a small handful of persons. The risk to having water undrinkable, land torn up and never being the same, and the loss of rare and precious species of plants and wildlife, should be enough to say no to these kinds of projects - and at the very least doing an Environmental Assessment and giving the public the opportunity to object.

If this project goes through, we will lose so, so much. They will be drilling and disturbing wildlife in a surreal area of the Black Hills. A region of the hills with slightly different flora and fauna, an area that still hasn't been seen by a lot of people. And that's good for tourism, for the economy of the Black Hills, and just for our sanity. Knowing we have a space we can go to that is hidden and so beautiful that it would make Van Gogh cry.

The people of the Black Hills are telling you to step up, do your jobs, and protect OUR land.

You know the right move here. Please, for the sake of your children and grandchildren, do the right thing, and do not allow this project to have a Categorical Exclusion. Perform an EIS or an EA, and let the people know what will REALLY happen if this project is allowed to continue.

Thank you,

Alexander Massa
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