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Comments: I am totally opposed to the proposed withdrawal of 20,574 acres in the Black Hills National Forest. Right now, 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 next deposit. And make us more dependent on countries with few regulations on waste and emissions.

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, they are 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.

This withdrawal is unnecessary. Laws and regulations are place. 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. I work in the mining industry, I know these are enforced. They are more than adequate to protect the environment, while allowing mineral exploration and development to proceed in South Dakota.