

Data Submitted (UTC 11): 5/16/2025 1:11:44 PM

First name: Shaylen

Last name: Gough

Organization:

Title:

Comments: I respectfully submit this public comment in opposition to the Pete Lien and Sons Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project (#67838). This project raises serious concerns regarding its environmental impact and its disregard for the cultural and spiritual sovereignty of Indigenous communities.

The Black Hills region, where this project is proposed, holds sacred significance for the Lakota and other Indigenous nations. Any mineral exploration in this area risks further violating longstanding treaty rights and contributes to the ongoing erasure of Indigenous heritage and spiritual life. Proceeding with exploratory drilling disregards the moral and legal obligation to honor tribal sovereignty and to meaningfully consult Indigenous communities who have expressed deep opposition to mining in these lands.

Additionally, in the face of accelerating climate change, it is imperative that we shift away from extractive practices that intensify carbon emissions and ecological degradation. Mineral exploration and subsequent mining operations can lead to irreversible damage to local ecosystems, contaminate water sources, and disturb carbon sinks-compounding the effects of a climate crisis that disproportionately affects marginalized communities.

Approving this drilling project would set a dangerous precedent that prioritizes short-term economic interests over long-term environmental sustainability and human rights. I urge the responsible agencies to reject this proposal and instead invest in development practices that are environmentally just, respect Indigenous sovereignty, and are aligned with the urgent need to combat climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this comment and for your consideration of its ethical and ecological dimensions.