

## Uranium Mine Foes Want Hearing Changed

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Opponents of a proposed uranium mine in southwestern South Dakota have asked Gov. Dennis Daugaard to change the proposed date of a state hearing on the project.

Dakota Rural Action members and other project opponents said a state board's hearing on a mine permit for Powertech Uranium Corp. should be delayed until after another panel holds a hearing on water permits for the project.

Project opponents said a member of the state Board of Minerals and Environment has proposed that the hearing on the uranium mine permit be held Sept. 23-27 in Pierre. They said that's too close to the state Water Management Board's hearing on the water permits, scheduled to start Oct. 7, which means it would be difficult to prepare adequately for both hearings.

The mining permit hearing also should be held in Rapid City, rather than Pierre, because it's closer to where people interested in the project live, project opponents said.

Tony Venhuizen, the governor's communications director, said Wednesday that state officials cannot comment on the issue because the Board of Minerals and Environment has not formally set a date for the hearing on the mining permit.

Powertech's project near Edgemont would use a method known as in-situ recovery, which would pump groundwater fortified with oxygen and carbon into the underground ore deposits to dissolve the uranium. The water would be pumped back to the surface, where the uranium would be extracted.

Opponents argue the mine could damage underground water supplies, but Powertech officials contend it would not pollute the water.

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