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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

NES 43

90-1 (13) 35

PREPARED BY STATE DOCUMENTS,

STATE OF MONTANA  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

FINAL  
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

FOR

STATE DOCUMENTS COLLECTION

PROJECT I 90-1 (13) 35

ST. REGIS EAST

PLEASE RETURN



THIS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT IS PROPOSED FOR FUNDING UNDER TITLE 23, U.S.C. THIS STATEMENT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT WAS DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND IS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO:

SECTION 102(2)(C)  
PUBLIC LAW 91-190

Date 5-15-72 H.J. Anderson, Director of Highways  
By Jack R. Beckett  
Administrator, Engineering  
Division

REVIEWED FOR CONTENT AND ACCEPTED BY FEDERAL  
HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Date \_\_\_\_\_ By \_\_\_\_\_  
F.H.W.A. REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

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1

I

SUMMARY

ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Project I 90-1 (13) 35 ST. REGIS-EAST

DESCRIPTION

A section of Interstate Highway System, Route I-90, beginning 1.5 miles east of the town of St. Regis, Montana, and continuing for a distance of 3.6 miles southeast along U.S. 10.

IMPACTS

Improved service for area residents, increased safety, comfort, and speed for long distance travelers and improved access to the Sloway Campground from the interchange on this project. Minor air and noise pollution during construction, possible increase in deer-auto collisions and minor acquisition of land.

ALTERNATES

Due to limiting factors of terrain, no major alternates were considered.

INTERAGENCY REVIEW OF DRAFT STATEMENT

The following state, local, and federal agencies were supplied copies of the Draft Environmental Statement but did not return comments thereto:

Montana Soil Conservation Committee  
Mr. O. M. Ueland, Executive Secretary  
Room 224, Mitchell Building  
Helena, Montana 59601

Montana Department of Planning & Economic Development  
Mr. Perry F. Roys, Executive Director  
Capitol Station (1716 9th)  
Helena, Montana 59601



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<http://archive.org/details/finalenvironment15unit>

Montana Council of Natural Resources & Development  
Mr. Richard E. Mayer, Landscape Architect  
Room 420, Mitchell Building  
Helena, Montana 59601

State Council of Natural Resources  
Mr. George T. McGaffick, Coordinator  
Mitchell Building  
Helena, Montana 59601

Board of County Commissioners  
Mineral County  
Superior, Montana 59872

Honorable E. O. Pike  
Mayor of Superior  
Superior, Montana 59872

Mrs. Anna J. Murphy  
Superintendent of Schools  
Superior, Montana 59872

Mr. Kermit C. Sullivan  
Postmaster  
Superior, Montana 59872

Agriculture Stabilization & Research Service  
112 West 13th Avenue  
Helena, Montana 59601

Rural Electrification Administration  
Montana Associated Utilities  
Rainbow Western Hotel  
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Environmental Protection Agency  
Mr. Charles Fabrikant  
Director of Impact Statements Office  
1626 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Department of Agriculture  
630 Sansome Street  
San Francisco, California 94111

Soil Conservation Service  
4930 Ninth Avenue South  
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Geological Survey  
Federal Center  
Denver, Colorado 80225



Department of Health, Education & Welfare  
Environmental Health Service & National  
Institute of Environmental Health & Sciences  
Cogswell Building  
Helena, Montana 59601

Department of Interior  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries  
Billings, Montana 59103

National Park Service  
1709 Jackson Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

Economic Development Administration  
415 First Avenue North  
Seattle, Washington 98109

The following agencies were supplied copies of the Draft Environmental Statement and responded as summarized:

LETTER NO. 1

U. S. Department of Interior  
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation  
Pacific Northwest Region  
1000 Second Avenue  
Seattle, Washington 98104

"This statement, as it relates to our programs and interests, is adequate." (Signed, E.E. Allen, Acting Regional Director)

LETTER NO. 2

Federal Power Commission  
Regional Office  
555 Battery Street, Room 415  
San Francisco, California 94111

Acknowledged review of Draft Statement and made no comment.  
(Signed, M. Boyd Austin, Regional Engineer)

LETTER NO. 3

U. S. Department of Transportation  
Assistant Secretary for Environment & Urban Affairs

"We have no specific comments to offer on the Statement."  
(Signed, Herbert F. DeSimone, Assistant Secretary)

