Data Submitted (UTC 11): 6/26/2025 4:31:20 PM
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Organization:
Title:
Comments: I am writing to express my unequivocal opposition to the proposed Solitario Resources Ponderosa gold drilling project in the Black Hills. This devastating industrial operation represents yet another attempt to sacrifice our precious environment, sacred sites, and economic future for the benefit of an extractive industry that comprises only 1% of South Dakota's economy while leaving behind a legacy of pollution and destruction.

The Ponderosa project would inflict unprecedented damage on our landscape through:
Over 400 drill holes, each penetrating 3,000+ feet deep into the earth
43 drill pads requiring clear-cutting of trees and native vegetation
Each drill hole serving as a permanent conduit for pollution to reach our watershed
Toxic drilling mud pits filled with barium and other hazardous chemicals
24-hour industrial operations with lights, noise, and dust pollution 5-7 days per week

This is not responsible resource development-this is environmental vandalism on a massive scale.

The Black Hills watershed provides clean drinking water for thousands of residents and supports the natural ecosystems that define our region. Mining companies have repeatedly polluted South Dakota's waterways, and we cannot allow this pattern to continue. Once these 400+ drill holes puncture our aquifers and contaminate our groundwater, the damage will be irreversible and permanent. Our water is worth infinitely more than any temporary mining profits, especially from an industry that routinely abandons sites after extraction, leaving communities to deal with the toxic legacy for generations.

The proximity of this project to Tribal ceremonial grounds-within one mile of sacred land-represents a blatant violation of Indigenous treaty rights and religious freedom. These sacred sites have been protected by solemn agreements that this nation is bound to honor.
Indigenous Peoples have already suffered centuries of broken promises and cultural destruction. We cannot allow mining companies to desecrate these sacred spaces that hold immeasurable spiritual significance and have been used for generations of ceremonial practice.

South Dakota's tourism economy and world-class outdoor recreation opportunities generate far more sustainable economic value than the mining industry's mere 1% contribution to our state's economy. This project threatens to:
Devastate the already struggling tourism economy in the Spearfish area
Eliminate recreational opportunities across a huge area for hiking, hunting, fishing, and other outdoor activities
Destroy the natural beauty that attracts visitors and residents alike
Create industrial blight in one of South Dakota's most treasured landscapes

We are trading our sustainable economic future for short-term extraction that benefits outside corporations while leaving local communities with permanent environmental damage.

I demand that all permits for the Solitario Resources Ponderosa project be denied based on:
Unacceptable environmental risks to our watershed and drinking water supply
Violation of Indigenous treaty rights and desecration of sacred ceremonial grounds
Destruction of our sustainable tourism economy for minimal economic benefit
Clear community opposition from residents who will suffer the consequences
Permanent loss of recreational and ceremonial use of vast public lands
The mining industry's proven track record of pollution and abandonment in South Dakota