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Title:

Comments: The Black Hills are a treasure to all who visit them. Preserving these hills is not only essential to the economy of the state but also to the well being of residents. The Black Hills are a huge part of the natural tourism to South Dakota. I hail from south central South Dakota, as my family couldn't afford big vacations we frequented the hills. I have vibrant memories from my childhood; camping with my family, visiting Keystone, Hill City and other surrounding towns, seeing Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse, and soaking in the summer rays at multiple lakes across the hills. In later years I travelled with my siblings to Hippie Hole, once a hidden gem, now full of litter. The hills are beautiful but they are not vast, we must strive to protect what we have left of them. It is my prerogative to preserve the hills so that in twenty years, I too may bring my family to enjoy all the hills have to offer. Mining presents a real threat to all kinds of small businesses across the hills, as the forest shrinks the people lose the very thing that provided employment to begin with. Jeopardizing the livelihood of the individuals in the area is asinine and frankly, unnecessary. I believe over-mining these hills will be this state's downfall if it continues. While I am no fan of the influx of new residents, adding more mining to the docket may slow or even halt the population growth, thus further harming our state. As the country is taking notice to our little slice of heaven, I would feel it ill-advised to remove even a few acres from the land we all love to explore. Failure to properly inform citizens of the area is not a promising kick off for this project either. All residents of the state should have a very real invested interest in the health of the forests in the Black Hills. Denying or stifling information on mining projects across the hills is disingenuous and does not give me hope for the intentions of these companies. If this is as beneficial as they claim, every resident would like to know about it. Before any mining operation is approved, a full environmental impact statement should be conducted. To suggest otherwise, is foolish.