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First name: Ashley

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Organization: Integral Health, Ltd.

Title:

Comments: August 22, 2022

TO: Mystic District Ranger James Gubbels

8221 Mt. Rushmore Dr. Rapid City, SD 57702

FROM: Ashley Preston

2419 Buena Vista Dr. Rapid City, SD 57702

RE: OPPOSITION TO USFS FONSI F3 GOLD EXPLORATION PROJECT

Dear Mr. Gubbels,

As a citizen of the U.S., I adamantly oppose the Findings of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on the F3 Gold, LLC, proposed Jenny Gulch Exploration Drilling Project.

There are numerous reasons to oppose this project that appears to be a sick infatuation of a couple of frat boys from Minnesota. Please, spare me one more opportunity for them to "mansplain" how "sustainable" this project is. We in this community are not dumb. We know that this project of exploration (junior mining) opens the door for future possibilities of industrial (senior) mining. Why would anyone even consider putting Rapid City's sole source for drinking water at risk? Out of respect for the process, it is prudent to state for the record the reasons for this Trojan Horse project that will exploit an antiquated 150-year-old law. If allowed in the gates, this Trojan Horse will inevitably result in costly litigation and a waste of valuable time resources.

I want my home and my children to not live another day with the threat of industrial mining looming, even if that threat would be years into the future.

OBJECTION 1.) First and foremost, Tribal Consultation was not respected and NONE of the tribes were provided a cultural survey in the proposed impact areas. None. Of the 9 Sovereign Domestic Nations in South Dakota, only three (3) tribes were even allowed a chance to respond to the hurried Environmental Assessment process. All of this is mentioned considering the environmentally destructive and culturally evasive results of exploratory drilling (i.e., junior mining) and what it will permanently mean for a select area of the Black Hills. Furthermore, all three tribes vehemently opposed this project as a further violation of broken promises and treaty rights (please see Chairman Harold Frazier's letter to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack dated July 15, 2022).

OBJECTION 2.) The FONSI relied on short-lived regulations from the previous administration. Those rule changes were hurried, temporary, and are no longer in effect today. New rules were published in April 2022, taking effect in May 2022, and making clear that more than one alternative is required. 40 CFR 1501.5(a)(2). The FONSI is in clear violation of the current NEPA requirements.

OBJECTION 3.) There are additional environmental damages not mentioned in the FONSI. There has never been a natural flora survey ever performed in the Black Hills. It is imperative that an Environmental Impact Survey be performed to truly understand what is actually at stake.

OBJECTION 4.) The website provided by the USFS was given a broken link for those of us using a Mac computer. How is that fair? From what I can tell, it was nearly impossible for me to use Safari and file my original comment.

OBJECTION 5.) The recreational uses of the hills will be affected within the proposed area. The federal government lands are a benefit to all Americans and the thought of removing those freedoms so a private company can exploit laws and prospect for gold in 2022 is inherently unfair. Recreators in this area will be affected, much less the private landowners nearby who will have to contend with light pollution, noise, and increased traffic in a delicate part of the hills.

OBJECTION 6.) Sentinel water monitoring program. Who or what will be installed to be certain that if there are ever any changes in the water composition that our water treatment plants can immediately pick up on these variances? Often, dangers water are found too late and we will want to have immediate capabilities to respond. It is understood as discussed from Rapid City Public Works employees that our water treatment does not have a means for immediately catching any infiltrates of the sort caused by even exploratory drilling. Jackson Springs Water Treatment plant is in question for being one of the first in Rapid City to intake water. The folks up in Hisega are in an even more precarious position.

OBJECTION 7.) The lack of an Environmental Impact Statement is a concern for everyone involved. Even the prospectors, if they are as environmental stewards as they claim, would benefit from this publication. Why has one not been done? It appears that the hurried rules of the previous administration has resulted in the avoidance of an important step. This is a major concern. What is there to lose by performing an EIS? Of course, if you're F3 you lose. But again, our processes are designed to protect the public and not fast track profit projects for prospectors.

Sincerely,

Ashley Preston  
Concerned Citizen of Rapid City