



PRESS RELEASE

**NRC DOCUMENT ON PROPOSED URANIUM MINE IS DEFICIENT:
STATE PROTECTION NEEDED**

For Immediate Release:
January 30, 2014

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The “Final” Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) issued by the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the proposed Dewey-Burdock uranium mine is substantially deficient. The mine, proposed by Chinese/Canadian company Powertech Uranium, would use 9,000 gallons per minute of groundwater from Black Hills aquifers, contaminate area water, and open the door for eight other uranium companies that have an interest in the Black Hills.

“We will continue to consider all avenues for dealing with this deficient document and with proposals to mine uranium at the expense of our water,” said Lilias Jarding of the Clean Water Alliance. “This document is far from the final word on the proposed project. Even if everything goes the way of the uranium company, this project is years from starting. We must do everything we can to protect our water.”

The NRC has put the cart before the horse – they have published a “Final” SEIS - and chosen a final alternative for project design - before they have completed the cultural resources analysis. This analysis is required by law to be completed before this document was issued. The

SEIS notes that the analysis is “ongoing.” This relegates the cultural studies to afterthoughts, and necessarily limits NRC’s ability to protect these important resources.

The SEIS also fails to adequately analyze the baseline conditions at the site, including the impact of thousands of improperly abandoned/capped exploration drill holes in the area. The SEIS notes the holes in passing, but on first review, does not appear to provide a clear strategy for protecting our water resources beyond a promise from the mining company to deal with any problems that arise. Uranium companies have a long history of inadequate clean-up at former mine sites, including over 100 former uranium mines in the Black Hills.

The SEIS also lacks independent research on the probable impacts of the potential uranium mining project. The NRC uses Powertech – the company that wants to mine -- as the source of much of its information on the impacts of a mine. The other major source of information is the NRC’s Generic Environmental Impact Statement, which is a general document that is not specific to the many challenges present at the Dewey-Burdock site. “As this document shows, we cannot trust a distant federal bureaucracy to protect our water,” Jarding continues. “We must insure that state laws provide protection against this dangerous industry.”

There will be hearings on the concerns raised by area residents and the Oglala Sioux Tribe before a branch of the NRC at some future date, which has not yet been set. After any federal decisions are made by the NRC and the Environmental Protection Agency – and assuming they were favorable to uranium mining – the stalled state permit hearings would be restarted.

“We will protect our water. Citizens – doctors, city officials, business people, tribal leaders, ranchers, college professors, and others – oppose uranium mining in the Black Hills for very good reasons,” Jarding continues. “Water is life.”

The Clean Water Alliance is a diverse collection of citizens concerned about the health, environmental, and economic impacts that proposed radioactive mining projects would have on our communities, people, and natural resources. For more information on the Clean Water Alliance, see www.bhcleanwateralliance.org.