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Organization:

Title:

Comments: We are opposed to Solitario's exploratory-drilling plan off Tinton Road. The only possible reason to explore for minerals is to mine them if they are found. Solitario's ultimate goal is a heap-leach mine right next to a residential area (Aspen Hills) and a popular recreational site (Big Hill). Such a mine would destroy the quality of life for Aspen Hills residents and destroy the solitude provided by the Big Hill trails. These historical uses of the land should take precedence over Solitario's financial interests, especially since the minerals Solatario plans to mine have no wider public good and since heap-leach mining is-as any Black Hills resident knows-a method that essentially razes the land and creates an ecological and scenic wasteland.

We are also opposed to the project for reasons of water usage. The Black Hills aquifers have so far been adequate to support the population, but they are limited, and the uncertainties of climate change make their long-term capacities hard to predict. Under such circumstances, it would be unwise to assign water rights to a mining company, especially when the mineral it plans to mine has little to do with national security or with solving the climate problems that make the mine questionable in the first place.

We understand that mining is a necessary part of modern life and technology. We are opposed to this project for specific rather than general reasons. It contributes nothing to the nation's or the region's needs while endangering our water supplies and quality of life, and the health of the Black Hills as a living ecology. It puts the narrow financial interests of a single company ahead of the established, historical uses of the land and the interests of the citizens who live with it. We ask you to consider all these things and reject the proposal.