LETTER NO. 4

U. S. Geological Survey  
Water Resources Division  
Federal Building  
Helena, Montana 59601

"... no reason to anticipate adverse lasting effects..."  
(Signed, Thad G. McLaughlin, Regional Hydrologist)



LETTER NO. 5

U. S. Department of Transportation  
Regional Environmental Coordinator  
Portland, Oregon

The comments comprised of a list of additions and corrections to the Draft Statement which were incorporated in the Final Statement. (Signed, Donald H. Potter, Acting Regional Environmental Coordinator)

LETTER NO. 6

U. S. Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Lolo National Forest  
2801 Russell Street  
Missoula, Montana 59801

"The Statement is satisfactory as written..." (Signed, Jack Large, Forest Supervisor)

LETTER NO. 7

Montana Water Resources Board  
Sam Mitchell Building  
Helena, Montana 59601

The letter acknowledged their review of the Draft Statement and made comments about signing, alignment, and vegetation. (Signed, Douglas G. Smith, Director)

LETTER NO. 8

Department of the Army  
Seattle District, Corps of Engineers  
1519 Alaskan Way South  
Seattle, Washington 98134

"... no adverse impacts..." (Signed, Sydney Steinborn, Chief, Engineering Division)

LETTER NO. 9

State of Montana  
Department of Fish and Game  
Helena, Montana 59601

Acknowledged review of the Draft Statement and made no comments critical of the conclusions. (Signed, James A. Posewitz, Chief, Environmental Resources Division)

LETTER NO. 10

U. S. Department of Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Box 8008  
Boise, Idaho 83707

Acknowledged review of the Draft Statement and commented on possible wildlife losses. (Signed, Norman H. Moore, Regional Director)



Final Environmental Statement

Additional discussion of letters of comment on Draft Statement:

Letter No. 5

Comment number (2)

The earthwork for the project is planned to be balanced, so borrow excavation is not involved. However, should it be found necessary during construction to "borrow" the resultant scarring will be properly reshaped, topsoiled and seeded.

Water pollution during construction will be held to a minimum as established by State law and highway specifications.

Noise pollution will no doubt increase in proportion to increased traffic volumes. This should be minimal, however because of the few people who reside close to the projects limits.

Comment number (6)

No relocation problems are foreseen.

Comment number (7)

No 4(f) situations are foreseen.

Letter No. 7

Comment number (1)

Adequate signing will be provided to direct the traveling public from the Sloway Interchange to the Sloway Campground.

Comment No. (3)

Existing trees will be saved where possible to provide screening.

Comment number (4)

Signing will be provided as deemed appropriate to alert travelers to wildlife crossings. Location of signs should probably be designated subsequent to construction when the determination can be made more accurately for proper placement.

Letter No. 10

Last paragraph of letter

Signing as mentioned above will be provided to help minimize wildlife losses.



LETTER NO. 11

U. S. Coast Guard  
13th Coast Guard District  
618 Second Street  
Seattle, Washington 98104

"... no foreseeable, significant impact..."  
(Signed, J. J. McClelland, Rear Admiral, U.S.C.G.)

LETTER NO. 12

U. S. Department of Interior  
Bureau of Mines  
Denver Federal Center  
Denver, Colorado 80225

"... anticipate no conflict..." (Signed, O. M. Bishop, Chief,  
Intermountain Field Operations Center)

LETTER NO. 13

State Department of Health  
Helena, Montana 59601

"... acceptable without further comment." (Signed, John S.  
Anderson, M.D., Executive Officer)

LETTER NO. 14

Department of Housing and Urban Development  
Federal Building  
19th and Stout Streets  
Denver, Colorado 80202

"... no basis for reservation or comments..." (Signed, Robert  
J. Matuschek, Special Assistant)

The Design Public Hearing was held in Superior, Montana, on  
June 2, 1971. Requests were heard from several persons owning property  
in the vicinity of the project for additional access. Subsequent study  
by the Highway Department determined that there was insufficient need  
to justify the additional construction costs.

AVAILABILITY OF DRAFT STATEMENT

The Draft Environmental Statement was mailed for interagency review  
on April 22, 1971.



## II.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND AREA

This project is in the western part of Montana approximately 30 miles from the Idaho border, and about midway between the north and south borders. More specifically, the project begins 1.5 miles east of the town of St. Regis and continues south and east along existing U. S. Highway 10 a distance of 3.6 miles.

