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Comments: I am writing to express my deep concern and opposition to the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project #67838. As someone who cares deeply about the environmental and cultural integrity of the Black Hills, I strongly urge the Forest Service to:

Grant a 60-day extension of the scoping public comment period to allow full participation from Tribal Nations, local communities, and the general public.

Require a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project, due to its potential to cause serious environmental harm and its proximity to sacred Lakota ceremonial sites, including Pe' Sla.

This project, as proposed, threatens to negatively impact water quality in the upper Rapid Creek watershed. The plan for 18 drill pads - some dangerously close to streams - raises the risk of contamination to surface and underground water sources, which are vital to the health of ecosystems and communities downstream.

Equally troubling is the project's proximity to Pe' Sla, a sacred site central to Lakota spiritual and ceremonial life. Disturbing this area would not only be disrespectful, but would cause real harm to the cultural and religious practices of the Lakota people. Industrial activity in such a spiritually significant landscape is incompatible with the Forest Service's obligation to protect Tribal resources and heritage.

The Forest Service has a responsibility to uphold environmental stewardship and honor its trust responsibilities to Tribal Nations. A full EIS is not just justified - it is essential. Anything less would fall short of the transparency and rigor the public expects and the law requires under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Please do the right thing. Extend the comment period, listen to all stakeholders, and require a full Environmental Impact Statement before allowing any further progress on this ill-advised project.