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First name: Samuel

Last name: Sheehy

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To whom it may concern;

I appreciate the opportunity you have created for myself and many others to voice their opinions on the topic of debate: the proposed Mineral Withdrawal.

As a 15 year old, my values and insights are often not heeded, so it means a lot to me that you are now reading this.

While I have not done ludicrous amounts of studying on the topic, I believe that turning the proposed mineral withdrawal around Pactola Reservoir into a reality is the correct choice. I believe it is the choice that will affect future generations to be provided with a clean source of water, benefiting the community, the economy, creating a cleaner environment and protecting the beautiful Black Hills we know and love. I personally have seen firsthand the cause of mining to turn the wild, free nature into a mining cesspit that will never be the same; even if this will not impact the ecosystem (which studies show it will) the Perli Pit quarry near Bear Country has turned a once beautiful forest into a patch of dead land, a sore thumb preventing the enjoyment of the outdoors to anybody driving that stretch of Highway 16.

Living amongst a generation of teenagers who spend approximately 17 hours a day on their phone, the least that could be provided is protection of the refuge called nature. I believe that protecting the Black Hills is a way that it can be proven that The People and their interests are the most important choice, whether the choice is being made by the government or someone else.

Perhaps you think I'm naive to think it's that simple, but tell me: do you truly think that allowing mining to destroy something created through billions of years of nature's work thus preventing future generations--heck, our generation--to use and enjoy this environment is the correct choice? It sure doesn't sound right to me. Oh, and did I mention the massive consequences for human life that projects such as the Spearfish Canyon gold mining project would cause? Or consider what mining would do to our water system when the harmful effects from the F3 Gold's Jenny Gulch gold project leech into our drinking water, and cause damage to one of our nation's protectors: Ellsworth Air Force Base?

I believe that the mineral withdrawal is the correct option and I'm willing to fight for it, for the people in their best interests. So, thank you; proposing this decision is a wonderful move, even if the protection only lasts 20 years, 20 years of protection for one of our precious watersheds, 20,574 acres of the Black Hills is better than nothing. I would also like to throw out the fact that this will only protect 10% of the Rapid Creek watershed, leaving 90% of this resource unprotected not to mention the many other watersheds and federal lands in the Black Hills.

Consider carefully the correct choice.

Thank you so much again;

Sincerely,