Data Submitted (UTC 11): 3/2/2023 12:28:26 PM
First name: Travis
Last name: Entenman
Organization: Northern Prairies Land Trust
Title: Executive Director
Comments: We offer this comment in opposition to the proposed F3 Gold "exploratory drilling" project.

Northern Prairies Land Trust's mission is to educate and assist private landowners in South Dakota to conserve and restore lands for habitat, agriculture, water quality, and cultural protection by building conservation easements, providing a conservation toolkit, guiding landowners in conservation opportunities and enabling a land ethic.

First, the majority of citizens impacted by the approval of this project are unaware of this proposal. Adequate notice has not been given and the public has had virtually no opportunity to educate themselves about this project or about the impact it may have on them or on the geographic area in question. As someone who follows these issues closely, I only learned about this proposal and the opportunity to comment about it, roughly 2 weeks before the expiration of the March 14th public comment deadline. This is unacceptable and the deadline must be extended.

Second, this proposal has been touted by F3 as "exploratory" in nature. This is simply a foot in the door for a future mine, whether it be for gold or lithium, not unlike the open cut in Lead, SD. This project's foundation is based on an antiquated 1872 Mining Law that continues to allow companies, typically foreign-owned, to pollute the very public resources held in trust by our government for the benefit of all its citizens. The fact that this proposal would take place in an area of South Dakota that relies almost exclusively on the high-quality natural resources a project like this would destroy is unacceptable.

Third, an environmental impact statement (EIS) as set forth in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) must be done to protect the public and their natural resources currently at risk by F3's short-sighted proposal which is essentially a Trojan Horse.

Finally, this project will require vast amounts of water in both its initial "exploratory" phase and even more water, once a gold or lithium mine is up and running. Notwithstanding the lack of water in the area already, the potential for pollution of private wells, the French Creek drainage, municipal water supplies, 3 underlying aquifers, and to public and private property is simply too great to ignore.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,
Travis Entenman
Executive Director | Northern Prairies Land Trust