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Comments: Good Day:

I am opposed to the proposed mineral withdrawal associated with the draft EA for the Pactola Reservoir - Rapid Creek Watershed. Not only is the study inadequate, but it is in contravention with the Biden Administration's policy on critical minerals. This is especially true when there are already existing mineral withdrawals on the existing water sources and recreational sites within the proposed withdrawal area making this withdrawal unnecessary for the protection of this area.

This area is known to contain critical minerals and President Biden signed Executive Order 14017, America's Supply Chains, to not only study, but also address the the "Critical Minerals (that) are essential building blocks of the modern economy and our energy security...." (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2024/09/20/fact-sheet-biden-harris-administration-takes-further-action-to-strengthen-and-secure-critical-mineral-supply-chains/> ) This briefing from the Administration also discusses "Supporting Responsible Domestic Mining". Removal of areas known to contain critical minerals, or even potential critical minerals certainly is in direct opposition to this policy.

At a minimum I would respectfully ask that comment period for the draft EA for the Pactola Reservoir - Rapid Creek Watershed Withdrawal be extended. This extension would allow National Forest Advisory Board to include the proposed withdrawal on their meeting agenda and allow time for input from this organization.