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(S.D.)-State Wants More Authority In Uranium Mine Regulation

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 01/22/2013 07:58 AM

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) - South Dakota environmental officials are asking the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission for more authority in regulating a proposed Powertech USA uranium mine near Edgemont.

The 2011 Legislature suspended the state's power to directly regulate in-situ uranium mines, which involve pumping chemicals into groundwater to free uranium from the surrounding ore. Powertech USA officials had argued that state permits for the mining method were an unnecessary duplication of federal regulations.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources spokesman Eric Holm says the state agency is working with the NRC not to get permitting authority back but to have a bigger role in setting reclamation bonds and doing inspections.

State lawmakers also are considering legislation to restore the state permitting authority over in-situ uranium mining.

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