



Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary
Managed by The Institute of Range and the American Mustang

Dayton O. Hyde
President

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Cindy Bladey, Chief, Rules, Announcements and Directives Branch
Division of Administrative Services
Office of Administration, Mailstop TWB-05-B01M
U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Washington, D.C. 20555-0001

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RULES AND DIRECTIVES
BRANCH
USNRC

Docket NRC-2012-0277, the proposed Dewey-Burdock project, comments on the SEIS

Dear Ms. Bladey,

Twenty five years ago I founded the Institute of Range and American Mustang (IRAM) a 501 c 3 non-profit corporation. IRAM's Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary is home to more than 600 wild horses on 13,000 acres of private range in South Dakota.

On this location one can find; 60 million year old remains from the Pleistocene era of plants and animals, Ancient Petroglyphs that date back hundreds of years, Native American Ceremonial Sites, Historic Pioneer homesteads, and hundreds of native species of plants and animals. IRAM is supported by the thousands of visitors that come to South Dakota each year to see the natural history of the local area. Besides a Wild Horse Sanctuary the historic significance of this region brings people and scientists from all over the world.

For hundreds of years, the Cheyenne River that runs through the Sanctuary was the first source of water for the wildlife that lived on the grassy prairies. Ancient man and the dinosaurs of the past traveled this waterway. Native Americans hunted the buffalo and then held their sacred ceremonies on this land.

Along with IRAM's Board of Directors, I am greatly concerned over the proposed Powertech Dewey-Burdock project that is located within twenty miles of the Sanctuary. We feel that the SEIS was issued before all the relevant information was available.

The Cultural and Historic impact that will result from this proposed project have not been considered properly. The relevant information is still not available. The SEIS should not have been issued until a thorough study of the cultural and historical sites on the proposed project area was completed.

The SEIS "dilutes" impacts by saying that the impacts are "small" because only part of the project area is involved. The impacts are large to the affected areas, and that is what should be considered. The Cheyenne River and its water shed are within a few miles from the proposed mining area. Our house wells and livestock wells all share the same aquifer that is to be used to inject the waste water from the project.

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The SEIS only includes the impacts of a 100-year flood, and some facilities are allowed within the 100-year flood boundaries. A 500-year flood should be considered. No facilities should be allowed within the 100-year flood boundaries. Vigorous, overland and stream flooding is common in the Black Hills.

The SEIS says that impacts are "small" in a number of instances because Powertech Uranium has said it will do certain things if problems develop. The SEIS should not consider only the "best case" impacts, but should consider impacts if the problems found at other ISL projects develop. The public and the environment should be protected from worst case impacts.

Besides over 600 wild horses, IRAM also has a herd of Red Angus Cattle and over 100 domestic horses, chickens, turkeys, and peacocks. We are greatly concerned over the potential exposure to radiation for all of these animals.

The SEIS lists a number of things that Powertech should do before it starts its operation, such as air dispersion modeling, livestock radiation sampling, pump testing, creating well field operational plans, and setting up emergency procedures for truck accidents. These activities should be completed before a SEIS is issued, so that the public can have full information on which to base its comments, and so that the NRC can have full information on which to base its ratings of various impacts.

Due to the high desert environment, this area is very susceptible to lightning strikes and wild fires. This summer alone there were months of fires in the local area of the proposed mining. The environmental impacts of wildfires, which are common in the immediate area of the proposed project, should be considered, including potential impacts if a fire strikes mining, pipelines, overhead power lines, and processing buildings.

The SEIS does not acknowledge environmental justice, cultural, and historical concerns that include Lakota treaty rights to the proposed project area and the fact that a number of Native American tribes consider the Black Hills to be sacred.

Bald eagles, sage-grouse, whooping cranes, and black-footed ferrets are all threatened or endangered wildlife species that could be negatively impacted by the proposed project. Wildlife is simply expected to disperse and go elsewhere. This creates undue hardship on sensitive species.

All ponds, including radium settling ponds, and areas where wastewater is applied to the land are threats to wildlife, particularly birds.

Public hearings should be held after full information is available on the proposed project. Hearings held elsewhere during the writing of the NRC's Generic Environmental Impact Statement are not adequate to this specific project.

Because the state no longer has regulatory authority over ISL mining, the federal government's plans for monitoring the project should be clearly explained in detail, so that the public can determine whether monitoring will be adequate.

All data provided by Powertech Uranium should be independently verified. It is not in the public interest to have the proposed project's benefits and problems judged based almost entirely on data provided by the company seeking a permit.

The applicant has never mined uranium. They do not have anything close to the resources necessary to create a mine. The inexperience of the company and its lack of funding are important variables in the company's ability to manage the environmental aspects of the proposed project and should be discussed in the SEIS.

The SEIS indicates that 30% of the water treated through the reverse osmosis process will become waste. The impacts of the removal of this water from local aquifers should be discussed much more clearly.

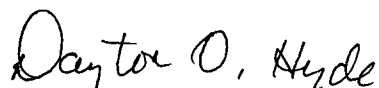
All of the above facts about the Dewey Burdock project and the SEIS clearly affect the Institute of Range and American Mustang Programs and Black Hills Wild Horse Sanctuary. The Uranium Mining would endanger the wildlife, the mustangs, the water supplies, the land and all the people that are on the land.

This matter of allowing Uranium Mining and using the water from an already delicate ecosystem must be considered and analyzed from all dangers and risks. Science tells us what a situation is but it is up to the humans involved to make the decisions. Once this area is exposed the Uranium Mining there is no turning back the clock to undo the mistakes.

Our policy at IRAM is that man is the caregiver of the Earth and all of its beings and no one has the right to contaminate or pollute the environment. There are no second chances at life if the water, land, wildlife, people and history of an area are destroyed by Corporate Greed.

There is something very great at stake here in the Black Hills of South Dakota and we ask you please to consider the dangers and consequences of the Dewey-Burdock project of what it can and might do to the very water we drink and the land we live on. Sometimes in life the risk is just not worth taking. Please help us keep our land and water safe.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dayton O. Hyde".

Dayton O. Hyde
IRAM President