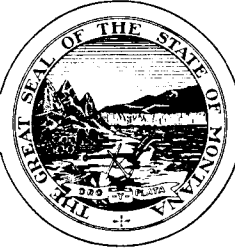


DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE DIVISION

Air and Waste Management Bureau



MARC RACICOT, GOVERNOR

(406) 444-3490
FAX (406) 444-1499

STATE OF MONTANA

OFFICE: METCALF BUILDING
ADDRESS: 1520 E 6TH AVENUE

PO BOX 200901
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0901

October 16, 1998

Rick Walsh
Montana Power Company
40 East Broadway
Butte, Montana 59701

RECEIVED

OCT 19 1998

**ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY COUNCIL**

Dear Mr. Walsh:

Air Quality Permit #2997-01 is deemed final as of October 16, 1998 by the Department of Environmental Quality. This permit is for a gas compressor station. All conditions of the department's decision remain the same. Enclosed is a copy of your permit with the final date indicated.

For the department,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Richard Knatterud".

Richard Knatterud
Air Permitting Section Supervisor

RK:bjd

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Permitting and Compliance Division
Air and Waste Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620
(406) 444-3490

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Issued For: Montana Power Company.
40 East Broadway
Butte, MT 59701

Air Quality Permit Number: 2997-01

Preliminary Determination Issued: 09/14/98
Department Decision Issued: 09/30/98
Final Permit Issued: 10/16/98

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Compliance: An environmental assessment required by the MEPA, was completed for this project as follows.

Legal Description of Site: The Montana Power Company Main Line #3 station is located in Section 8, Township 20 North, Range 4 West, Lewis and Clark County, Montana.

Description of Project: This permit is for the operation of a natural gas compressor station that supplies pressure to pipelines which distribute gas to markets in western Montana. The current project involves adding one Smart Ash Burner to the permitted equipment in permit #2997-00.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal: This facility is designed to compress and transport pipeline quality natural gas. The new equipment will allow Montana Power - Main Line #3 to dispose of certain wastes on site.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider: No reasonable alternatives available.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency: A list of enforceable conditions, including a best available control technology analysis, are contained in permit #2997-01.

Description and analysis of regulatory impacts on private property rights: The department has considered alternatives to the conditions imposed in this permit as part of the permit development. The department has determined that the permit conditions are reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with applicable requirements and demonstrate compliance with those requirements and do not unduly restrict private property rights.

Potential Impact on Physical Environment

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments
1	Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats				X		See Attached
2	Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution				X		See Attached
3	Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture				X		See Attached
4	Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality				X		See Attached
5	Aesthetics				X		See Attached
6	Air Quality			X			See Attached
7	Unique Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resource				X		See Attached
8	Demands on Environmental Resource of Water, Air and Energy			X			See Attached
9	Historical and Archaeological Sites				X		See Attached
10	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			See Attached

Potential Impact on Human Environment

		Major	Moderate	Minor	None	Unknown	Comments
1	Social Structures and Mores				X		See Attached
2	Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				X		See Attached
3	Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue				X		See Attached
4	Agricultural or Industrial Production				X		See Attached
5	Human Health			X			See Attached
6	Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities				X		See Attached
7	Quantity and Distribution of Employment				X		See Attached
8	Distribution of Population				X		See Attached
9	Demands for Government Services			X			See Attached
10	Industrial and Commercial Activity				X		See Attached
11	Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals				X		See Attached
12	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			See Attached

Potential Impact on Physical Environment

1. There will be no additional impacts on the aquatic life and habitats.
2. There will be no additional impacts on the water quality, quantity, and/or distribution as a result of adding the Smart Ash Burner to the Main Line #3 facility.
3. There will be no additional impacts to the geology and soil quality, stability and moisture as a result of adding the Smart Ash Burner to the Main Line #3 facility.
4. There will be no additional impacts to the vegetation cover quantity and quality.
5. The facility will look the same way it did prior to the addition of the Smart Ash Burner.
6. The addition of a Smart Ash Burner will result in minor impacts on the air quality because the burner will be adding additional pollutants into the air. However, as part of the BACT analysis, the Smart Ash Burner will be limited to 10% opacity or less.
7. No unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources will be affected as a result of this project.
8. A slight increase in the demands of the environmental resources of air and energy are expected from this project. The air contaminants will increase slightly, as will the need for energy. No additional demands are expected for water.
9. No historical or archaeological sites are located around the site.
10. Overall, this project will result in a minor increase in pollutants. The Smart Ash Burner has been proven to constitute a negligible risk to public health, safety, welfare, and to the environment. An opacity limit has been placed on the Smart Ash Burner that will further limit the emissions from the burner.

Potential Impact on Human Environment

1. There will be no change in social structures or mores as a result of adding the Smart Ash Burner at the Montana Power - Main Line #3 compressor station.
2. The addition of the Smart Ash Burner to dispose of oil, oily rags, and filter will not cause a change in the cultural uniqueness and diversity of the area.
3. No changes are expected to the local and state tax base and tax revenue as a result of adding the Smart Ash Burner to the Main Line #3 station.
4. The addition of the Smart Ash Burner will not cause a change in the local agricultural or industrial production.
5. Slight impacts to the air quality around the facility will result from the addition of the Smart Ash Burner at the Main Line #3 facility. Overall, the human health effects from this project remain minor. Montana Power - Main Line #3 submitted a Risk Analysis as

part of the permit application. Since the Smart Ash Burner meets the criteria in ARM 17.8.706(5), the Smart Ash burner constitutes a negligible risk to public health, safety, welfare, and to the environment. All other parameters at the Montana Power - Main Line #3 facility will remain the same.

6. The addition of the Smart Ash Burner will have no effects on the access to and quality of recreational and wilderness activities.
7. The quantity and distribution of employment will not be affected by the addition of the Smart Ash Burner to the facility.
8. The addition of the Smart Ash Burner will have no impact on the distribution of population.
9. The only immediate demands for government services as a result of the current project will be in acquiring the appropriate permits.
10. No additional impacts to industrial or commercial activity are expected as a result of adding the Smart Ash Burner to the Main Line #3 facility. Commercial activity will remain unaffected by this project.
11. No locally adopted environmental plans and goals will be impacted by this project.
12. Overall, this project will result in a minor increase in pollutants. The Smart Ash Burner has been proven to constitute a negligible risk to public health, safety, welfare, and to the environment. An opacity limit has been placed on the Smart Ash Burner that will further limit the emissions from the burner.

Recommendation: No EIS is required.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: The limitations in Permit #2997-01 will restrict emissions from the Smart Ash Burner at the Montana Power - Main Line #3 facility. By applying the conditions that were derived through the BACT determination, the emissions from the Smart Ash Burner will be controlled and the effects to the surrounding air quality will be minimal. The results of the EA that was performed for the Main Line #3 facility reflect the minimal impacts that will result from the addition of the Smart Ash Burner. For these reasons, the EA is the appropriate level of analysis and an EIS is not required.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction: None

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Department of Environmental Quality, Permitting and Compliance Division

**EA prepared by: Dan Walsh
Date: September 3, 1998**