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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am a Nevada resident whose mother grew up in a town called Minersville, Pennsylvania, and I am writing to oppose the proposed Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project (RMEDP).

The land in question, Pe' Sla, is a sacred site for the Lakota, Dakota, and other Sioux Tribes. No further information or comment beyond that statement should be needed to decide against the proposed project.

Are we a country that will not honor the values underpinning even its own constitution? Its proclamations of freedom of religion? According to the NDN Collective, "Pe' Sla is an ancient holy site to which Lakota people still return for ceremonial gatherings annually, as well as for individual spiritual purposes throughout the year. The unique physical qualities of the site are irreplaceable to the religious practice of multiple Tribes."

Such statements regarding Pe' Sla as an area holding sacred significance have already been validated by a Traditional Cultural Property (TCP) survey not based on beliefs and practices alone, but in connection with the physical place.

Are we a nation that will not uphold its own word and stand as trustworthy in our agreements? Well beyond the TCP designation, Pe' Sla was originally protected by the 1868 Sioux Nation Treaty. Article Six of the United States Constitution holds that treaties "are the supreme law of the land."

The short-sighted counter argument often put forward against these immemorial points is "economic development." As a Nevadan with roots in Minersville, Pennsylvania, however, we know that this "development" in its extraction decimates the location in short order, and at best ends up as a commonly termed ghost town.

In the process, laborers purported to benefit from the "development" suffer disproportionate impacts to their health and ultimately their job insecurity. All the while, rates of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) in the area rise.

<https://www.mining-technology.com/features/occupational-health-how-mining-impacts-workers-well-being/?cf-view>

<https://www.colorado.edu/program/tallgrass/2020/01/29/violence-extractive-industry-man-camps-endangers-indigenous-women-and-children>

Lastly, in addition to opposing the proposed RMEDP, in the interim, I am writing to request two things: First, a 60-day extension of the public comment period. Second, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be conducted for this proposed project. The proposed project presents a high risk of contaminating Rapid Creek watershed, nearby streams, and underground water. The proposed project would result in the clear cutting of trees, toxic drilling mud pits, and wildlife damage. Of note, in the spring of 2015, the first calves were born to buffalo reintroduced to Pe' Sla.

Please seriously consider these comments in opposition to the proposed RMEDP. Thank you.