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First name: Keith
Last name: Schartz
Organization:
Title:
Comments: To whom it may concern,
As a lifetime resident of the Black Hills I vehemently oppose the exploratory drilling by F3 Gold LLC in the Jenny Gulch region of the Mystic Ranger District. I am also very concerned of the significant long term impacts exploratory drilling could have on Silver City, Rapid City, Box Elder and Ellsworth AFB citizens.
Exploration and mining in this area should not be allowed due to the significant potential impact to our communities. We need to protect our water source at all costs! While it has been stated this is merely an exploration of the area, it is very hard to trust the process when our Black Hills has been exploited so badly in the past.
A full EIS for this watershed should be instituted rather than the EA process being proposed. I believe a full EIS to confirm the potential impact is the minimum best practice for this proposal. We are significantly concerned about the significant impact this exploratory drilling will have on the roads, bridges, and trail system in the region due to the sharp increase in traffic with all the related equipment and personnel. There are full-time long-term residents in Silver City and the increased traffic will generate a significant burden to these residents and their infrastructure as well.
Please do not allow this exploratory drilling to proceed. The Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) appears to have been based on the short-lived NEPA regulations that were enacted in 2020. New rules were published in April 2022, taking effect in May 2022 which make it very clear that more than one alternative is required pursuant to 40 CFR 1501.5(a)(2). This decision of FONSI is not compliant with May 2022 and a complete EIS is appropriate to this situation.
It also appears there was also a failure to conduct a Tribal Consultation and provide access to tribal officials. Failure to consult all 7 Tribal entities prior to the finding of FONSI does not meet the statutory requirements.
My family has been in the Black Hills for four generations, and we have a deep love of the Black Hills and all its majesty. I believe that you do to- so take a moment and make the right decision and leave a legacy for future generations. While economic development is vital to any community I am more interested in a sustainable future, economically and environmentally; and the history of mining in the Black Hills has shown that ultimately the costs of poor decisions outweigh the benefits.