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Organization:

Title:

Comments: July 22, 2026Shawn CochranBlack Hills National Forest SupervisorSM.FS.r2_bkf
webin@usda.gov1019 N. 5th StreetCuster, SD 57730Re: Bear Lodge Mining Project, haul road, strong
opposition to Miller Creek RoadDear Mr. Cochran,I am writing as a Crook County landowner and rancher to
respectfully express my strong opposition to the proposed use of Miller Creek Road as the haul route for the Bear
Lodge Mining Project.My family's ranch borders Miller Creek Road, and we would be among the landowners
most directly affected by this proposal. My wife and children live on this ranch, and I manage its day-to-day
operation. Together with the adjoining Wyoming State School Section that we lease, our operation encompasses
approximately 1100 acres of contiguous grazing land. We rely on these roads, these water resources, and this
land for our home, our livestock, and our livelihood. The decisions made during this process will have lasting
consequences for our family and for the long-term viability of our ranch.While I recognize the importance of
responsible economic development and the role mining can play in Wyoming's economy, I believe this project
should proceed in a manner that minimizes unnecessary impacts to private property and neighboring landowners
whenever a reasonable alternative exists.From the information currently available, Warren Peak Road appears to
be that reasonable alternative.Warren Peak Road was originally constructed by the United States Air Force to
Department of Defense standards to provide access to the radar installation atop Warren Peak. It was
intentionally designed to accommodate heavy traffic and is substantially more robust than a typical paved road. It
also provides a more direct connection to Interstate 90 and has been recommended by the Crook County Road
and Bridge Department as the preferred haul route.In contrast, the Miller Creek proposal does not simply utilize
the existing county road. It would require substantial reconstruction, including straightening curves, widening the
corridor, and constructing a new industrial haul route across private property. The proposed alignment would
permanently alter the character of the area and require condemnation of private land to support decades of
heavy truck traffic. For my family, these changes would not be minor inconveniences. The proposed realignment
has the potential to significantly impact our hay production, reduce our ability to effectively graze portions of our
property, and separate our largest water source from the remainder of our approximately 940-acre pasture.
These are permanent operational impacts that directly affect the productivity and long-term viability of our ranch. I
am equally concerned about the project's potential effects on groundwater and surface water resources.The
proposed mining operation will require significant groundwater pumping over an extended period. Project
documents acknowledge that groundwater levels and springs will be altered during operations and indicate that
conditions may not return to normal until mining has concluded, if they return to pre-mining conditions at all. For
families who depend on wells, springs, ponds, and streams for their homes, livestock, and agricultural operations,
those are serious uncertainties that deserve careful scrutiny. These concerns are even more significant given the
severe drought conditions affecting Wyoming today. Before any approvals are granted, I believe the
environmental review should include updated, independent scientific analysis that reflects current hydrologic
conditions and clearly demonstrates that neighboring water resources can be protected. I am also very
concerned by the proposal to use mine water for dust suppression along the haul route. Based on project
information made available to the public, this water may contain naturally occurring radioactive materials
associated with the mining process. I do not believe water with radioactive constituents should be applied to
roads adjacent to private homes, ranches, livestock, wildlife habitat, and agricultural land. Dust suppression
should never introduce additional concerns about potential exposure for nearby residents or the environment.
Finally, I encourage the agencies preparing the Environmental Impact Statement to fully evaluate the cumulative
impacts of the haul road itself-not simply the mine. The effects on private property, ranching operations, public
safety, wildlife habitat, road maintenance, noise, dust, water resources, and the long-term character of the
surrounding area deserve the same careful analysis as the mining operation.Private property rights have always
been one of Wyoming's fundamental values. When a practical alternative already exists that better serves the
project while substantially reducing impacts to private landowners, I believe that alternative should receive strong
preference.Choosing Warren Peak Road would allow the project to move forward while respecting private

property rights, utilizing infrastructure specifically built for heavy traffic, and avoiding unnecessary and irreversible impacts to the families who live and work along Miller Creek Road. Thank you for your time, your service, and your thoughtful consideration of these comments. I respectfully ask that private property rights, protection of Wyoming's water resources, and the availability of Warren Peak Road as the clearly less disruptive alternative remain central to your decision-making process. Sincerely, J. Matt Lambert and Anna Lambert
Crook County
Landowners