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Powertech rule process expected next week

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The details of how a public process will unfold ultimately determining how and if Powertech USA can develop its Centennial Project uranium mine northeast of Fort Collins are expected to be announced by the state next week.

The Colorado Mined Land Reclamation Board decided Wednesday to move ahead with a formal rulemaking process that will implement a 2008 law, House Bill 1161, which regulates in situ, or "in place," leach uranium mines in the state.

The law requires companies operating in situ leach mines to prevent long-term groundwater contamination after mining is complete by returning the groundwater to the same quality it was before mining began.

Powertech, which plans to build its in situ uranium mine between Wellington and Nunn, has been an active player in the creation of the proposed rules, the final version of which will soon be posted on the board's Web site.

Sometime in the "next several days," the state Mined Land Reclamation Office will post a timeline for the rulemaking process and the final proposed rule, office director David Berry said Thursday.

The formal rulemaking process, he said, is expected to begin in April and last for "several months."

The rulemaking is separate from any federal permitting process Powertech must go through to begin mining. The company needs a permit from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency that would regulate how the Centennial Project can impact underlying groundwater.

Additional Facts

On the Internet

For information, go to <http://mining.state.co.us/Rulemaking.htm>.
