

Heap-Leach Gold Mining and Wildlife

A RESOLUTION

WHEREAS at least 1,018 migratory birds of at least 34 species including prairie falcon, pine siskin, purple finch, red crossbill, mountain bluebird, spotted sandpiper, blackpoll warbler, yellow-rumped warbler, loggerhead shrike, Wilson*s phalarope, Townsend*s solitaire, among others, have died as a result of ingesting cyanide-laden water at heap-leach gold mine sites in the Black Hills of South Dakota; and

WHEREAS at least 85 individuals of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and resident birds including white-tailed and mule deer, pine marten, red-bellied snakes, sharp-tailed and ruffed grouse, have also been found dead on heap-leach gold mine in sites the Black Hills of South Dakota; and

WHEREAS these wildlife deaths could have been prevented by proper prior planning and/or retrofitting to exclude wildlife contact with toxic solutions; and

WHEREAS it has been over three years since Federal and State officials have first warned the heap-leach gold mines that the migratory bird deaths were preventable and as such are violations of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act; and

WHEREAS several heap-leach gold mine companies in other states have been successfully prosecuted under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act for similar takings of protected birds; and

WHEREAS Federal and State agencies have, over the last three years, attempted to work with the heap-leach gold mine companies to help rectify the problem; and

WHEREAS the heap-leach gold mine companies have, to date, failed to correct the problems as outlined by the United States Attorney*s Office resulting in continued threats to wildlife; now

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the South Dakota Chapter of The Wildlife Society, a professional society comprised of over 200 wildlife managers, enforcement officers, biologists, researchers, and educators, on this day of March 2, 1993 at it*s annual meeting in Watertown, South Dakota, urges the Black Hills* heap-leach gold mining companies to take immediate action to prevent further wildlife deaths from exposure to heap-leach toxins and to comply fully with State and Federal Environmental laws and regulations.