

## ARENDS LAW, P.C.

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December 1, 2022

South Dakota Game Fish and Parks Commission  
523 East Capitol Ave.  
Pierre, SD 57501

Re: Spring Creek Golf Course

Dear Chairman Olsen and Commissioners:

I currently have the honor of serving as a county commissioner in Lincoln County and representing the citizens of the 1<sup>st</sup> Commission District which encompasses northeast Lincoln County and includes several Game Fish and Parks managed properties to include Good Earth State Park, Lave Alvin Recreation Area, the Rollings Game Production Area. Additionally, directly adjacent and to the south is the GFP Archery Range and to the east on the border with Iowa is the Big Sioux River.

Directly across the border in my native state of Iowa there are also a number of outdoor recreational opportunities on the Big Sioux including, Gitche Manitou State Preserve and Peterson Prairie Wildlife Area. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention Lake Pahoja Recreation Area where I taught my wife how to fish and where she taught me how to retrieve by throwing my grandfather's fishing pole in the lake on her first cast...I got it back!

On both sides of the Big Sioux River there exists the sacred Blood Run National Historic Landmark and effigy mounds. The Blood Run Site straddles the Big Sioux and was populated for 8,500 years by an estimated 8,000 to 10,000 people until the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Those of us who live and work in this area of Lincoln County are blessed with many outdoor recreational and historical opportunities all within an easy commute of the state's largest metropolitan area.

I also want to share some statistics about Southeast Sioux Falls and northeast Lincoln County in general:

- Lincoln County has approximately 68,000 residents after the last decennial census

- Lincoln County is the ninth fastest growing county in the nation averaged over the last ten years
- Lincoln County is predicted to grow at a rate of about 2,000 residents per year (Overall, the Sioux Falls metro area is predicted to grow at a rate of about 7,000 residents per year) for the foreseeable future

In addition to the incredible population growth, our citizens have also been fortunate to realize significant increased value in their homes. The median home value in Census Block Group 46083.10106.1 is \$393,300.00. This CBG includes most of the Spring Creek area immediately encircling the Spring Creek Golf Course and extending north to Good Earth State Park. The CBG population is estimated to contain 493 people with at least 143 households. Northeast Lincoln County commands some of the highest median home values in our state due in part to the Big Sioux River geography, easy commute times to employment in the Sioux Falls metro area (outside of more dense urban residential development), amenities such as the Spring Creek Golf Course and planning and county zoning regulations that have encouraged homeowners to significantly invest in this area of our state.

During my time on the Lincoln County Commission, I have worked with a whole host of citizens from this area of the county on a number of land use issues, including the future of Spring Creek Golf Course.

I have attended many of the GFP informational meetings regarding the future of Spring Creek Golf Course, attended numerous meetings with homeowners, interested parties, school officials, city officials, county planning staff and even sat down with employees of GFP to understand the department's views. The conversations with each of these parties have been candid and productive.

The number one concern expressed in each of these meetings has been what impact a campground would have on the residents and the county. And conversely, what impact removing Spring Creek golf course would have on the community and stakeholders. The three key unanimous messages I have received are the following:

- Citizens do not want a campground in their backyard
- Citizens want the outdoor recreational opportunity of a golf course to remain
- Citizens are concerned about the negative fiscal impact a campground would have on county finances

Not one single resident has told me they support a campground at Spring Creek. It has been made abundantly clear by my constituents that a campground would have a negative impact on their largest investment – their home and the lifestyle that the community has invested in and relied upon. In fact, 210 homeowners have signed a petition stating their opposition to the golf course being converted to a campground. Additionally, each of the six homeowners' associations in and around the golf course have all formally expressed their opposition to placement of a campground at Spring Creek.

I have also received over two dozen emails from golfers and residents requesting that the golf course remain in place. (Please find these emails attached to this letter). Golfers are concerned about securing tee times in an area of the state that lacks golf courses in comparison to the population. Further, over 25,000 rounds of golf are played at Spring Creek every year. This is a tremendously powerful statistic which speaks to the outdoor recreational value of this golf course. Golfing is a lifetime sport played by those of all ages that is relatively low cost, easily accessible and a healthy outdoor activity. Golf is also offered as a sport at the Harrisburg high school which uses the Spring Creek Golf Course as their home course and hosts visiting schools from across the area throughout the school year.


