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(S.D.)-Officials Feel Powertech Decisions Should Be Left To Experts

By: Chris Fankhauser Posted at: 03/18/2013 09:29 AM

(Edgemont)-The proposed Powertech uranium mine, which would be located near Edgemont, was discussed at two meetings in Fall River County recently. Both the Edgemont City Council and Fall River County Commissioners included discussions regarding the mine on their agendas.

The Edgemont council met on March 5, and a resolution in support of Powertech uranium mining applications received unanimous approval. According to the Edgemont Herald Tribune, Mayor Jim Turner said that any company that meets the requirements set forth by law should be granted the permits applied for.

At the Fall River County Commissioner meeting on March 7, the Board voted to withdraw their Intervener Status on the Powertech permits. The Herald Tribune quoted Commissioner Joe Falkenburger as saying, "I am making the motion that we withdraw as an intervener. After considerable discussion, there is so much conflicting information that I believe it is best left to the experts."

Commissioner Joe Allen was the sole opposition on the vote, saying that the risk to aquifers is too great. He said Powertech, "wants to mine uranium right on top of the water. There are theories both ways, but I believe that the chance of interaction between the aquifers is too great." The other Commissioners agreed they don't have the expertise to make such a judgment.

Powertech President and CEO Richard Clement spoke to the Board, noting he has 40 years experience in uranium mining, and none of the in situ mines he has been involved with has shown contamination, and said this is a great opportunity for the county. There were many on hand who displayed support as well as opposition of the project.

Several officials in Fall River County visited the uranium mine near Crawford in the fall to get a better understanding of what would happen should the Powertech mine be constructed near Edgemont, and many came away feeling very positive about the mining process. For those in attendance at the meeting who expressed their concerns, Clement responded that the in situ method is very environmentally friendly.

(Information courtesy of the Edgemont Herald Tribune)