Message

From: U.S. EPA [no-replysubscriptions@epa.gov]
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Subject: EPA issues permits for Dewey-Burdock uranium recovery project near Edgemont, South Dakota

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EPA issues permits for Dewey-Burdock uranium recovery project near Edgemont, South Dakota

Permits to Powertech USA ensure groundwater protection, reflect multi-year review and comment process

Edgemont, South Dakota (November 24, 2020)--The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) today announced it has issued final Underground Injection Control (UIC) permits and a Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) aquifer exemption to Powertech (USA) Inc. (Powertech) for the Dewey-Burdock uranium in-situ recovery (ISR) site near Edgemont, South Dakota.

EPA is issuing these permits based on Powertech's applications, the agency's Safe Drinking Water Act authorities and regulations, and a public comment process that began in 2017. The permits have been revised based on a thorough review of all technical and regulatory information associated with the project and public comments, and include specific requirements to protect groundwater resources as current and future sources of drinking water under the Safe Drinking Water Act in the proposed project area, located in southwestern Custer County and northwestern Fall River County, on the Wyoming/South Dakota border.

"These permits reflect many years of evaluation and public comment on Powertech's applications to recover uranium from ore-bearing formations at the Dewey-Burdock project location," **said EPA Regional Administrator Gregory Sopkin.** "EPA's final actions are based on a thorough consideration of scientific, technical and regulatory aspects of the permits, and a review of all comments received, including those received during tribal consultation. This process has contributed to the development of requirements that will protect the region's groundwater while enabling the safe recovery of valuable uranium resources."

Today's action includes two final permits issued to Powertech for injection activities related to uranium recovery. One is a UIC Class III Area Permit for injection wells for the ISR of uranium; the second is a UIC Class V Area Permit for deep injection wells that will be used to dispose of ISR process waste fluids into the Minnelusa Formation after being treated to meet radioactive waste and hazardous waste standards. EPA is also finalizing an aquifer exemption approval in connection with the Class III Area Permit to allow for resource recovery in the uranium-bearing portions of the Inyan Kara Group of aquifers.

EPA included protective measures in both permits which will authorize the safe operation of multiple injection wells within the project area. These include requirements for the treatment of Class V injection fluids to ensure injected fluids are not radioactive or hazardous waste, and extensive monitoring of the areas surrounding the Class III injection wellfields before, during, and after ISR operations to ensure all regulatory standards are met. Additional permit requirements include securing financial assurances and testing related to the proper operation, management and closure of injection wells, as well as extensive recordkeeping and reporting. These requirements will protect groundwater resources at the project site, including the Madison Formation, a prolific aquifer and a source for public drinking water systems.

EPA requested public comments on these permit actions beginning in March 2017. After reviewing all comments and modifying the proposed actions, EPA requested additional public input in 2019. EPA reviewed and considered all comments received during both the 2017 and 2019 public comment periods, including those submitted at several public hearings held in communities in South Dakota and Nebraska, before finalizing the permit requirements in today's decisions. EPA has also prepared written responses to all comments received related to the permits.

For more information, visit: https://www.epa.gov/uic/uic-epa-region-8

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