The area can be described as a forested river valley in a mountainous area. The terrain is rolling hills with thick, coniferous timber throughout. A river, the Clark Fork, runs roughly parallel with Highway U.S. 10. There are no public parks, recreation areas, historic sites, wildlife or waterfowl refuges within the project limits. However, access to a campground is planned from the project. Present land use consists of timber growing and some cattle grazing. The man-made aspects of the environment consist of the two-lane P.T.W.\*, a single track railroad along the river and local access roads. There are no dwellings, businesses, or other structures adjacent to the existing roadway, which is U. S. Highway 10.

St. Regis, the nearest town to the project, has a population of 600, while eight miles to the east lies the town of Superior with a population of 993. The nearest large center of trade is Missoula, 65 miles to the southeast.

The project is a four-lane divided highway with independent alignments, both horizontally and vertically. The westbound roadway closely approximates the existing U. S. Highway 10 alignment with the eastbound lanes located closer to the Clark Fork. The distance between centers horizontally varies from 100 feet to 450 feet. The sharpest curve

---

\* Present travelled way



is 2° 00' and the maximum grade is 4.79%. The superelevations, sight distances, and other related criteria have been designed to a 70 m.p.h. speed.

Due to the separation of roadways, the right-of-way width varies from 543 feet to 850 feet over the length of the project. This includes the existing right-of-way for U. S. Highway 10. Access is to be controlled throughout.

The average daily traffic volume for this segment of U. S. Highway 10 was 1887 vehicles in 1967. In 1992, the design year of this project, the average daily traffic volume is projected to be 5850 which is a daily hourly volume of 760.

The Sloway Interchange, originally planned for an adjoining project to the east, was relocated in this project to save the Forest Services' existing Sloway Campground. This interchange is to be a diamond interchange located near the easterly end of the project. It will provide access to the surrounding lands and the Sloway Campground. The cross-road beginning at this interchange continues along the west side of the new highway until it connects with the existing P.T.W. near the east end of the project.

In that this project closely follows the existing U. S. Highway 10, no significant alteration of the area's character will occur. A desirable amount of existing trees and vegetation will be left in the median and the effect on back slopes will be held to a minimum. Embankment protectors will be used where necessary to control erosion, and drainage has been designed to perpetuate existing drainage flows. Topsoil and seeding is to be provided for vegetating disturbed areas.



As a segment of I 90 between Missoula and Spokane, Washington, this project is required by law to complete the four-lane system of Interstate and Defense Highways. Designed in accordance with the Montana Highway Commission's Field and Office Standards, and the A.A.S.H.O. Standard Specifications for Interstate Highways, its purpose is to provide safe, efficient means of surface transportation of maximum quality.

### III

#### PROBABLY IMPACT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT

The residents of the surrounding area will find that the higher service facility provided by the Interstate to the larger trade centers like Missoula will permit a freer movement of their goods. Likewise, as part of the four-lane Interstate Highway System, the long distance travelers will benefit from the increased safety, comfort, and speed of travel.

Access to the Sloway Campground from the Interstate Highway will be from the Sloway Interchange in this project. Since the improved Interstate System will encourage more travel, an increase in the use of the facility can be expected.

### IV

#### PROBABLE UNAVOIDABLE ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Air and noise pollution, attendant with any major construction activity, will of course be unavoidable. This will be held to a minimum by proper supervision and enforcement of existing statutes.

Presently, deer travel between the river and the hills across the P.T.W., with the increase from two to four lanes in width and the attendant rise in night time speeds, an increase in road kills is possible. The use of signing to warn motorists of this hazard could



t. Regis - East  
90-1(13)35

Addendum to page 3 of  
Final Environmental  
Statement)

Under existing conditions, wildlife movement consists mostly of white-tail deer and some mule deer crossing the highway intermittently throughout the project limits including the area of the Sloway Interchange. Major migratory movements at any particular spot or spots do not take place and it is expected that wildlife habits will remain essentially the same following construction of the interstate highway.

The Montana Department of Fish and Game and the Department of Highways have studied the entire corridor throughout the St. Regis Canyon relative to methods of control to make game movements and traffic movements compatible with one another. In cooperation with the Fish and Game every effort will be made to minimize the hazards resulting from big game movements in and around the project area.

