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Comments: I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project. This project poses significant risks to the environment, water quality, wildlife habitats, and the recreational and cultural values of the Rochford area. The Black Hills region is a treasured landscape, and industrial drilling operations could irreparably harm its ecosystems, including critical watersheds and sensitive species.

Before any decisions are made, I urge your agency to require a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). An EIS is essential to thoroughly evaluate the potential long-term consequences of this project, including groundwater contamination, noise and air pollution, and impacts on local communities and tourism. A cursory environmental assessment (EA) is insufficient given the scale of potential harm.

Additionally, I request that the public comment "scoping" period be extended by at least 60 days to ensure all concerned citizens, scientists, and stakeholders have adequate time to review project details and submit informed comments. The current timeline is unreasonably short and limits meaningful public participation.

The Rochford area deserves rigorous environmental scrutiny and robust public engagement. Please prioritize the protection of this irreplaceable landscape by mandating an EIS and extending the comment period.