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Dear Wendy Schuyler,

This email is to raise objection to the categorical exclusion to the environmental impact assessment granted the F3 Gold Newark Exploratory Drilling Project. I have significant concerns about the eventual environmental and cultural impact on the surrounding area, including the town of Custer. I am concerned that the limited scope of the exploratory project is merely the first step in a series that will result in long-term mining operations that will irreparably damage this area of the Black Hills. The website of F3 Gold itself lists an environmental assessment as one of the steps in their given project timeline. They tout their aims of being "sustainable" and "ethical" in their "environmental stewardship," which begs the question, why would they be granted - no less *seek* - a categorical exclusion. Something does not square with their mission statement. It inspires a level of distrust right from the beginning. F3 Gold should not be allowed the benefit of the doubt until they have earned it.

There are additional concerns for such a project as it pertains to limiting public access to Forest Service grounds, water contamination, erosion due to clear cutting timber for roads. The Newark project should be put on hold until it can be ascertained just how broad the environmental impact would be to French Creek and the Custer area at large.

There is only one goal for a mining operation: to make money. There is only one Black Hills. Let's do our best together to keep it intact for the sake of current and future generations. Thank you for taking the time to read my email.

Kind Regards,

Kory Lanphear
Black Hills resident