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Comments: First of all, to even consider this proposal is a travesty, but to ignore the obvious health and environmental risks is nothing short of irresponsible and criminal.

To begin with, the majority of this project is located on BH Forest area that is currently protected from vehicular traffic due to the elk population. If the public, who live in the area and love the land, are not allow to even drive on the established road therein, why would you consider allowing a completely destructive project like drilling in the area. The drilling will create a much greater impact on the elk population over the course of this project, than any recreational use.

Secondly, the water usage is far and above what the area can sustain for a project of this scope. Within the project proposal, F3 Gold states they will be using "5,000 gallons of municipal sourced water" for each site per day. With 39 sites planned, that is 190,000 gallons of municipal water per day.

How are they going to transport the water from Custer, the closest municipal water, to each site? Assuming F3 will use a small tanker to haul the water, we are talking about a 25 ton vehicle traveling on a road that is closed to the public, again, to protect the elk. This will create more disruption to the area than any number of small ATV/UTV vehicles that may or may not choose to use the road. Multiplying that 25 ton vehicle times the number of drill sites active at any one time, and the disruption to the land becomes completely irreversible.

Adding to the destructive aspect of transporting the water, is the cost of doing so. The cost in just fuel will be unsustainable and, from a business standpoint, fiscally irresponsible. The natural alternative will be to use the ground water near the sites. This consideration is very concerning as we are, and have been for years, in a drought.

In addition, this will require not only drilling for the scope of the proposal, but F3 will need to drill wells large enough to provide the required water for the project, as well, further causing damage to the area.

Those families living in the area will be greatly affected by pulling that much water from their water supply. The math is simple. The average person uses 3,000 gallons of water every month. If we were to consider only 10% of the sites being active at any one time, the amount of water being drawn off the area supply is equivalent to 150 people moving into the area.

Another concern is the contamination of the water. It is known that drilling, even for core samples, uses chemicals including cyanide. These chemicals will no be leaching into the ground, but be put directly back into the same water that the citizens in that area use for their everyday life such as drinking, bathing, cooking, watering livestock, etc. There is no way to separate the contamination from the water that is consumed by the people and animals therefore F3 will be directly poisoning the families, and animals within hundreds of miles downstream of this water supply.

How will this affect the local families and animals? There is no way to tell until it is too late. When the children and the animals start getting sick, at the very least, or even dying, it will be too late and irreversible. The area will basically become un-inhabitable for years following this project due to the poisoning of the water.

Next we have to look into the future. Why is F3 Gold asking for this project? The simple answer is to make money. The obvious outcome is a gold mine which will scale these concerns exponentially. There is no other reason to do an exploration of the area except that the principal owners believe there will be enough gold to mine

the area at a large scale. The final result is unacceptable!

Politically, why would we approve this from a citizens' standpoint? The company is from Minnesota and will not provide any benefit to our community. The income from this project will not be seen in or around Custer, by anyone except, maybe, the US Forest Service thru fees.

So in closing, The Newark Project in the Hell's Canyon District is extremely detrimental to the citizens of the Custer area. The water contamination and usage is irresponsible at best and criminal. The affects to the families and animals from the poisoning of the water will create catastrophic losses including illness and death. The proposed area will be permanently scared regardless of the "reclamation" proposed by F3. This is counter productive to the projection already in place for the elk of the region. And finally, any financial benefit to the project will not be realized by any of the citizens of Custer or South Dakota, but only to those in Minnesota.

I strongly urge the United States Forest Service and Department of Agriculture to immediately cancel this project with prejudice. Failure to cancel this project is, quite simply, irresponsible and ecologically criminal.

Thank you.