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First name: Cherlyn

Last name: Leach-Valades

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am writing in opposition to the categorical exclusion of F3 Gold's Newark exploration drilling project. Mineral exploration is a form of hydraulic fracturing (fracking). The horizontal well drills through layers of rock using high pressure. Fracking has a history of causing earthquakes and going through aquifers. It pollutes groundwater.

Thousands of gallons of water is used for this fracking process. That water belongs to the citizens of Custer and the Black Hills. Water should not be used for a mineral exploration company hell-bent on destroying our water resources, land and displacing insects, birds, bats and wildlife.

An environmental assessment is essential before this project should be allowed to move forward. But, let me make it clear, I am against exploration or mining of any kind. Recently, our state government refused to access \$3 million to implement plans to reduce carbon emissions. It is up to the citizens to voice opposition.

This proposal is on land upstream from Custer and near French Creek. French Creek runs through Custer. The potential for contamination is too great.

Our world, and our state, is at a tipping point with environmental concerns and this proposal exposes too many unnecessary risks.

As a student of the SD educational system, we were taught about carbon, nitrogen, phosphorous, and water cycles. These cycles are interdependent and must not be disturbed. In addition, we are not aware of what endangered insects, birds, bats, fish and wildlife will be harmed. We must not interfere with these cycles.

According to the World Gold Council, around 208,874 tons of gold has been mined throughout history. Gold is virtually indestructible which mean almost all this metal is still around in one form or another.

Mineral exploration is about the greed of F3 Gold and its shareholders at the expense of our water resources, land and wildlife.

I have lived in the Black Hills most of my life. Our land is under attack by outside mineral exploration companies. This area is sacred to the indigenous population and that needs to be respected.

It is unacceptable to allow a categorical exclusion for the Newark Project.

Thank you for your considerations.