There are also significant concerns about the fiscal impact a campground would have on Lincoln County. County revenue is based on property taxes and counties do not have sales tax revenue to rely upon. Furthermore, counties do not earn revenue from state operated campgrounds. Property values are immensely important to our county budget. There is a very real concern that home values would be diminished, or at least stunted, by a campground that was never intended to be situated next to these homes in this type of planned development.

Furthermore, increased motor vehicle and camper traffic would almost certainly require road improvements above and beyond that which is already planned for in this residential community. Minimum improvements would include expanding the intersection at 271<sup>st</sup> St. and 480<sup>th</sup> Ave., with turning lanes, installing stop lights and other intersection controls which the county cannot afford and is not programmed into any future county budget. Lincoln county currently does not have the budget to pay for other critical and necessary road maintenance projects all across the county on existing roads, so how and why would taxpayers want additional fiscal constraints placed on them through placement of a campground that the community does not support and for which the county receives no revenue?

I want to genuinely thank each of you for paying close attention to this issue as the plans for the future of the golf course will have a very real and lasting impact on not only the adjacent homeowners, but also the Harrisburg high school sports program, other citizens who use the golf course, and county property taxpayers.

Lastly, when meeting with GFP staff members I pledged to work with GFP to find other more suitable outdoor recreational opportunities for our citizens in lieu of a campground. Starting in early 2023, Lincoln County will be revamping its comprehensive zoning plan. I want to reiterate my pledge to GFP that the county would want to include recreational opportunities in our comprehensive zoning plan. By taking a proactive approach and including stakeholders in future growth planning, we can avoid circumstances like we find ourselves in now.

With Confidence,



Joel A. Arends

Lincoln County Commissioner, District 1

**Exhibits 1-24**

**From:** Beau Ireland beuireland310@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Keep Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** May 10, 2022 at 3:03 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Hello,

My name is Beau Ireland and I am messaging to show my support in keeping spring creek golf course! It is my favorite course in the Sioux Falls area and is always busy with golfers who love to play on a beautiful yet challenging course. It would be a huge loss to destroy this course and would also bring about a lot of angry feeling from many people in this community (including myself). I hope that you listen to these words and all of the other people who feel the same way as me! Thank you for your time and consideration.

-Beau Ireland

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**From:** Butch Hanssen butchhsprint@midco.net  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** May 11, 2022 at 8:58 AM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov  
**Cc:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Good morning.

I would like to comment on the future closing of the Spring Creek Golf Course.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to get T times to play golf. I feel this is because more players are taking up the game as well as the community growth which is about the size of Watertown every other year.

I am asking that we consider to keep Spring Creek open to help keep up with the growth of the sport.

Thank you for allowing me to voice my opinion.

Butch Hanssen

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Richard E Gloe gloerich@centurylink.net  
**Subject:** Golf  
**Date:** May 13, 2022 at 10:16 AM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Sent from my iPhone please do not close Spring Creek golf course. I think the depaman for camping will go down with the high gas prices. This is a beat golf course and is needed in this area. Thank you Richard Gloe

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**From:** kylee.s.tirrel@nm.com   
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** May 17, 2022 at 4:28 PM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov, jarends@lincolncountysd.org



Good Afternoon Mr. Aylward and Mr. Arends:

This email is being sent to voice my opposition to the closure of Spring Creek Golf Course in Harrisburg. As a resident of Lincoln county and the Harrisburg School District, it would greatly sadden us to see this course close! There are not enough golf courses in Sioux Falls the way it is and, in my opinion, not ANY course like Spring Creek. We love the nature aspect the course brings to our community. It is by far our favorite course in Sioux Falls limits. To see the course filled with out-of-state campers would definitely deter us from every going to the area again. Please consider this email in your decisions. Thank you for listening!

Kylee Tirrel, Lincoln County Resident and Avid Golfer

*(please note my new email address of kylee.s.tirrel@nm.com)*

**Kylee Tirrel** | Associate Financial Representative

2307 W 57<sup>th</sup> Street Suite 200 Sioux Falls, SD 57108  
P: 605-978-9994 | F: 605-339-1496 | C: 605-680-2342



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**From:** Mike Pap mpap@live2bhealthy.com  
**Subject:** spring creek closing  
**Date:** May 25, 2022 at 1:56 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

MP

Commissioner Arends. I thank you for your time and effort with the work you do for Lincoln County. My email is asking you and others to reconsider Spring Creek golf course being turned into a state park.

