

**From:** [Lancaster, Thomas](#)  
**To:** [Richard Blubaugh \(rblubaugh@powertechuranium.com\)](mailto:rblubaugh@powertechuranium.com)  
**Cc:** [Burrows, Ronald](#); [Conley, Maureen](#); [McIntyre, David](#)  
**Subject:** FW: Informing Public of Process  
**Date:** Thursday, April 17, 2014 9:13:00 AM  
**Attachments:** [image001.png](#)  
[image002.png](#)

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Mr. Blubaugh,  
Thank you for your e-mail. Please refer to the below-referenced e-mail from the NRC Office of Public Affairs for the answer to your question.

Regards,  
Tom Lancaster



U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission  
FSME/DWMEP/DURLD/URLB  
11545 Rockville Pike, MS T-8F5  
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Website: <http://www.nrc.gov/materials/uranium-recovery.html>

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**From:** McIntyre, David  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 17, 2014 8:54 AM  
**To:** Lancaster, Thomas  
**Subject:** RE: Informing Public of Process

Tom -

The Office of Public Affairs does not recommend responding to the Rapid City Journal's editorial, "NRC's Rush to Judgment." The editorial did not mischaracterize our process or regulations, which direct the staff to issue a license once the necessary safety and environmental reviews are complete, even if an adjudicatory hearing is still underway. The editorial disagrees with that process, which is their opinion.

Dave

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**David McIntyre**  
**Public Affairs Officer**  
**U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission**  
(301) 415-8200 (office)  
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*Protecting People & the Environment*

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**From:** Lancaster, Thomas  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 17, 2014 8:45 AM

**To:** McIntyre, David  
**Subject:** FW: Informing Public of Process

FYI

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**From:** Richard Blubaugh [<mailto:rblubaugh@powertechuranium.com>]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 15, 2014 10:53 AM  
**To:** Burrows, Ronald; Lancaster, Thomas; Yilma, Haimanot  
**Subject:** Informing Public of Process

Ron, Tom and Haimanot,

Please see editorial from Rapid City Journal below. Will NRC respond in order to correct the misunderstanding presented to the public regarding the licensing process? I will follow up with telephone call later today.

Richard Blubaugh

Rapid City Journal



2014-04-13T08:30:00Z EDITORIAL: NRC's rush to judgmentJournal editorial board Rapid City Journal

April 13, 2014 8:30 am • [Journal editorial board](#)

[\(3\) Comments](#)

Today's topic

THE ISSUE: The Nuclear Regulatory Commission issues a license to Powertech Uranium in advance of its August hearing on the company's proposed uranium mine.

OUR VIEW: Awarding a license before the hearing gives the impression that the permitting process has already been decided.

The Nuclear Regulatory Agency issuing a license for Powertech Uranium Corp.'s proposed mine near Edgemont may be what the company expected would happen, but why did the agency grant the license before its hearing on the project?

Mark Hollenbeck, project manager for the Dewey-Burdock project, said the company expected the NRC to grant the license. "We have confidence in our science and we had confidence in our team putting together the applications," he said.

Opponents of the proposed uranium mine said they would file a lawsuit to get a stay against the NRC license.

We question why the federal agency would issue the license before its scheduled August hearing on the project. The NRC hasn't even heard from the mine's opponents yet.

By issuing the license before testimony is heard, the NRC invites cynicism in the uranium licensing process. Mining opponents can't be faulted for believing the process has been corrupted, and that the NRC is controlled by the uranium industry that it's supposed to regulate.

We won't go that far. But the NRC should have waited until after the August hearing to issue the license.

The NRC's role in the permitting process is limited to determining if Powertech's proposed uranium mine is viable. Apparently, the NRC decided that Powertech had demonstrated what the agency needed to see for issuing a license.

The Dewey-Burdock mine, which would be located about 15 miles northwest of Edgemont, would use the in-situ mining process — in which oxygenated water is pumped into the ground to absorb uranium ore and the solution is brought back to the surface, where the dissolved uranium would be extracted and processed.

The August hearings will deal with, among other things, contentions that the mine would affect old Native American burial grounds and whether aquifers could become polluted.

Hollenbeck told the Journal that the August hearings can't derail the license.

Mining opponents who say the mining process would lead to contamination of underground aquifers stand a better chance of prevailing before the state Water Management Board and Board of Minerals and Environment, both of which postponed their permit hearings until after the NRC and Environmental Protection Agency make their decisions.

In our view, at the very least, the NRC should have waited until after the August hearings to issue Powertech its license. The proposed Dewey-Burdock project is controversial enough without the NRC giving the impression that the permitting process has already been decided.