

FALL RIVER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
COURTHOUSE
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RECEIVED

JAN 29 2026

MINERALS & MINING PROGRAM

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

Dear Honorable Chair,

Last spring, Department of Agriculture & Natural Resources (DANR) published notice of proposed uranium exploration (EXNI 453) in Fall River County, near Craven Canyon. Publication of the notice provided for public comment and petitions to intervene in the decision-making process. It also provided for a venue change request from an affected county.

In a letter dated May 14, the Oglala Lakota County Commission, which is situated downwind and downstream from the proposed site, timely and properly submitted a request to hold the hearing in Pine Ridge, Hot Springs (their county seat), or Rapid City.

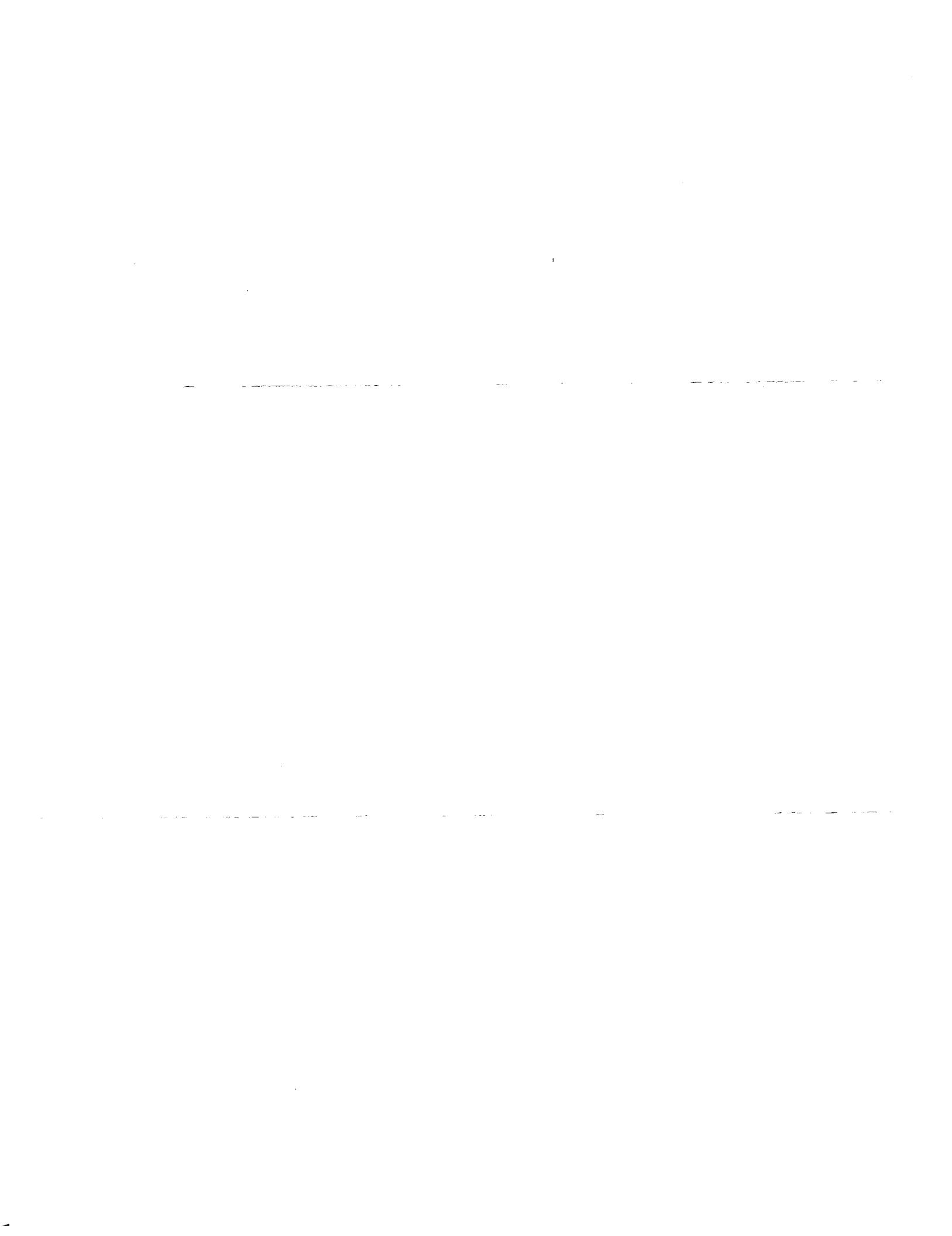
SDCL 45-6D-27 states, in part, “The board of county commissioners of a county containing affected land may request that the hearing on the application for a uranium exploration operation permit be held in that county.”

At an August, 2025 pre-hearing on the matter, Board of Minerals & Environment Hearing Chair Bob Morris denied 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 states that the request may come from a county “affected” by the project, not simply the county in which the project is specifically sited.

In a letter to the Board dated October 15, 2025, the Fall River County Board of Commissioners wrote to support 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.” The City Council of Hot Springs also wrote in support.

Subsequent to the Commissioners’ formal support for the venue change request, and consistent with the requirements of SDCL 45-6D-27, the Commission agreed to commit 1/3 of the cost of moving the hearing, estimated by the State of South Dakota at a cost of \$5,870 (i.e. \$1,956.67). The Oglala Lakota County Commission and the Hot Springs City Council each agreed to fund the remaining 2/3 of the cost.

Despite these requests, our support of Oglala Lakota County’s timely & proper venue change request was denied in a December 21st ruling from Hearing Chair Morris, citing an earlier deadline that Oglala Lakota County did, in fact, meet.



Pursuant to ARSD 74:09:01:08, the Fall River County Board of Commissioners respectfully requests reconsideration of venue change requests by the full Board of Minerals & Environment.

Respectfully,

Joe Falkenburg

Joe Falkenburg, Chairman
Fall River County Board of Commissioners

Deborah Russell

Deborah Russell, Vice-Chair
Fall River County Board of Commissioners

Joe Allen

Joe Allen
Fall River County Board of Commissioners

Les Cope

Les Cope
Fall River County Board of Commissioners

Sandra Wahlert

Sandra Wahlert
Fall River County Board of Commissioners



Fall River & Oglala Lakota County Auditor
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