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First name: Suzanne

Last name: Ruggles

Organization:

Title:

Comments: To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Suzanne Ruggles, and my address is -PII-. I am writing to express my deep concern about the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project (#67838) proposed for the Black Hills National Forest.

Although I live in New York, I care deeply about this project and the Black Hills because of the region's profound ecological, cultural, and spiritual importance. The Black Hills are not only a place of incredible natural beauty and biodiversity but also a sacred landscape that holds deep significance for the Lakota people and other Indigenous communities.

I am writing to respectfully request a 60-day extension of the current scoping comment period to allow for broader public participation and ensure that all voices-especially those from affected Indigenous communities-have a meaningful opportunity to be heard.

I strongly oppose the Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project. Mineral exploration and the potential for future extraction pose serious risks to local water sources, wildlife habitats, and the health of the forest ecosystem. Equally troubling is the disruption of traditional Lakota ceremonial practices and sacred sites, which should be respected and protected, not threatened by industrial activity.

Given the potential for significant environmental and cultural impacts, I urge the Forest Service to require a full Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) rather than a less rigorous Environmental Assessment. A comprehensive EIS is necessary to fully evaluate the implications of this project and to ensure the public has access to transparent, science-based information.

Please consider the long-term health of the Black Hills and the voices of those who have lived in relationship with this land for generations. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Ruggles