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First name: Caryn

Last name: Lerman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear US Forest Service,

My name is Caryn Lerman.

I am a SD Volunteer Naturalist that lives in Hot Springs, SD. I'm writing to comment and express my opposition to the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Project that would be located in the sacred ?e Sápa (Black Hills).

I am specifically concerned about the effects this project would have on the Lakota people and their rich cultural traditions. The proposed site of this project is adjacent to Pe'Sla which is a sacred site where the Lakota people do ceremonies annually. The Black Hills are significant for many reasons and are highly valued and respected by the Lakota people. This project, along with the others that have already been approved, would only further contaminate these sacred lands and strip the Lakota people of their rights to the land. They have already suffered enough.

In addition, I am also concerned about the effect to our public water supply. Exploration could contaminate water in the upper Rapid Creek watershed, with some proposed drill pads very close to streams. There is also the potential for contamination or cross-contamination of underground water sources.

Lastly, this project could negatively effects the diverse wildlife in the Black Hills. These resources, cultural, water and wildlife are ones that are critical for a healthy environment and society therefore, I urge you to assure that the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is followed precisely and a full environmental impact statement is conducted. I also urge you to put a 60-day extension on the "scoping" public comment period.

Thank you for your consideration.