Controls such as lighting and underpasses were considered but in view of the type of game movements, are not warranted because of their questionable usage.



minimize this. Since an interchange is planned in this project, a way under the Interstate will exist where presently all crossings must be made on the highway.

As mentioned earlier, the Sloway Interchange was originally located in the Sloway East and West Project just east of the St. Regis Project. During planning it became apparent that the Sloway Campground would be lost with the construction of this interchange. It was therefore decided to move the interchange to the St. Regis Project and thus save the campground. In that the procurement of land area and the loss of existing trees and vegetation represents an unavoidable adverse effect on the environment, the additional land required for the interchange increases this effect on the St. Regis Project. In return, however, the adverse environmental effects to the Sloway East and West Project are greatly reduced.

## V

### ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Brief consideration was given to a corridor south and west of the river. But the rugged terrain plus the difficulty foreseen in connecting to the adjoining segments of the Interstate precluded serious study.

The choice of alternates within the proposed corridor for this project is limited since terrain somewhat dictates the feasible location for the facility. Also, utilization of the existing highway is of prime concern in minimizing the impact on the environment. As a result, alternates for this project consisted of minor horizontal and vertical changes, the most extreme of which was the use of the existing highway for the eastbound roadway rather than the westbound roadway. Variations in the environmental impact of this project as a result of these minor changes is insignificant.



In the light of the benefits to be derived by the travelling public from this project, the "do nothing" alternative does not appear practical. The need for highways does exist and, consistent with environmental considerations, should be constructed. To do nothing would be regressive.

## VI

### SHORT TERM USE VS. LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

The prior establishment of this portion of the environment as beneficial to man's needs for highways is in accordance with man's needs today. It is apparent that the need for highways will continue into the foreseeable future. Thus the maintenance of this portion of the environment to serve man's transportation needs is a long term productive use of the land. Short-term uses of man's environment such as construction and the taking of trees are necessary for the maintenance and enhancement of this long term use.

## VII

### IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENT OF RESOURCES

Land and building materials such as earth and gravel are resources which are committed for the life of the project. However, these are not in sufficient quantities to be significant. As a segment of the Interstate System, this project contributes to the overall commitment of that system. Again, however, the amount of commitment of resources by this project is insignificant.

