

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/8/2025 10:31:16 PM

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Comments: I stand in unequivocal opposition to the proposed development at Pe'sla. This sacred site, nestled in the Black Hills of South Dakota, holds profound spiritual and cultural significance for the Lakota and other Indigenous peoples of the region. Recognized through a Traditional Cultural Property survey, Pe'sla is not merely land-it is the heart of the Lakota Nation, integral to their identity and way of life.

The proposed development threatens to desecrate this sacred site, violating both federal and international legal protections. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) affirms the rights of Indigenous peoples to access and worship at their sacred sites. Furthermore, Executive Order 13007 mandates federal agencies to accommodate access to and avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of sacred places. Ignoring these protections sets a dangerous precedent: if Pe'sla can be compromised, no sacred site is safe.

This is not just a matter of cultural disrespect-it is a breach of treaty obligations. The 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie established the Black Hills as part of the Great Sioux Reservation, the sovereign land of the Lakota. Although the U.S. government later seized this land illegally, the Lakota have never relinquished their claim. This project deepens the historical injustice by continuing to treat sacred Lakota lands as expendable.

The parallels between Pe'sla and Maunakea in Hawai'i are striking. Both are sacred mountains central to the cosmology and cultural practices of Indigenous peoples. In Hawai'i, the proposed construction of the Thirty Meter Telescope on Maunakea has been met with steadfast resistance from Kanaka Maoli, who view the project as desecration. These struggles underscore a broader pattern: Indigenous sacred places around the world are under threat in the name of development and profit.

Beyond cultural and spiritual concerns, the proposed development poses significant environmental risks. Under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), any major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment requires a comprehensive Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). To date, no such EIS has been conducted for this project, which is a glaring legal and ethical oversight.

Moreover, the community surrounding Pe'sla-homeowners, residents, and local businesses-faces potential harm, including environmental degradation, strain on infrastructure, and disruption of the region's character.

In light of these concerns, I urge the following immediate actions:

- *Listen to the Lakota people.
- *Extend the comment period.
- *Complete a full EIS.
- *Honor treaty obligations and legal protections.

Pe'sla must be protected-not only for the Lakota but for the integrity of law, justice, and humanity.