

## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION SUSPENDS SAFETY REVIEW OF PROPOSED URANIUM MINE; CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER RESIGNS**

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In a May 6 letter, the Nuclear Regulatory Commission, in a slap to Powertech Uranium, suspended the safety review of the company's application to mine uranium in the southern Black Hills. Then on May 9, in a short announcement, the company said that its Chief Operating Officer had resigned from that position.

The letter details "significant deficiencies" in Powertech's application and says that a series of "critical issues lack sufficient detailed information for the staff to make a finding related to the protection of public health and safety." Those issues include the potential for mining fluids to contaminate surface water through unplugged exploration holes, problems with an old underground mine and with geologic "straws" called breccia pipes, and the possibility that mining fluids may not be contained underground in the mining area.

"These are some of the major concerns that the Clean Water Alliance has been raising about this project all along," said Lilias Jarding, an environmental policy specialist with the Alliance. "The geology of this site is simply not suited for in situ leach mining, and if the project went through, it would cause both underground and surface water contamination. We are glad that the NRC has suspended the safety review."

The NRC said that, whenever it might re-start its safety review, the project's timeline is uncertain. According to Bruce Ellison, an attorney for the Clean Water Alliance, "This significantly slows Powertech's effort to mine in the Black Hills. We hope that this will signal

potential investors that there are major problems with this proposed project and that Powertech will give up on this ill-advised project.”

A copy of the NRC’s letter is attached. The Clean Water Alliance is a citizen’s organization dedicated to public education on uranium issues in the Black Hills. For more information see [www.bhcleanwateralliance.org](http://www.bhcleanwateralliance.org).