

City council should oppose uranium mine

Health, environmental, economic impacts remain a concern

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Tonight, City Council will discuss a resolution to express its opposition to a proposed uranium mining operation near Nunn.

A message strongly opposing the mine to governing bodies that could approve the PowerTech Company's Centennial Project proposal is appropriate.

In the past, the Coloradoan editorial board has opposed resolutions concerning the Iraq war and immigration because of the city's limited influence on such issues. Opposition on these issues is better focused on federal lawmakers.

But this resolution is different because of the city's proximity to the proposed mine, which is about 11 miles from the northern edge of Fort Collins. Decisions made about this project will affect residents far beyond the proposed mine site.

PowerTech has yet to iron out some of its plans and likely won't seek permits until mid-2008. However, it has shared that the project is expected to include in-situ mining via an aquifer and could include open-pit mining. Centennial could become the first in-situ uranium mining project in Colorado. Because of such unknowns, City Council is correct to be wary of the project's health, environmental and economic impacts on the city and its residents.

This resolution also comes at a time when three Fort Collins state lawmakers are correctly seeking to tighten regulations and oversight over uranium mining in Colorado.

While the city of Fort Collins will not be the governing body on this issue, its opinions and concerns should carry weight with its neighbors to the east, including Weld County, as well as state and federal regulators. City Council is encouraged to support the resolution.