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First name: Todd

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: To: Shawn Cochran, Forest Supervisor, Black Hills National Forest

Subject: Support for Pete Lien & Sons Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project

Dear Mr. Cochran and Members of the Decision-Making Team:

I respectfully submit this comment in strong support of the Pete Lien & Sons proposed Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project targeting graphite resources within the Black Hills National Forest. Graphite is recognized by the U.S. Department of the Interior as a "critical mineral," essential for lithium-ion batteries, fuel cells, renewable-energy storage, and advanced electronics.

Key Reasons for Support:

1. Strengthening Domestic Supply Chains: Developing a domestic graphite resource reduces U.S. reliance on imports-enhancing national security, providing and protecting American jobs, and buffering our clean-energy transition against global market volatility.
2. Responsible, Science-Based Exploration: The proposed Plan incorporates best practices for minimizing surface disturbance, controlling erosion, protecting water quality, and promptly reclaiming drill sites. By focusing on a modest number of drill holes and employing modern, low-impact techniques, we can gain vital geological data while preserving the forest's natural character. Pete Lien & Sons has demonstrated they conduct low-impact mineral exploration during previous exploration programs.
3. Economic and Community Benefits: Geological exploration creates local employment opportunities-from field crews and environmental monitors to logistics and hospitality services. Knowledge gained here could attract further investment for responsible development, supporting small businesses in nearby Spearfish, Lead, Deadwood, and Rapid City. It also provides some diversification from the gaming and tourism industry.
4. Advancing Clean-Energy Goals: As the United States works to decarbonize its economy, securing critical minerals like graphite domestically will help accelerate the deployment of electric vehicles, grid-scale battery storage, and other low-carbon technologies. Exploration drilling is an essential step in that trajectory.

Conclusion:

I urge the Forest Service to approve the proposed exploration plan. By doing so, you will enable a cautious, science-driven evaluation of our local mineral endowment-paving the way for sustainable resource development that benefits our economy, our energy security, and our shared environmental stewardship, while we honor Mother Nature's gifts.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration.

Sincerely,

Todd Christensen

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