

From: Aerial Allison <hscityadministrator@hs-sd.org>

Sent: Thursday, January 22, 2026 9:49 AM

To: Binegar, Brenda <Brenda.Binegar@state.sd.us>

Cc: hummingbirdpottery@yahoo.com; Misty Summers-Walton <hsfinanceofficer@hs-sd.org>; Bob Nelson <hsmayor@hs-sd.org>

Subject: [EXT] Support relocating the Craven Canyon Uranium Exploration Drilling Permit Hearing to Hot Springs

Hello Brenda,

Sarah Peterson, Intervenor, has asked me to email you the attached Letter of Support from the Hot Springs City Council for the Appeal to move the Craven Canyon Uranium Exploration Drilling Permit Hearing to Hot Springs. We will mail a copy as well.

Thank you



Aerial Allison
City Administrator

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Hot Springs, SD 57747

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City of Hot Springs
303 N River St.
Hot Springs SD 57747

January 20, 2026

Glenn Blumhardt, Chair
Board of Minerals & Environment
Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources
523 E Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

Dear Honorable Chair,

In May of 2025, the Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources (DANR) published notice of proposed uranium exploration (EXNI 453), seeking public comment and allowing parties to petition to intervene in the permitting process. Public comment from the City of Hot Springs, dated May 13, 2025, noted the potential for negative downstream and regional-scale impacts from the project, as have occurred with previous exploration and mining activities.

SDCL 45-6D-27 states, in part, “The board of county commissioners of a county containing affected land may request that the hearing on the application for a uranium exploration operation permit be held in that county.” According to the record in this contested case, Oglala Lakota County (OLC), which is situated downwind and downflow from the proposed site, timely and properly submitted that request. Due to the extremely rural nature of the county, the OLC Board of Commissioners proposed three potential hearing sites: Pine Ridge (within their county borders), Hot Springs (their county seat), or Rapid City.

At an August 21, 2025 pre-hearing on the matter, Board of Minerals & Environment Hearing Chair Bob Morris appeared to dismiss the request of Oglala Lakota County as improper because it did not come from the county in which the exploration is sited. **However, SDCL 45-6D-27 clearly encompasses counties “affected” by the project, not simply where the project is specifically sited.**

In a letter to the Board dated October 15, 2025, the Fall River County Board of Commissioners supported Oglala Lakota County’s venue change request, stating that “...a venue in western South Dakota would best serve all involved in the matter and create the most equitable circumstance for Tribes and the general public.” Our October 20th letter supports that assertion, “The City Council of Hot Springs joins with Intervenor and other County Commissions in



**City of Hot Springs
303 N River St.
Hot Springs SD 57747**

strongly encouraging the Board to relocate this important hearing to Hot Springs. Doing so will provide more opportunity for local public participation.” Despite these entreaties, the venue requests were denied in a December 21st ruling from Hearing Chair Morris.

The City of Hot Springs supports Oglala Lakota County’s request for reconsideration of venue change requests by the full Board of Minerals & Environment Pursuant to ARSD 74:09:01:08.

Respectfully,

Robert Nelson
Mayor
City of Hot Springs



**City of Hot Springs
303 N River St.
Hot Springs SD 57747**

October 20, 2025

South Dakota Board of Minerals and Environment
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, SD 57501

**RE: Support for Relocating the Craven Canyon Uranium Exploration Drilling Permit
Hearing to Hot Springs**

Dear Board Members,

On behalf of the City of Hot Springs, the City Council respectfully supports changing the venue for the upcoming public hearing on the Craven Canyon Uranium Exploration Drilling Permit. We support holding the hearing in Hot Springs rather than at the Capitol in Pierre. The scheduled hearing date will be set on January 6, 2026, and proceedings are expected to extend over four days.

Hot Springs is a proven and suitable venue for such proceedings. The Mueller Civic Center in Hot Springs has successfully hosted numerous EPA and NRC public comment opportunities, consistently drawing standing-room-only attendance in its 400-seat theater. Relocating the hearing here would ensure greater accessibility and engagement from the citizens and stakeholders directly impacted, including Intervenors from Fall River, Custer, Oglala Lakota, and Pennington Counties. This level of local participation is critical to the transparency and integrity of the decision-making process.

