Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/8/2023 4:03:52 AM
First name: Taylor
Last name: Gunhammer
Organization:
Title:
Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

My name is Taylor Gunhammer and I am an enrolled citizen of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. I reside in Rapid City. I am writing to express my vehement and wholehearted objection to Solitario Zinc's Golden Crest project proposed south of Spearfish, South Dakota. Respectfully, I am sorry to say that your stated reasoning as to the legality and actuality of this project is deeply flawed.

As per Article VI of the US Constitution, treaties with Tribal nations are to be regarded as the "Supreme Law of the Land." The US Supreme Court upheld this Constitutional ideal in 1980 as well, ruling that the Black Hills had unequivocally been stolen from the Sioux nation in violation of the Fort Laramie Treaty of 1868 which guaranteed our "undisturbed use and occupation" of the Black Hills. Therefore, the idea that the 1872 General Mining Law makes a claim by a non-Tribal entity legal on indisputably stolen treaty land is absurd on its face. Mining companies do not and cannot hold legal claims to this land, and that is not a matter of opinion. All the mining that has ever occurred in the Blacks Hills was illegal. The law doesn't stop being the law because people keep committing crimes.

Additionally, the claim that "no mining will happen, only exploratory drilling" is hard to understand as anything but a farce when the entire reason to perform exploratory drilling is the hope that it will lead to mining. Solitario-Zinc is not intellectually curious, they are financially ravenous. As a citizen of the Hills, I am deeply disappointed in the disingenuous manner in which you've attempted to convey the intent of this project. The Spearfish City Council voted unanimously against this project, and if you have any sense of duty you should respect that instead of pretending that a mining company has no intention to do any mining. To be frank, it comes off to the general public as you being complicit with out-of-state and international mineral interests who would happily leave us, the common citizenry, with poisoned water, land, and air for one extra penny. I sincerely hope that is not the case, and I wish you the best of luck in demonstrating that it isn't.

Respectfully,
Taylor Gunhammer