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First name: Alex

Last name: Van Maanen

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Reviewing Officer,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed Rochford Mineral Exploratory Drilling Project in the Black Hills National Forest. I respectfully urge the U.S. Forest Service to deny this proposal due to the serious environmental, cultural, and community impacts associated with it.

The Black Hills are not only an ecological treasure but also a sacred place to many Indigenous peoples, particularly the Lakota and other tribes with historical and spiritual ties to the land. Mineral exploration in this area threatens both the integrity of these sacred sites and the natural balance of a region already under pressure from previous extractive activities.

Exploratory drilling-though termed "temporary"-introduces irreversible harm to ecosystems, watersheds, and wildlife habitats. The potential for contamination of groundwater sources, including Rapid Creek which supplies drinking water to surrounding communities, is a major concern. Furthermore, the cumulative impact of such projects contributes to long-term degradation of public lands that should be protected for future generations.

There is also growing public sentiment against further industrialization of this forested region. Expanding mineral exploration prioritizes private commercial interests over public health, tribal sovereignty, and environmental conservation.

I ask that the Forest Service act in the public interest and reject this project in favor of sustainable land stewardship. Our forests, water, and sacred landscapes are far more valuable intact than the short-term gain offered by mineral development.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I appreciate the opportunity to participate in the public comment process.