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Comments: You cannot pick where minerals occur, if you could, they would not be in anybody's back yard. There would be no "NIMBY's" or reasons to protest and all the minerals we rely upon would be in the middle of some godforsaken place no one cares about.

Unfortunately, that is not the case here in the United States. There will always be someone or some group that will protest mineral exploration and production no matter where it is.

If the United States wants to absolutely withdraw all the places minerals occur, we must then be content knowing other countries will be exploiting those same minerals themselves and they may or may not provide them to the United States.

That being said, I will reiterate comments being made by many other people.

This withdrawal is redundant and unnecessary. There are existing regulations in place that assure that any activities within the watershed meet strict environmental standards. The agencies involved should trust the process they put in place. Let that process work as designed and is currently being implemented.

The NEPA process for exploration and mining accomplishes a scientific review and decision-making process without putting an unnecessary and costly burden on taxpayers and at the same time tying up 20,000 to 200,000 acres of land.

This withdrawal is in opposition to the administration's stated goals for green energy transition and critical minerals supply lines from the DOE/DoD. Removing large tracts of land without understanding the resource potential will have detrimental effects on US green energy transition and state security.

Prior to removing an area like this, a geologic study to determine the mineral potential of the proposed withdrawal area should be done. This should provide a detailed report of the area's mineral potential prior to making a wholesale mineral withdrawal of the area.

Many minerals, some strategic and critical, some common, are known to be in the Black Hills so why are we so quick to remove the possibility of their recovery just for the sake of preventing gold mining.

Although this withdrawal is for approximately 20,000 acres, an effort is already underway to increase it to roughly 200,000 acres. What is next, the whole Black Hills?

How about other mineral districts within the United States. Will critical mineral resources in Wyoming be the next target for mineral withdrawal? More in Minnesota and Nevada?

Lastly, as a country we should be concerned about protecting the environment as well as essential and critical mineral independence. We can have both.