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Comments: The Bear Lodge Mountains are an irreplaceable part of northeastern Wyoming. They hold deep cultural and spiritual significance for Indigenous Nations, provide vital habitat and recreation opportunities, and serve as the headwaters for streams and groundwater that support ranchers, rural communities, and wildlife throughout the region. Protecting these lands and water resources is essential for the people who depend on them every day.

Rare Element Resources has pursued development of a rare earth mining project in the Bear Lodge area for many years. Although the project was previously paused, it has resumed, with plans to transport mined material approximately 40 miles from the mine site near Sundance to a processing facility in Upton. This proposal also raises important questions about the handling and transportation of mining waste, including materials containing naturally occurring radioactive elements such as thorium and uranium. These issues deserve careful review to ensure the long-term protection of the region's water, land, and surrounding communities.