



Committee kills in situ measure

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HB 1193 defeated by Ag & Natural Resources 10-2

PIERRE – The South Dakota House Agriculture and Natural Resources committee last Thursday voted 10-2 to delay action on House Bill 1193 until the 41st legislative day, essentially killing the legislation.

The bill was proposed as a measure to require all in situ mining companies to show that waste water from their proposed mining sites would not reduce the quality of groundwater in the area. The defeated measure would also have required that the mining companies restore groundwater quality levels to baseline water quality levels.

The defeated measure was seen as a victory by Powertech, Inc., the company pursuing state and federal licensing to extract uranium north of Edgemont, while those who appeared at the committee hearing to support the bill viewed it as a missed opportunity.

In a press release sent out by Powertech following the vote, Powertech's Dewey-Burdock Project Manager Mark Hollenbeck said, "The bill was clearly an attempt to delay or completely stop the project. The bill sponsors ignored the experience and expertise of the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) which recently issued the Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (FSEIS) for the project."

"This bill would have protected us from the potentially harmful activities of foreign corporations," said Dr. Liliias Jarding of Rapid City, in a statement from Dakota Rural Action, which opposes the proposed mining project.

"South Dakota needs protection from its state government," Dr. Jarding stated. "The state has missed a chance here."

Hollenbeck said it was important to note that the key points of HB 1193 were addressed in the FSEIS and rejected by NRC, and that the bill offered no additional protection to the public health or environment.