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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am absolutely opposed to the mining plans proposed by Solitario Zinc Corp. I moved from Iowa after my wife, a native South Dakotan, and I got married. We then moved from her native Sioux Falls to the Black Hills to raise a family amongst the natural backdrop of the Black Hills. I am a lifelong fisherman and have dreamed of raising my children to fish in Spearfish Canyon and to hike along Little Spearfish and up Big Hill. The thought of having an out-of-state corporation come in to the beautiful Spearfish Canyon to pollute her waters, pump the surrounding land full of toxic heavy metals and other dangerous by-products, harvest South Dakota's natural resources, and then leave to go back to their Colorado-based company is absolutely disgusting to me. If this happens, my dreams of a pure, healthy, and beautiful South Dakota for my children is not possible.

In our time in Rapid City, we have learned that the natural resources South Dakota provides to her residents are some of her very best treasures. Namely, South Dakota is a rural state that thrives on tourism and marketing her close-to-home hiking trails, fly fishing creeks, and beautiful mountainsides. We cannot allow these resources to be destroyed for the communities that actually live, work, and contribute to the local and state economy for the benefit of some faceless corporation with no stake in the community after they leave. Furthermore, if we allow mining companies like Solitario Zinc Corp to destroy the gem that is Spearfish Canyon, then the state and the communities of the Black Hills are left to suffer the loss of income from the decline in tourism that will inevitably follow.

A new study of U.S. gold mines' operating records reveals that major gold mines surveyed by the United States Geological Survey have spilled contaminants, and 74% polluted water with cyanide, arsenic, nitrates, or other hazardous materials. This company is joking if they think they can live up to the promise they list on their website: "The project area is in a safe and mining friendly jurisdiction." From my position, as a contributing resident of South Dakota, this company is hostile and threatening the health and security of my own future and that of my children and all future generations in the Black Hills and Spearfish Canyon.

I am completely opposed to an out-of-state company arriving with no accountability, damaging the environment, and leaving our communities with toxic waste that will pollute our water, poison our fish, cattle, and crops, and decrease the value of our tourism industry for decades to come.