

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 1/24/2024 4:22:21 PM

First name: Julian

Last name: Michaels

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

The Michaels Family, owners of Hell's Gate Lodge at 21597 US-85, object in its entirety, to the Golden Crest Exploration Project, proposed by Solitario Zinc Corp. Our cabin is situated less than 0.25 miles from the intended Downpour drill sites AA, A, & CC and is directly downstream of any runoff/effluence associated with these drill sites. During the multi-year period where drilling may occur, our enjoyment of the property would be highly degraded, as well as the potential for irreparable damage to our water well/hydrology. During 24 hour/day drilling, we would be subjected to noise and light pollution, as well as any associated air & water pollution. We demand that light, sound, and runoff mitigation barriers are in place to protect our home while drilling occurs in the area. As a geologist in the oil industry, I know that these are standard practice when operating near occupied structures and we would implore regulators to implement similar regulations in this case.

Importantly, any surface contamination at the drill sites will flow downhill into the Deadhorse Gulch, which has a direct pathway to our home and water well. Spearfish Creek is another hundred yards downstream, threatening the town of Spearfish's drinking water and all of the recreation & ecosystem throughout Spearfish Canyon. Any contamination to the aquifer via drilled test wells will likely also contaminate our drinking water since Solitario plans to drill wells 400-500m deep. The elevation of the drill site is ~1850m above sea level, while our cabin sits at ~1725m above sea level, a difference of only ~125m. If our well is ~30m deep, which is the average depth of water wells in the area, Solitario's test wells will absolutely drill through the water-bearing zone where we draw our drinking water. We would like to have a conversation with the USFS and Solitario Zinc Corp. about how they intend to minimize the impact to our area and our drinking water. We insist that baseline water testing be done of the well water at our cabin and any surface water upstream of our property that might be impacted. We are aware that our water well was previously not recorded in the South Dakota state water well database and have worked to help the state identify and locate it.

There is no mention of regulation associated with activity near occupied structures in Solitario's proposal, which is a huge oversight by Solitario and an oversight by the USDA Forest Service. We believe that other occupied structures may be impacted by this proposed drilling project and certainly if mining were to take place in the northern Black Hills. If valuable minerals were found at these drill sites, our cabin would be negatively impacted beyond recognition. We are open to allowing Solitario and the state of South Dakota to collect baseline & ongoing data from our property to ensure proper and safe execution of this project. We would like to be included in all discussions regarding the protection of our water, air, and enjoyment of our property. Please utilize telephone or email for contact.

Sincerely,

Julian Michaels, M.S.

Senior Development Geologist at bp

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