Spring Creek I believe was owned privately and provided a great location for area golfers to play a public golf course. It seems a shame that all the work that the people who owned and built the golf course would be turned into a park. If there is any way that decision can be changed, it would make a lot of golfing people happy.

Thank you for your consideration to this request.



**Mike Pap**  
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**From:** Mike Kuiper mikuiper@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** May 29, 2022 at 4:15 PM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov, jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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MK

Hello,

Thank you for your time. I am a Harrisburg resident and an avid golfer. I host a traveling Men's golf league of 16 guys. We play Bakker Crossing and Willow Run at the beginning and end of the seasons both before their league starts and after it ends. The rest of the summer we rotate between Spring Creek, Hartford, and then a spattering of other Great Life courses such as Beresford, Dell Rapids, and so on. That means we play Spring Creek at least every three weeks if not more. My league members hail from Harrisburg, Dell Rapids, Crooks, and the rest all in Sioux Falls with five of the players living in the Harrisburg School District. When we play at Spring Creek our post round money stays in Lincoln County (generally Fresh Horses).

The Sioux Falls Market needs more golf courses and I am writing you to ask you to help our efforts to keep Spring Creek a golf course and not have it become a campground. Without Spring Creek the Great Life and city courses are just going to get busier and they are already over crowded. I will also add that as a course Spring Creek is a charming track with several unique holes and overall has a great design. Finally, I play in a handful of fantastic golf tournaments each year at Spring Creek and that money also stays in Lincoln County. So please do all you can to help save Spring Creek Golf Course. I know 16 golfers that would appreciate it. Thank you!

Mike Kuiper  
15 Year Harrisburg Resident  
(605) 321-2818 call me if you would like

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**From:** Jacob Kinder jacob.kinder93@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** June 2, 2022 at 3:43 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Good Afternoon Joel,

I'm emailing you in regards to Spring Creek Golf Course. I've got some questions and concerns about the future of the golf course.

I've been golfing this course my whole life and consider it one of the best courses in the area. I think it would be a big mistake to turn this course into a campground or a wildlife preserve. Golf has been getting very popular around the country and eliminating a premier golf course in the area will be a big mistake. It is already hard enough to get on a course in the area without booking a tee time 5 days in advance and if Spring Creek closes, it'll make getting out and enjoying golf even more difficult.

With that being said, how much traction is there with the state's current plan? Also, are there any physical or online petitions I can sign? I'd be willing to sign something or show up to meetings to express my displeasure.

I appreciate what you are doing and hope Spring Creek is able to stay open.

Best Regards,

Jacob Kinder

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**From:** Michael Brown mgbrown54@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek GC  
**Date:** June 3, 2022 at 8:07 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

MB

Hello Joel,

I am writing to you after obtaining an information card near #11 green at Spring Creek GC on Wednesday. I am writing to address the possible loss of Spring Creek GC to SDGFP parks division for the expansion of Good Earth SP.

I am not a home owner there, but I do play that golf course on a yearly basis. I can't imagine how the home owners feel knowing that there could be people camping near their homes. They have to be considering a loss of privacy with campers nearby.

I am hoping that enough people voice their opinion on keeping this a golf course. If it does go to the state, at least keep 9-holes. There is already a clubhouse in place and a great course superintendent. This would allow it to still make money. Please consider voting against this course being turned into a nature area.

Michael G Brown  
Sioux Falls

**Michael G Brown**

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**From:** lisabeacom61@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** June 7, 2022 at 9:56 AM  
**To:** Aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov, jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Please save the Springcreek Golf Course as a golf course for the residents of the Sioux Fall area. Population is growing and golf courses are all busy. Taking one out of the use would adversely affect the quality of living that our community has to offer. We need this golf course.

Thank you.

**Lisa Beacom**

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**From:** magera@sio.midco.net  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course closing  
**Date:** June 9, 2022 at 9:36 AM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Dear Mr. Arends:

My email is regarding the potential closing of Spring Creek Golf Course to turn the property into a campground. As a citizen of Sioux Falls and regular golfer at Spring Creek Golf Course, I am requesting strong opposition to this move and consideration to keeping the golf course as is. I would encourage the property owner to work with the local golf course management to extend the life of the course or sell the property to an owner that will keep the golf course.

