

# Enefit American Oil shale project on hold

By Mary Bernard

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The status of Enefit American Oil's Utah oil shale project seems to be in dispute – at least from the standpoint of the company's Estonian shareholders.

On Wednesday, Feb. 19, an EnergyWire article quoted a former Estonian government official to say the Utah project was on hold.

The comments brought swift written response from Enefit Utah's Brian Wilkinson, Public Relations spokesperson.

“Despite comments in today's edition of U.S. online publication EnergyWire, Enefit’s Utah oil shale project is not “on hold,” he stated.

Enefit is in the midst of acquiring federal and state permits as well as developing an environmental impact statement for the project.

The company needs to develop rights-of-way for roughly 20 miles of pipelines, power lines and roads across public lands to access the proposed oil shale mine and 50,000 barrel-a-day processing facility on state and private property in Uintah County.

Wilkinson says the lead time for these processes is lengthy.

The Bureau of Land Management website cites a 2015 completion date for the final Enefit environmental document.

Wilkinson went to state that the article wrongly claims the Estonia-owned company has traded focus from the U.S. to it's troubled homegrown oil shale industry.

The article says the focus is “on fine-tuning its new Enefit280 oil plant. In reality, however, both of these projects are moving forward,” he said.

Opening in 2012, the Estonian Enfit280 oil plant was supposed to come online within a year, but has remained well-below operating parameters according to critics.

“It was supposed to be up and running last year, but all they have to show is an idle plant and the death of a worker,” Andres Raid, Tallinn-Estonia TV reporter told the Vernal Express.

Rather, it's investment finances that are stalling the process, according to Estonian finance minister Jurgen Ligi.

Ligi told national Public Radio on Thursday, Feb. 20, that “it is too soon to evaluate the Utah project [...] There has been no talk of investments mounting to billions by Eesti Energia (the parent company).”

The financial investment, according to Ligi, will be as little as possible into the U.S. venture until studies on the oil shale in Utah have been conducted.

Eesti Energia CEO Sandor Liive, said “The Utah Project, and other international projects, are on separate trajectories, however, and are moving forward.”