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First name: Stephen

Last name: Quin

Organization:

Title:

Comments:

As a long term investor in US mining projects and an executive and/or director of mining companies with projects in the US, I am opposed to the proposed withdrawal of 20,574 acres in the Black Hills National Forest. Currently, more than 400 million acres of the 650 million acres managed by the federal government are already off limits or severely restricted to mineral exploration and development. Taking more lands off the table will make it even harder to discover the those mineral deposits that are essential to the economic and strategic interests of the United States and its allies.

The United States is already dangerously dependent on foreign sources of minerals like copper, lithium, zinc, cobalt, nickel, antimony, rare earth elements and many others, many of which metals are controlled by countries strategically opposed to the interests of the U.S. Not only does the U.S. have these minerals in abundance that are and could be produced domestically, many are also present in South Dakota. However, mineral withdrawals like the one proposed by the Forest Service here place these minerals, which are vital to diverse technologies like computer chips, wind turbines, jet engines, cell phones, electric vehicles, military technology, flame retardants, and countless others, off limits. With curtailed access to lands, the U.S.'s dependence on imported minerals will inevitably grow, potentially threatening the U.S. economy and its national security interests.

Finally, the withdrawal is not needed. Laws and regulations currently in place in the U.S., such as the Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and dozens of other laws and regulations govern how mines must be designed, and how they must operate in order to keep their permits, as well as defining closure and reclamation requirements and standards and ensuring sufficient bonding to cover same. These laws and regulations are more than adequate to protect the environment, while allowing mineral exploration and development to proceed in South Dakota.