Sioux Falls and the greater metro area, does not have enough golf courses for the need as reflected in wait lists for membership to the country clubs and lack of tee times available when needed. I have been a Great Life member for 7 years and only play their courses once or twice due to lack of availability. Spring Creek has been the only course that I can play on a regular basis and will be needed more as the metro area expands.

Please use this email to further the communication and desire of the people directly impacted by your decision.

Respectfully,

Nicholas J Magera

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**From:** Deborah Harr harrvest@icloud.com  
**Subject:** Spring creek golf course  
**Date:** June 10, 2022 at 6:33 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org



We are writing you to voice our strong opposition to SD game, fish & parks closing spring creek golf course. We really enjoy playing this course every week and feel it would be a very bad decision to close it and turn it into campgrounds. it is very difficult to get a tee time anywhere in Sioux Falls and spring creek is a beautiful course with great people.

It is our hope you will listen to the voice of the people and stop this from happening

Thank you,

Rich & Deb Harr

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** rgroon1@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** June 17, 2022 at 8:43 AM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org



Dear Mr. Arends,

My name is Rosalie Groon & I'm a resident of Sioux Falls (District 12) who has enjoyed golfing the beautiful Spring Creek Golf Course.

Please consider leaving the golf course as is for now & future generations. I believe it has so many beautiful & challenging features that other golf courses in the area don't have. I believe it's even more picturesque than Willow Run and I enjoy playing them both.

Thank you for your consideration. May God bless you, your work & your family.

Sincerely,

Rosalie Groon

[\(605\) 310-7618](tel:6053107618)

Sent from my iPhone

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Matthew Johnson matthewj026@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Spring creek golf course  
**Date:** June 26, 2022 at 7:33 PM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov, jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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MJ

Hello,

I'm writing this email to inform you of my opposition of the closing of Spring Creek Golf course in Harrisburg, SD. I frequent this course often and it is by far one of the nice courses in the area. It is well taken care of and the staff is great! Closing this course will make it even tougher to find tee times in the area. Please do not close Spring creek golf course!

Sincerely,

Matt Johnson

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Brian Prisbe bprisbe@scheelsiceplex.com  
**Subject:** Stop the closing of Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** July 5, 2022 at 2:38 PM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov, jarends@lincolncountysd.org



Hello Aaron and Joel

The talk around the local golf community is whether Spring Creek Golf Course will eventually be a State Park or campground. I haven't talked to one person who thinks that turning a beautiful parkland golf course into State Park (with a State Park less than a mile away) is a good idea.

As a golfer, I selfishly want Spring Creek to remain a golf course. Spring Creek is always in great condition with some of the best greens in the state. The layout is unique, fun and challenging for all skill levels.

The game of golf took off during covid. Golf courses are busier than ever. Being a Great Life member is great but securing a tee time isn't easy. My golf group often plays Spring Creek as our go to when we can't get a GL tee time. They are always accommodating and as mentioned above, the course is always fun to play!

If the homeowners on Spring Creek Golf Course and the thousands of golfers that tee it up annually at Spring Creek Golf Course want the golf course to remain, I would hope that our elected officials help keep it that way.

Thank you for your time and energy.

**Brian Prisbe**

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**From:** Bob Swanhorst btswan@sio.midco.net  
**Subject:** Spring Creek  
**Date:** July 19, 2022 at 8:38 AM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Dear Commissioner Joel Arends,

I am writing to ask for your consideration to maintain the current site of the Spring Creek 18 hole Golf Course. I will make two points: the tremendous influx of people that will be moving into the area, and the need for the Harrisburg Public School to have a home course for their practices and match play. It seems logical to me that it would present a greater need for the public than a camping site. To replace an 18 hole course of this nature will require a tremendous investment of not only money but also time.

Respectively,

Bob and Trish Swanhorst

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**From:** Gary Strasburg garystrasburg@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** July 25, 2022 at 6:52 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org



Commissioner Arends,

I am writing to you to show our support for the Spring Creek Golf Course. My wife and I feel it would be a great loss to the community if the course was made into a camp grounds. Many golfers enjoy getting out of the city to enjoy a bit of country!

