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First name: Jennifer

Last name: Linn

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Dear Supervisor Cochran and Project Manager Schuyler,

I am writing to formally submit my comments regarding the proposed Bull Hill Mine open-pit project within the Bearlodge Ranger District of the Black Hills National Forest.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY ATTACHMENT & IMPACT:

Our family, along with countless others, uses this land continuously for hiking, biking, camping, hunting, and fishing. The abundant animals and the deep solitude of these mountains are truly like no other place on earth. Furthermore, as a local teacher, I regularly teach units focused on the unique ecology of the Bear Lodge area, its trees, and its wildlife. It is incredibly sad to think that this living classroom will be taken away from our students. This mine will strip all of that away, permanently destroying the peaceful public landscape, educational opportunities, and the unique wildlife that we love.

The proposal by Rare Element Resources to establish a massive open-pit mine on 260 acres of public land is an unacceptable violation of the multi-use mandate of the Black Hills National Forest. I strongly demand that the Forest Service select the No Action Alternative and deny this project entirely. Should the agency fail to protect this land, I submit the following critical impacts that must be thoroughly analyzed:

Irreversible Threat to Aquifers, Springs, and Private Wells: The mandatory, large-scale groundwater "dewatering" required to keep the Bull Hill pit dry poses an unacceptable risk to local hydrology [performance.gov]. Hydrology studies indicate that this continuous pumping will lower the regional water table, threatening to dry up vital natural springs and seeps that wildlife and livestock depend on [performance.gov]. Furthermore, because this mine sits in the headwaters of the Redwater River, any subsurface disruption poses a direct threat of cross-contamination to the connected private aquifers that local families and ranches rely on for household drinking water. A permanent, highly mineralized "pit lake" left behind post-mining is a long-term toxic liability for Crook County's water security [performance.gov].

Permanent Visual and Habitat Destruction: The 183.5-acre open pit represents a permanent scar on a pristine landscape [rareelementresources.com]. This is not a temporary disturbance; it is the irreversible destruction of mature forest canopy that sustains local wildlife, including regional bat species, far beyond the initial project lines [rareelementresources.com]. **Severe Public Safety and Road Hazards:** Forcing 13 to 17 daily round-trip industrial semi-trucks onto Forest Service Road 838 (Warren Peak Road) creates an immediate hazard. A heavy commercial truck passing every 30 to 45 minutes will completely destroy the local road bed, produce blinding dust walls, and run recreational drivers, campers, and locals off shared forest routes.

Decimation of Historic Hunting Grounds: The location sits directly inside Deer Hunting Unit 1 and Elk Hunt Unit 116. Constant industrial blasting, night lighting, and heavy machinery noise will permanently displace local big game herds, ruining highly valued hunting opportunities that local families rely on for food and tradition.

Direct Conflict with Recreational Trails: The project sits right next to the popular Sundance Trailhead, threatening paths like the Edge and Ogden Ridge Trails [usda.gov]. Furthermore, winter hauling plans will cross right through Snowmobile Trail 4 of the Bear Lodge Mountains Snowmobile Trail System, directly compromising winter tourism and safety [wyo.gov].

The short-term corporate profits of this mine do not justify the permanent destruction of our groundwater infrastructure and the Bear Lodge mountains [performance.gov]. I urge the Forest Service to stand with the local

community, protect our public land, and reject these permits. Thank you for your time and for considering the voice of the community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Linn