Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/6/2023 7:15:12 PM
First name: John
Last name: Nelson
Organization:
Title:
Comments: United States Forest Service Committee,

As a supporter of Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, the voice for our wild public lands, waters and wildlife, I write to oppose the Golden Crest Exploration Drilling Project in the Black Hills of South Dakota. This drilling project would hinder my ability, as well as millions of others, to recreate in South Dakota.

This project would have a number of significant impacts on recreational opportunities, water quality, wildlife, and the economy of the surrounding region. In similar mining practices around the country, Backcountry Hunter & Anglers has seen foreign mining companies promise jobs and a boom to the local economy, only to offer those jobs to foreign entities that strip our land of its resources for short-term economic gain and leave the region with nothing but a permanent scar on the landscape.

Drilling would cause critical damage to aquifers that provide water to local residents and potential pollution to Spearfish Creek that runs though Spearfish Canyon. It is important to the Black Hill's elk herds and the turkey populations, both of which have seen recent declines. It is likely that the additional development of roads and 24-hour activity at the drill pads will impact the wildlife. Additional disturbance could further harm these populations. Not only could the project have detrimental effects to hunting and fishing opportunities and wildlife populations, but could impact hiking, camping and mountain biking, all of which contribute to the local and regional recreational economy.

Thank you for your support of public lands, waters, and wildlife of South Dakota, and to your commitment to the hunters, anglers and outdoorsmen and women that recreate there. I appreciate you taking these concerns into consideration and hope that you will oppose moving forward with the Golden Crest Exploration project.

I have not yet had an opportunity to visit the Dakotas, but the draw of outdoor recreational activities in the Black Hills, including hunting and fishing, and their relative proximity to me, mean that I am hopeful that I will see that country in the next few years. It would be criminal to imperil such a landscape for the short term benefit of a large conglomerate.

Sincerely,

Johnnie Nelson