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Organization:

Title:

Comments: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Golden Crest Exploration Drilling project. This is an important decision and I hope that I can add a unique perspective to aid in your final decision.

I am currently an environmental scientist working on my graduate degree in hydrology. So, I understand the importance of protecting the environment and the need to ensure that future generations have access to clean and accessible drinking water. I am also a long-time Lawrence County resident currently living in Spearfish. My family and I enjoy hiking in the hills, spending time at our local lakes, and appreciating all the beauty our area provides.

As a scientist I also see the absolute necessity of mining for the continued growth and prosperity of our nation. Mining plays a crucial role in providing materials for U.S. industries and the construction of infrastructure, creating job opportunities, providing sources of energy, and promoting innovation and technologic advancement.

Gold exploration in particular, has historically played a vital role in boosting local and national economies. The extraction and subsequent sale of gold can bring substantial revenue, providing opportunities for job creation, infrastructure development, and enhanced public services. This economic boost can significantly improve the standard of living for communities in the vicinity of the exploration site and foster regional prosperity.

Furthermore, the proposed plan must be seen in the context of responsible and sustainable resource development. It is crucial to note that modern exploration techniques have evolved to minimize environmental impacts. Rigorous environmental assessments, compliance with stringent regulations, and the integration of best practices in mining operations can effectively mitigate potential risks.

It is important to recognize that the proposed drilling plan is not synonymous with mining operations. Instead, it is a crucial step in determining the viability and potential of gold deposits within our region. The data collected from exploration drilling will inform future decisions, allowing for an informed and balanced approach to resource extraction.

Additionally, the revenue generated from gold exploration can significantly contribute to community development initiatives. These funds can be allocated towards improving infrastructure, healthcare services, education, and other essential public services. By investing in the well-being of our community, we can create a sustainable future for generations to come.

Throughout the duration of the project, Solitario Zinc has been an invaluable source of employment for over forty local residents, including students from Black Hills State University and South Dakota School of Mines and Technology. Beyond providing internships, they have even contributed funds to support a mining team's participation in a prestigious competition held in Australia. The significance of Solitario Zinc's presence cannot be overstated, particularly in Spearfish where opportunities for well-compensated employment are limited.

Regrettably, halting this project would not only bring an end to the current job opportunities provided by Solitario Zinc but also curtail the potential for future high-paying positions in our community.

In conclusion, I wholeheartedly support the proposed exploration drilling plan for our community. It presents a significant opportunity for sustainable economic growth, job creation, and the responsible utilization of our natural resources. By embracing this initiative and promoting responsible mining practices, we can achieve a balance between environmental stewardship and economic progress, ensuring a brighter future for our community.

Thank you for considering my viewpoint, and I trust that you will carefully weigh the potential benefits of this proposal for our community.

Sincerely,

Brian Teaney