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Comments: I appreciate your consideration of these comments in opposition to the proposed withdrawal of 20,574 acres in the Black Hills National Forest. Preemptive withdrawals of areas of our federal lands for critical mineral exploration flies in the face of the apparent goals of this Administration to mandate electric vehicles and alternative energy sources - all of which will require substantially more mining.

The United States is already dangerously dependent on foreign sources of minerals like copper, lithium, zinc, cobalt, nickel, rare earth elements and many others. Not only do we have these minerals in abundance here domestically, but they 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, and countless others, off limits. Our dependence on imported minerals will grow, potentially threatening our economy and our national security.

As opposed to many other nations, modern hardrock mines in the U.S. are subject to stringent environmental, labor and safety laws and regulations such as the Clean Water Act, the Clean Air Act, Safe Drinking Water Act, and dozens of others. The proposed withdrawal won't provide any benefit, but it will deprive South Dakotans of jobs that pay well above average and will cause our entire nation to become even more dependent on minerals from foreign sources.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.