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**Jim Ruby, Executive Secretary
Environmental Quality Council**

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Wyoming Environmental Quality Council Pruca
Herschler Building
122 West 25th Street room 1714
Cheyenne, WY 82002

Dear Council members,

This letter is to voice support for the Sand Creek petition for the Very Rare and Uncommon classification, in the Northern Black Hills.

I have been reared in the area under consideration, and own property on Sand Creek. For the last 70 years, I have personally benefited by the unique qualities of the area. I serve on the Emergency Reserve Corps of the South Dakota Animal Industry Board, and am well aware of the concerns of the livestock and agricultural industry.


My chief concerns urging your support of passage of this measure are as follows:

1. The price of gold is at an all time high. This leads to a significant risk that short term gains for a few would cause huge damage and costs for future generations if hard rock mining were allowed.
2. As a life-long fly fishing angler and outdoorsman, I am aware of the harmful recent track record of the hard rock mining industry and its recent damage to water resources in Montana and South Dakota.
3. The area under consideration is a vital re-charge structure for the Madison Formation Aquifer, and has a high potential for harm, not only for the class one stream of Sand Creek, but for the aquifer, and those dependent upon it, through heavy metal contamination.

The points listed above, combined with my understanding of the Very Rare and Uncommon classification, convinced me to voice enthusiastic support for the measure. It appears not to impair the timber industry. We can still manage the forest for fire, and insect mitigation. It does not curtail grazing or multiple use, but would appear to limit the harmful threat of hard rock mining.

This letter is not driven by self-serving reasons, but for the benefit of future generations.

Sincerely yours,



James D. Mortimer DVM