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Comments: On behalf of the Montana Mining Association, I would like to lodge our comments in opposition to the proposed 20,574 acres for withdrawal from mineral development in the Black Hills National Forest. The proposed action represents a dangerous and growing precedence by this administration for withdrawing crucial natural resources on and beneath our federal lands that are vital for strengthening our nation's supply chains for critical and other minerals that are necessary to improving our economy, security and technology advancement.

There are many existing environmental regulations in place at the federal (e.g., Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act) and state levels to ensure minerals development is done responsibly and without impact to adjacent aquatic, groundwater and terrestrial resources. Lastly, the proposed withdrawal will certainly deprive South Dakota of significant tax revenues and high-paying jobs and economic benefits.

At a time when there is a dire need and a stated federal focus on growing our nation's ability to secure its mineral independence by focusing on permitting reforms and advancement of our critical metals and mineral supply chains, this proposal runs completely counter to those stated priorities.