## VIII

### MINIMIZATION OF ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

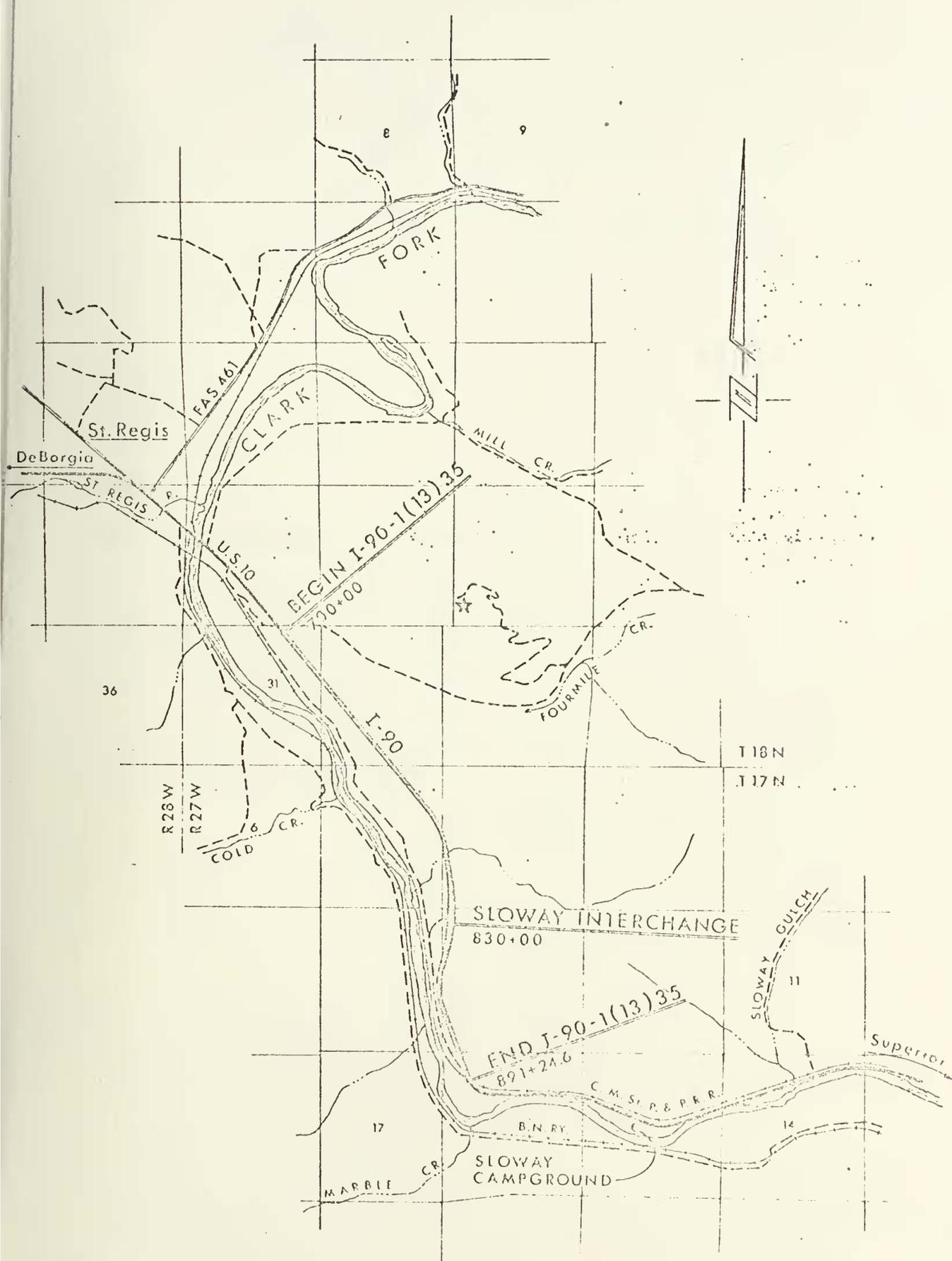
Highway construction necessarily results in the alteration of the environment. The design of this project has included study of methods of minimizing harmful effects of highway construction. Split alignment has been used to the fullest extent possible. Variation in grades has been made to decrease cuts and fills.



It must be noted that much of the existing vegetation and ground cover will be destroyed during construction. However, as stated earlier, in the areas outside the actual roadbed, topsoil and seeding will be used to restore as much cover as is practicable. Existing trees and vegetation will be preserved outside of the construction limits particularly in the median strip between roadways. Tree screens have been planned between the roadway, frontage roads, and railroads where possible.

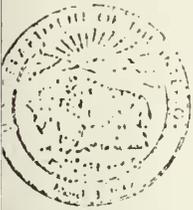
Deer and other wildlife exist in the area, and cattle graze the area north of U. S. Highway 10. A woven wire fence is planned which will keep cattle off the highway. Signing could be used where warranted to warn motorists of deer and help minimize this hazard.





LOCATION MAP  
 ST. REGIS EAST  
 I-90-1 (13) 35





UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION  
1100 SECOND AVENUE,  
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98104

REPLY REFER TO:

D36

RECEIVED  
MAY 18 1971  
HELENA, MONTANA  
MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION

*Folder*

SEARCHED	INDEXED
SERIALIZED	FILED
MAY 17 1971	
FBI - HELENA	

MAY 17 1971

Mr. Grover O. Powers, P.E.  
Preconstruction Engineer  
Montana Highway Commission  
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Powers:

The draft environmental statement for I. 90-1(13)35 St. Regis - East as was received with your letter dated April 22, 1971, has been reviewed by our staff. We know of no public recreation areas, projects, or proposals that would be adversely affected by this highway project. The statement, as it relates to our programs and interests, is adequate.

Sincerely yours,

Fred J. Overly  
Regional Director

*E. E. Allen*

E. E. Allen  
Acting Regional Director

Date Recd. Preconst. 5-19-71

MAIL ROUTE	DATE	REMARKS
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LETTER # 1







*Memorandum*

DATE: JUN 16 1971

SUBJECT: Draft Environmental Impact Statement: Project  
I 90-1(13)35, St. Regis East, MontanaIn reply  
refer to: TEU-12FROM: Assistant Secretary for Environment  
and Urban SystemsTO: H. N. Stewart, Division Engineer, FHWA,  
Helena, Montana

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on this draft environmental impact statement. We have no specific comments to offer on the statement.

