

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/16/2025 2:39:00 AM

First name: Justin

Last name: Herreman

Organization:

Title:

Comments: As a resident of Rapid City who gets his drinking water from the aquifers fed by the Upper Rapid Creek watershed including Castle Creek and its tributaries. As a consistent user of Deerfield and Pactola Reservoirs. As a hunter, fisherman, hiker, and wild life observer. As a United States taxpayer and public lands steward. I strongly oppose Pete Lien and Sons Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project #67838.

As described this project has drilling sites that are inappropriately close to Castle Creek and multiple tributaries both intermittent and perpetual. These streams are a critical resource for Rapid City, Rapid Valley, Boxelder, and Ellsworth Air Force Base. This project is a serious existential threat to the Upper Rapid Creek watershed, our ONLY source of drinking water for Rapid City, Boxelder, Rapid Valley, Ellsworth Airforce Base and many other communities in Western South Dakota. OUR watershed recharges the aquifers that supply drinking water to Western SD. Deerfield Reservoir was construction in 1942 specifically for the purpose of supplying water to the Air Force Base. This project poses a national security threat via potential contamination of the aquifers.

The hydrology of the watershed, and surface and subsurface interactions are incredibly complex according to 2 SD Mines professors who are experts on this subject. We lack a fully accurate model and understanding of this complex system and therefore the risk these mining projects have to cause permanent contamination of critical resources. If the aquifers or 2 reservoirs in the watershed are contaminated by this project, permanent irreparable damage will be caused. The negative consequences to our communities and economy are massive. The "juice is not worth the squeeze" here for this project.

This project is a substantial violation of a significant Lakota cultural and religious site. Exploratory drilling for minerals in Pe' Sla is analogous to drilling for graphite in Arlington National Cemetery. That is not something that would or should ever be considered. It is wrong and deeply disrespectful towards our Lakota relatives. It's incredibly disappointing that a local company would even consider this violation of Pe' Sla.

The Rapid Creek watershed is an important resource for everyone in Western South Dakota. It supplies our drinking water, gives us amazing places to paddle like Pactola and Deerfield Reservoirs, and Castle and Rapid Creeks. Our water is a frangible resource we have a civic duty to protect, this project is not reasonable and clearly should not be allowed to go forward.

At a minimum of the project is not stopped a complete EIS is the minimum standard under NEPA for a project of this sort in these important areas of our public lands. A specific reason for an EIS is the Beaver Dam Analogues that have been built in the watershed above Deerfield and the potential this project has for impacting this resource and the water storage they have created.