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Comments: We are in a climate crisis, and our precious water needs to be protected from those who don't care. That conviction, and my concern for how my tax money gets spent, drives this comment opposing the 2026 Newberry Geothermal Consent to Lease.

The Project Summary states that the purpose of this action is to "grant consent to lease approximately 29,477 acres of nominated National Forest System lands for geothermal exploration and development. This decision is an administrative action only." That label troubles me. Calling something an administrative action only implies the agency has already decided this consent cannot constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the environment, yet that significance determination is precisely what NEPA requires the agency to make before it chooses between an EA and an EIS. The agency cannot announce its conclusion and then conduct the analysis that should have produced it. I ask the agency to publish a written threshold determination explaining why consenting to lease that acreage of National Forest System land qualifies as an administrative rather than a major federal action, or to prepare an EIS instead.

The Project Overview compounds the problem. It commits to an Environmental Assessment as the analysis type while the project status remains "Developing Proposal," and it provides no published extraordinary-circumstances evaluation or categorical-exclusion review to justify that selection. The agency has chosen its analytical tier before completing the analysis that should inform that choice. The Project Overview states the scope plainly: "grant consent to lease approximately 29,477 acres of nominated National Forest System lands for geothermal exploration and development." A pre-determined analysis tier for an action of that scale is not a substitute for the required significance determination. The agency must explain how it arrived at that tier before finalizing it.

Clean water matters to me, and I want this land managed responsibly with my tax dollars. I ask the agency to address both points above before this decision moves forward.