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First name: Sarah

Last name: Wilce

Organization: Northern Arizona Immigration Legal Services

Title:

Comments: I am writing to ask you to approve the Pactola Reservoir-Rapid Creek Watershed Withdrawal. In fact, I believe it would be appropriate to expand the withdrawal area to encompass *all* federal lands within the Black Hills.

I now live in Arizona, but I grew up in Newell, South Dakota, about 60 miles from this watershed. Having lived in dry landscapes throughout my life, I deeply value water, especially unpolluted water that is available to nearby human communities and all other species that depend on life-sustaining qualities. Mining activities inevitably lead to water degradation, which is why this withdrawal is necessary.

I have also lived all my life in areas with important Indigenous nations and feel grateful to have grown up in the lands of the Lakota People. I believe protecting their cultural values is essential not only to their spiritual and physical well-being but to all citizens of the United States.

That's why I'm writing to ask that you to:

- * complete an Environmental Assessment and

- * establish a Finding of No Significant Impact (since mining activities would no longer be allowed).

By taking these actions, you can help preserve the crucial environmental values in this watershed and the broader Black Hills area - and you can help preserve Indigenous cultural lifeways as well.

Thank you for considering my perspective as you make this important decision.