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First name: Sarah

Last name: Lambert

Organization:

Title:

Comments: July 22, 2026

Shawn Cochran
Black Hills National Forest Supervisor
SM.FS.r2 bkf webin@usda.gQY1019 N. 5th Street
Custer, SD 57730
Re: Bear Lodge Mining Project, haul road, strong opposition to Miller Creek Road
Dear Mr. Cochran, I am writing as a Crook County landowner whose family's ranch borders Miller Creek Road to respectfully express my opposition to using Miller Creek Road as the haul route for the Bear Lodge Mining Project. I support responsible economic development and understand the importance of balancing growth with opportunity. However, I believe this proposal raises several significant concerns that have not yet been adequately addressed. First, an existing alternative already appears to meet the project's transportation needs. Warren Peak Road was constructed to accommodate heavy vehicle traffic and has previously supported logging operations. The Crook County Road Department has also recommended this route. When a viable alternative exists, it is difficult to justify the permanent impact that condemning private property and converting Miller Creek Road into a haul corridor would have on the families and ranches that have stewarded this land for generations. Second, I remain deeply concerned about groundwater safety and long-term water availability. Our region is experiencing severe drought conditions, and the project proposes substantial water use while providing limited reassurance regarding potential impacts to wells, springs, streams, ponds, livestock, wildlife, and the drinking water relied upon by more than a thousand residents. Before any route is approved, I believe independent, current scientific analysis should clearly demonstrate that these water resources can be protected and safety not impacted. Finally, any environmental review should fully evaluate not only the mine itself but also the long-term impacts of the proposed haul road, including reclamation plans, effects on neighboring landowners, and the cumulative impacts to our community. These issues deserve careful consideration before irreversible decisions are made. My request is simple: if Warren Peak Road provides a practical and less disruptive alternative, it should be selected over a route that requires taking private property and places additional risks on local families and natural resources. Thank you for your time, your service, and your careful consideration of the people who call this area home. I respectfully ask that private property rights, water resources, and the availability of a reasonable alternative remain central to your decision-making process. Sincerely, Sarah Lambert
Crook County Landowner