The City Council of Hot Springs joins with Intervenors and other County Commissions in strongly encouraging the Board to relocate this important hearing to Hot Springs. Doing so will provide more opportunity for local public participation.

We appreciate your consideration and look forward to your decision.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Nelson
Mayor, City of Hot Springs



Robert Nelson
Mayor
hsmayor@hs-sd.org

RECEIVED
MAY 21 2025
MINERALS & MINING PROGRAM

May 13, 2025

Minerals, Mining, and Superfund Program
523 East Capitol Avenue
Pierre, South Dakota 57501-3182

**Subject: Strong Opposition to Uranium Exploration near Craven Canyon, Fall River County, SD
– Concerns Regarding Large-Scale Disturbance and Water Contamination**

Dear Members of the Minerals, Mining, and Superfund Program,

The City of Hot Springs is writing to express its strong and urgent opposition to the proposed uranium exploration project near Craven Canyon in Fall River County, South Dakota. The public notice regarding Clean Nuclear Energy Corp. (CNEC), a subsidiary of Basin Uranium, has raised significant concerns within the community due to the project's scale, its proximity to culturally sensitive lands, and the serious environmental risks it poses—particularly to vital water resources.

It has come to attention that the proposal includes 50 drill platforms with depths of up to 700 feet, with each borehole potentially taking two weeks to complete. This would result in sustained disruptive activity within an environmentally and culturally sensitive area. Although classified as "exploration," the scale and intensity of the project strongly suggest the likelihood of future large-scale uranium mining operations, with all the associated consequences that the region has historically experienced.

The primary concern is the potential for water contamination. The history of uranium mining in the Black Hills provides a clear record of environmental degradation. Uranium extraction in previous years has led to significant land disturbance. Even the exploratory drilling phase exposes large surface areas, which significantly heightens the risk of contaminated runoff, potentially carrying radioactive materials, heavy metals, and other hazardous substances into local waterways.

This risk is further amplified by the region's precipitation patterns, topography, and the proximity of Craven Canyon to critical water sources. A train derailment near Dewey, SD, though unrelated to mining, demonstrated how easily materials can spread via runoff. Uranium exploration, however, would introduce substances that present much greater and more lasting environmental and public health threats.

In addition to the environmental risks, uranium mining presents significant health hazards. Exposure to uranium and its decay products can lead to serious health issues, including lung cancer, kidney damage, and respiratory problems, especially in communities living near mining sites or downstream of contaminated runoff. The radioactive materials released during mining can contaminate air, water, and soil, and the long-term health impacts can persist for generations. For these reasons, any exploration or mining activities in areas like Craven Canyon pose a direct threat not only to the environment but also to the health and safety of local residents and future generations.

Past uranium operations in the Black Hills produced more than 10,000 tons of ore, illustrating the scale of operations that may follow should the exploration phase be successful. Any future mining operations in Craven Canyon would result in extensive excavation, irreversible landscape changes, and a significantly increased risk of toxic runoff affecting nearby water systems.

In addition to environmental concerns, Craven Canyon contains significant cultural and archaeological resources, including rock art and artifacts dating back over 7,000 years. The proposed drilling and potential mining activities would put these irreplaceable sites at risk, both through physical disruption and chemical contamination from runoff.

The City of Hot Springs feels that it is imperative that the Minerals, Mining, and Superfund Program take immediate action to reject this exploration proposal. The potential for long-lasting damage to water quality, environmental health, and cultural heritage is far too great. This project does not align with the principles of responsible land stewardship, public safety, or the overall wellbeing of the community.

The City of Hot Springs urges your agency to prioritize the protection of the environment and the preservation of South Dakota's cultural heritage by denying this exploration request.

Sincerely,



Robert Nelson
Mayor, City of Hot Springs

CERTIFIED MAIL

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CITY OF HOT SPRINGS
3 NORTH RIVER STREET
HOT SPRINGS, SOUTH DAKOTA 57747

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