We look forward to receiving the final environmental impact statement, including the comments received from other public agencies and the general public on the draft statement.

*Herbert F. DeSimone*  
for Herbert F. DeSimone  
Assistant Secretary

cc: Regional Federal Highway Administrator  
Portland, Oregon











(6) A statement should be included concerning displacement of families, businesses, etc. If there are people to be relocated, then mention of the State's relocation assistance program is desirable. If no relocation is foreseen, this should be so stated.

(7) A comment concerning Section 4(f) lands should be included. If there are none within project limits, this should be documented.

(8) The Environmental Protection Agency was not included in the list of agencies to whom the draft statement was sent for review and comment.

cc: D. H. Potter



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE

Lolo National Forest  
2801 Russell Street  
Missoula, Montana 59801

YTO: 7700 Transportation

June 4, 1971

SUBJECT: Interstate 90 - St. Regis-East



TO: Mr. Lewis Chittim, State Highway Engineer  
Montana Highway Commission  
Helena, Montana 59601

We have reviewed the environmental statement for this project. The statement is satisfactory as written to the Lolo National Forest.

*Mark A. Reini*

for JACK LARGE  
Forest Supervisor

Date Rec'd JUN 7 1971

ACT	INFO	R/W DIVISION MAIL ROUTE	INIT.
		60 E. 3rd Street	
		101 S. 2nd Street	
		102 S. 2nd Street	
		103 S. 2nd Street	
		104 S. 2nd Street	
		105 S. 2nd Street	
		106 S. 2nd Street	
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		109 S. 2nd Street	
		110 S. 2nd Street	
Gen.		FILE	INIT.

Date Recd. Preconst. 6-11-71

ACT	INFO	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	INITIAL
		30 Genl. Mail		
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		39 Genl. Mail		
		40 Genl. Mail		

LETTER # 6



St. Regis E, Sloway East, Superior West



MONTANA WATER RESOURCES BOARD

HARRY W. DEFFENBACH, DIRECTOR  
HELENA, MONTANA  
531001

MAY 26 1971

GOVERNOR FORREST H. ANDERSON, CHAIRMAN

JR WHITE, VICE CHAIRMAN AND SECRETARY, TWODOT  
R.C. BAILEY, COVALLIS  
OSIBY, WOLF POINT

HELENA, MONTANA  
DOUGLAS C. SMITH, DIRECTOR, HELLE  
EVERETT BLODEN, FOREST  
JOSEPH B. ROBER, HELLENA

May 24, 1971

Mr. Lewis M. Chittim  
Montana Highway Commission  
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

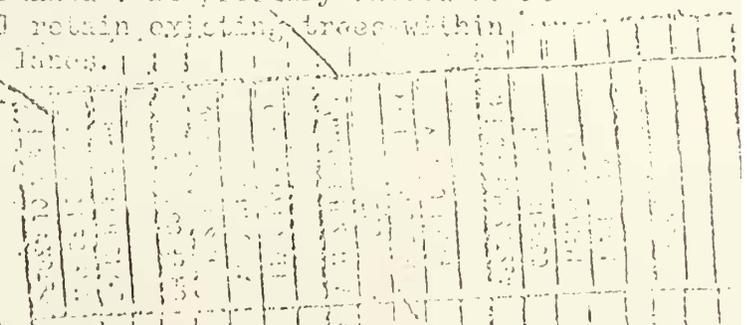
We have reviewed your draft of the Environmental Statement for the St. Regis -- East, Sloway East and West and Superior -- West Projects.

It is apparent that all three projects have an impact on each other and, therefore, should be reviewed together.

The following are comments our M.W.R.B. Environmental Coordinating Committee has developed:

St. Regis East Project

1. Since the Sloway Campground is located approximately 3 1/2 miles from the Ashmore Interchange, we hope adequate signing for the traveling public will be available.
2. We like the idea of a split alignment both horizontally and vertically especially to the 500 ft. centers. It probably is the maximum possible and still give both lanes the idea that there is another set of lanes adjacent to them.
3. We like the utilization of the existing P.T.W. from the environmental aspect of saving existing vegetation and minimizing cuts and fills. On page four of the St. Regis Statement it says, "Attractive tree screens have been planned". It probably should be re-written to indicate that they will retain existing trees within their project such as between the lanes.



