

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/3/2025 3:16:49 AM

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Comments: I am writing in strong and unequivocal opposition to the proposed Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project. As a concerned citizen and member of the public, I find this project to be a direct violation of the solemn treaty obligations the United States holds with the Oceti Sakowin (Great Sioux Nation), specifically the 1868 Fort Laramie Treaty, which remains binding and recognized under Article VI of the U.S. Constitution as the supreme law of the land.

The proposed exploratory drilling in the sacred Black Hills-known as ?e Sápa-constitutes a continued infringement upon unceded Indigenous territory. The Black Hills were never legally sold or ceded. To allow further extraction activity in this area not only dishonors federal treaty commitments but perpetuates a long history of illegal encroachment, cultural erasure, and environmental harm.

This region holds irreplaceable cultural, spiritual, and ecological significance. The Black Hills are not simply a geographic location-they are a sacred place of ceremony, origin, and life for the Lakota and allied nations. Extractive projects here violate the spiritual and cultural rights protected under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which the U.S. has endorsed.

Additionally, this project stands to damage fragile ecosystems, threaten water quality, and desecrate ancestral sites, while prioritizing the interests of private mineral corporations over the legal and moral obligations owed to sovereign tribal nations. The U.S. Forest Service has a fiduciary trust responsibility to tribal nations, which includes the duty to protect tribal lands, resources, and treaty rights-not to facilitate their exploitation.

I urge the Forest Service to cancel this project entirely and pursue a process of meaningful tribal consultation and environmental justice. To move forward without tribal consent would not only violate the law but deepen historical wounds and environmental degradation. Stand on the side of justice and legality. Do not permit this project.