We moved out by Lake Alvin 8 years ago from central South Dakota. We golf often and very rarely is the golf course not busy! Please consider keeping the property a golf course and not a camp ground. Thank you for considering this possibility!

Sincerely,

Gary and Sue Strasburg

Sent from my iPad

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**From:** Judy Brenner judymbrenner@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** July 27, 2022 at 10:58 AM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org



I am a golfer at the above golf course and would just like to express my concerns with turning it into a campground! This is a beautiful and well manicured golf course with a lot of character! Why would anyone want to turn it into a campground! There are a lot of other areas that they could have a campground at! Please help the poor homeowners and golfers keep that from happening!

Thanks!

Judy Brenner

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)

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**From:** Shirley Buseman sabuseman@gmail.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** July 27, 2022 at 12:18 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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I am concerned about your closing the golf course. It has such character and alot of us golf their. The staff is wonderful  
And the grounds are so well maintained  
Why would you change into a campground  
And do not believe it is fair to the homeowners around the golf course

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**From:** Craig Schoen craig@liftproequipment.com  
**Subject:** Save Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** August 1, 2022 at 10:45 AM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org



Please consider keeping Spring Creek Golf Course it would be a shame to turn it into a camp ground and with Sioux Falls growing we need this course. Thank you for your time.



**Craig Schoen**  
*President*

Lift Pro Equipment Co., Inc.  
3621 North Potsdam Ave Sioux Falls, SD 57104  
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[website](#) | [vCard](#) | [map](#) | [email](#)



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**From:** bob reierson rye853@hotmail.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** August 10, 2022 at 3:04 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org



Spring Creek Golf Course is going to be taking over by the GF&P of SD. They want to turn it into a Campground. GF&P have done a fables job trying to keep up camp grounds for campers. However, as you know Sioux Falls is growing fast and Golf has become extremely popular. It is very hard to get tee times in Sioux Falls. The 3 public courses are always busy. Trying to walk on and play is almost impossible and you almost have to plan your golf outing 5-7 days ahead of time to play when you want to.. Spring Creek Course is always in Great Shape and generally you can call and get on the same day, but not all the time. Unless you belong to either of the 2 Country Clubs it will really be hard to golf in Sioux Falls in the next couple of years. So please help keep Spring Creek Golf open. Thank you.

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**From:** Benji benji@sbmboats.com  
**Subject:** Spring creek golf course  
**Date:** August 20, 2022 at 1:29 PM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov  
**Cc:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Hi, please don't let them close this golf course. Very nice course that should not be a campground.

Thanks,  
Visiting From Chamberlain, SD  
Benjamin Hammell

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**From:** Doug Ishmael dishmael@gagebrothers.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** August 24, 2022 at 7:04 PM  
**To:** jarends@lincolncountysd.org, aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov

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I golf Spring Creek quite a few times a year and really believe it would be a mistake to close this beautiful golf course. In my opinion it is one of the best courses in the region.  
So please let's fight to keep it open.  
Thank you

Sent from my iPhone

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**From:** Ray Hoverson rhoverapwu@yahoo.com  
**Subject:** Spring Creek golf course  
**Date:** August 27, 2022 at 5:26 PM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov, jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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I am retired and a purple heart veteran and asking to do what you can to keep spring creek open as long as you can. I have been a member since it opening and may have ten more years of golf left in me. With the closing it will make it more difficult to get tee times in the area and may be forced to join great life to get available tee times and pay for cart as I have my own at spring creek.

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**From:** peltiers@sio.midco.net  
**Subject:** Spring Creek Golf Course  
**Date:** August 31, 2022 at 5:31 PM  
**To:** aaron.aylward@sdlegislature.gov, jarends@lincolncountysd.org

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Hello Gentlemen –

I am writing to you voice my opposition to the closing of Spring Creek Golf Course to turn it into a campground.

I enjoy golfing at Spring Creek and would hate to lose this beautiful course. I don't understand why anyone would ever want to camp there, there is nothing there. Because of this, there is a possibility that it could become a campground that people would live in long term. I live near the course and am completely not thrilled in having a campground within a mile of my house.

Please save our golf course!

Sincerely,  
Michal Peltier  
47949 Oak Ridge Place  
Harrisburg, SD 57032

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