Mr. Becker









DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
 SEATTLE DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
 1519 ALASKAN WAY SOUTH  
 SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98134

*13, 100 -*

NPSEN-PL-ER

24 MAY 1971

MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION  
 RECEIVED  
 MAY 27 1971  
 HELENA, MONTANA

Lewis M. Chittim, State Highway Engineer  
 Montana Highway Commission  
 Helena, Montana 59601

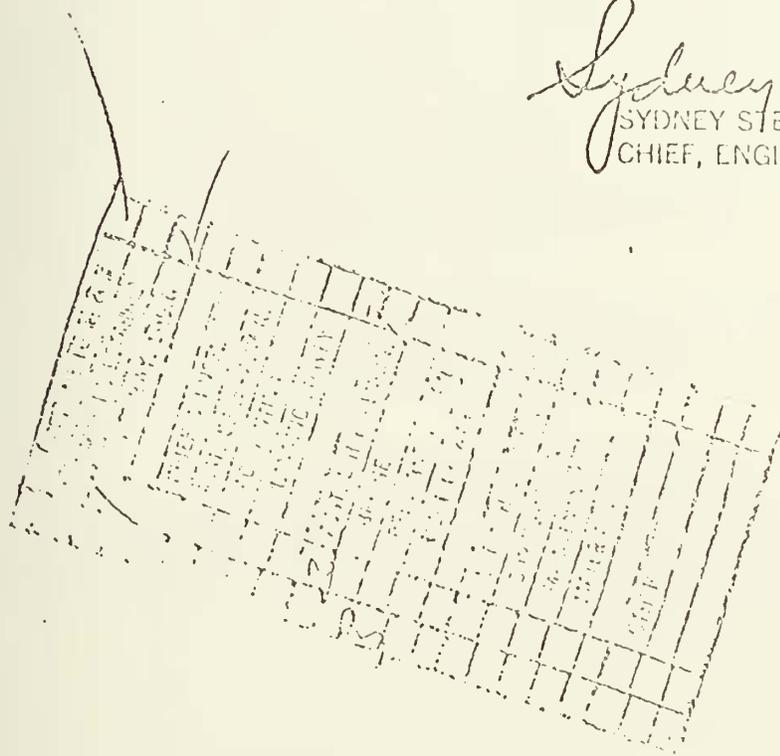
Dear Mr. Chittim:

We have reviewed the draft Environmental Statement for Project 190-1(13)39 and 190-1(40)43 transmitted by your letter of 22 April 1971. We assume the three river crossings have been analyzed for water way openings and other possible infringements to overbank flow. The proposed project would have no adverse impacts in environmental areas under the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers.

We appreciate the opportunity to review the draft statement.

Sincerely yours,

*Sydney Steinborn*  
 SYDNEY STEINBORN  
 CHIEF, ENGINEERING DIVISION



Date Recd. Preconct.		<i>6-1-71</i>	
NO	INFO	MAIL ROUTE	Attach Initial
		30 COPY MAIL	
		31 Field Design	
		32 Structural Design	
		33 Water Control	
		34 Water Control	
		35 Environmental	
		36 Environmental	
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		100 Highway	

LETTER #8



LETTER OF IDENTIFICATION

DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

FISH AND GAME

Helena, Montana 59601  
May 11, 1971

Mr. Grover O. Powers  
Preconstruction Engineer  
Montana Highway Department  
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Grover:

As requested in your letters of April 22, we have reviewed the Environmental Impact Statements on several projects. These projects are:

- Project I 90-1(13)35 - St. Regis-East
- Project I 90-1(13)39 - Sloway-East and West ✓
- Project I 90-1(40)43 - Superior-West ✓

