

# Deseret News

## State orders tar sands mining operation to monitor groundwater

By Amy Joi O'Donoghue , Deseret News

Published: Wednesday, July 22 2015 10:01 a.m. MDT



A map of a proposed mine footprint for a tar sands development in Uintah and Grand Counties is on display during a public meeting in Salt Lake City, Tuesday, June 30, 2015. (Ravell Call, Deseret News)

SALT LAKE CITY — State mining regulators have given the go-ahead for the next phase of the nation's first commercial tar sands operation, but the mine must monitor for potential impacts to groundwater and comply with federal pollution standards.

The late Friday decision by the Utah Division of Oil, Gas and Mining upholds an earlier approval granting an expansion of the mine, which straddles the border of Uintah and Grand counties.

The division, however, opted to hold another informal public hearing and gather comment from concerned groups such as Western Resources Advocates and Living Rivers, which

have warned that perennial springs in the area will suffer irreparable consequences. The mine and springs are located within the Green River watershed, which is part of the Colorado River system.

The Utah Division of Water Quality has also said regulators believe the operation's impact will have a minimal impact to any subsurface water in the area, and the mine's operations itself don't use ponds or drainage pools.

The Utah Supreme Court upheld a challenge to the division's decision related to the mine's operation.

Mining regulators revisited U.S. Oil Sands permit because of a request to add another 104 acres to the mining operation.

Copyright 2015, Deseret News Publishing Company