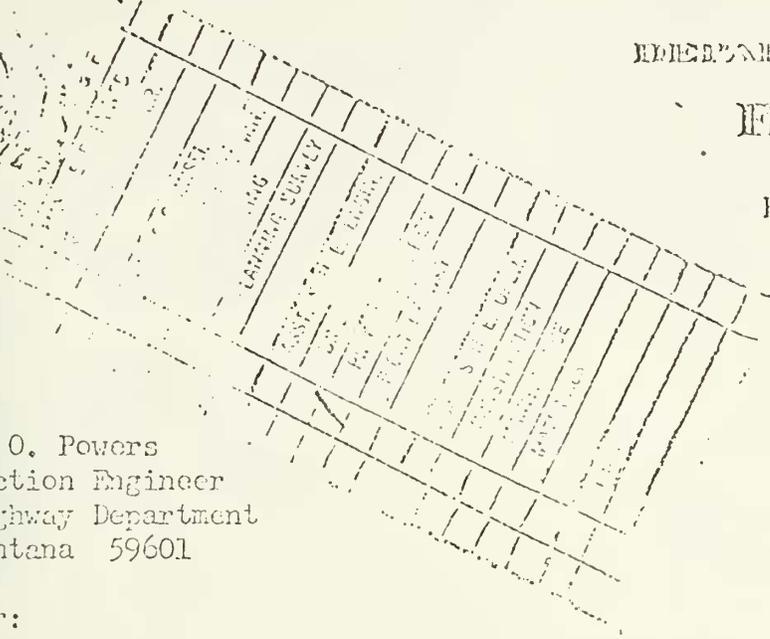
It would appear from the review of the above mentioned projects that some standardization of reporting procedures regarding Environmental Impact Statements is necessary. The statement prepared for St. Regis-East is much less comprehensive than the statement prepared for Sloway-East and West and Superior-West. In fact, in our opinion it appears to be a very superficial treatment of such a major environmental alteration as construction of an interstate highway. The other report on Sloway-East and West and Superior-West, while attempting to treat the environmental impact to a more significant depth, I believe makes some statements that would be difficult to substantiate with data, particularly as it relates to the effect of the interstate on wildlife populations. We are not necessarily disputing the findings in these reports; however, we do question the existence of biological data that would corroborate the opinions expressed.

Since the process of preparing these Environmental Impact Statements for highway construction projects is relatively new, I believe we should come to some understanding concerning the preparation and input from various state agencies into these reports.

It has been our experience that most consulting firms preparing Environmental Statements frequently show up at Fish and Game offices requesting available data which is then used to prepare these reports. I do not know what these reports cost the Highway Department; however, it would appear that there is the possibility that

LETTER #9

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STATE HIGHWAY COMMISSION REGIONAL OFFICE, REGION I  
BOX 8008  
BOISE, IDAHO 83707

MAY 19 1971

Mr. Lewis M. Chittim  
State Highway Engineer  
Montana Highway Commission  
Helena, Montana 59601

*St Regis*

Dear Mr. Chittim:

We appreciate the opportunity to review your Environmental Impact Statement covering the construction of a four-lane divided highway in western Montana. As pointed out in your statement, construction of a major highway can and does affect ecologic systems through modification of wildlife forage and habitat, changes in soil stability, and disturbance of surface and ground water relationships. This is particularly true in forested areas where much of the natural vegetation must be disturbed during construction. To a lesser extent it is also true for range areas.

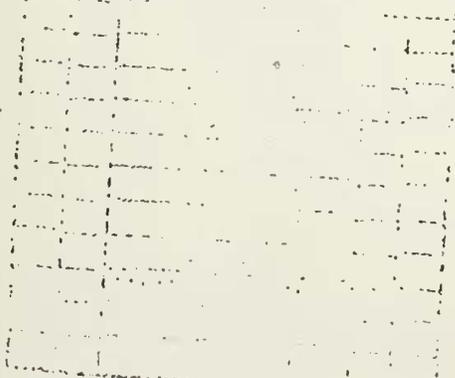
We note that your study includes measures that would help to minimize the adverse visual impacts through use of revegetation and planned tree screens between roadways, frontage roads, and railroads where possible. In this connection, we note that while there are undesirable impacts, the overall impact of the highway program is beneficial to the human environment. Highway transportation is a commodity upon which the tourist and local users have become vitally dependent.

In the last paragraph of your statement on page 5, you indicate that a woven wire fence will keep the cattle off the highway. By inference, there is nothing being done to prevent the loss of wildlife that could get onto the highway. If there are any measures that could be taken, or are being considered, to minimize wildlife losses, a short discussion on this point would be helpful.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this statement.

Sincerely,

*[Handwritten signature]*  
Regional Director



*[Handwritten notes and signatures]*  
See St. Regis  
to Dept. of Interior



Oxford

ESSELTE

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