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THOMAS L. JUDGE  
GOVERNOR



STATE OF MONTANA  
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

HELENA, MONTANA 59601

H. J. ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

April 2, 1975

IN REPLY REFER TO:

RECEIVED

RF 171 (16)  
Norris Hill

APR 4 1975

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
COUNCIL

Environmental Quality Council  
Capitol Station  
Helena, Montana 59601

Gentlemen:

Attached, for your information, are two (2) copies of the Agency Impact Determination for the above project, as approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

Very truly yours,

H. J. ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

By *Stephen C. Kologi*  
Stephen C. Kologi, P. E., Chief  
Preconstruction Bureau

32-SCK:mg  
Enclosures

cc: K. F. Skoog

GEORGE VUCANOVICH, CHAIRMAN  
HELENA

Wm. M. KESSNER, VICE CHAIRMAN  
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SIDNEY



The new highway would be built as a two-lane facility utilizing two 12-foot driving lanes with 8-foot shoulders giving a surface width of 40 feet.

As shown on the attached autoscreen print the majority of the project passes through grazing land along with some cultivated farm land. The exception to this is at the end of the project, through Norris, where the centerline would closely follow the existing centerline of the highway.

## 2. PROBABLE IMPACT

The major impact of this project will be to provide a safe and efficient highway facility that will adequately serve the traveling public. Most of this project can be built without major disruptions to the flow of traffic. New right-of-way will be required for the project. The East Line would require about 161 acres of new right-of-way. Either the West Line or the Alternate of the West Line would require about 140 acres of new right-of-way. The standard right-of-way width, for a rural primary highway, is 160 feet, 80 feet each side of centerline.

At this time, it appears that one (1) family and their dwelling along with three (3) buildings used for storage will be displaced as a result of this project. These buildings are on the left, or west side, of centerline at about Station 512+00 to 518+00. The Department of Highways has right-of-way procedures including relocation assistance that will be available to any displaced persons. Also, no one will be displaced until adequate replacement housing has been obtained.

No historical sites, natural landmarks, parks, recreation areas, or wildlife or waterfowl areas will be affected by this project.

This project should have minimal, if any, effect on the economy of the area except possibly during construction. Construction should aid short-term employment in the area which in turn will benefit the area businesses.

## 3. PROBABLE ADVERSE IMPACTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED

Some water pollution may occur during construction. However, efforts will be made to keep this pollution to a minimum. The Montana Department of Highways Standard Specifications contain certain provisions pertaining to this matter that the contractor will have to follow. Interim erosion control measures will also be incorporated into the project during construction. Also, the contractor will be required to adhere to all state and national laws regarding this matter.

Although air pollution is expected to be increased during construction, some abatement of this will be provided by requirements in the standard specifications and special provisions. Watering and similar means will be included to alleviate the dust problems associated with highway construction.

The Department of Health and Environmental Sciences has reviewed the subject project. They stated, "We have reviewed the plans of the referenced project and find there should be no adverse effects on air quality from the construction of this project. We know of nothing existing or planned that would adversely affect the project in air quality considerations. We assume that usual precautions will be taken during construction to protect the environment from excessive dust and that any clearing and grubbing will be done according to current specifications." A copy of this response to the Letter of Intent is attached.

Future noise pollution will not be a detrimental factor on this project. Using the NCHRP Report 117 method (copy of analysis attached - EXHIBIT C) it was found that the future  $L_{10}$  noise level is about 71+ dBA. Although this exceeds the 70 dBA allowable, the difference would hardly be discernible and the projection is based on the amount of noise created by present-day vehicles. Vehicles of the future may create less noise than present day vehicles.

#### 4. ALTERNATES

In addition to the no-build alternate, several alternates are being considered for this project and are shown on the attached copy of the project autoscreen. The alternates are:

- Alt. 1 = West Line
- Alt. 2 = Alternate of the West Line
- Alt. 3 = East Line

Alternates 1, 2, and 3 have an essentially common alignment, as shown on the attached autoscreen print, from the beginning of the project at McAllister to about Station 150+00 just south of the Norris Hill Summit. From the summit north to approximately station 400+00 of the East Line, the alternates diverge to two separate alignments, Alternates 1 and 2 being on the west side of the existing highway and the main drainage and Alternate 3 being on the east side of the drainage and east of the existing highway. From Station 400+00 ahead the alternates again have a common alignment and closely follow the existing alignment to the end of the project, which is at Norris. The surface width of this project on any alternate will be 40 feet, with two 12-foot driving lanes and 8-foot shoulders. It is possible that climbing lanes may be added to portions of the various alternates between approximate Stations 150+00 to 400+00. In this case the surface width would be 48 feet with two 12-foot driving lanes with a 4-foot shoulder in the upgrade direction and one 12-foot driving lane with an 8-foot shoulder in the downgrade direction. The maximum grade to be used on the new construction will be about 6.0% as compared to the 7.0% grade which now exists on portions of this section of highway. At the summit it is proposed that no cut or a very shallow cut will be used to help alleviate snow problems.

The "no-build" alternative would leave the present facilities as they exist. Although the present facility is a two-lane roadway there is a need for improved safety and efficiency. The existing roadway has a narrow surface width, steep grades, sharp curves, poor sight distance, and is a maintenance problem in the winter. In the winter, large amounts of drifting snow requires the road to be continually plowed near the summit. Closures of the road due to this snow drifting condition have occurred. This condition would not be changed if the no-build alternate were selected.

#### 5. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT TERM USE AND LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

There will be some short-term uses of the environment during the construction of this project, however, we expect them to be insignificant. After construction, the flow of traffic will be improved but the overall traffic patterns will not change. Manmade features that will be taken to build this project are located in Norris and are a couple of old buildings used for storage. Also one dwelling in Norris will have to be taken or relocated. These buildings are on the left, or west side, of centerline.

The effect on natural features will be insignificant. The construction process could disrupt the area and cause some traffic delay, however, this will be short lived and last only as long as it takes to complete the necessary work.

The long-term effect will be the provision of a safe and efficient transportation facility for the traveling public. Although access to some land may be improved, we do not expect this to cause any significant change in land use.

6. IRREVERSIBLE AND IRRETRIEVABLE COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

Money, labor, road building materials, will be irretrievably committed to this project. The land that will be required for right-of-way will not be available for other use unless a demand greater than the roadway requires a change in land use. The commitment of social and cultural resources will be insignificant. There does not appear to be any major irreversible commitment of resources that would significantly affect the environment in the area of the project. Therefore, the use of money, labor, and materials is considered to be justified as it will provide a much needed improved highway facility to serve the traveling public.

7. BASIS FOR DETERMINATION

The attached "Letter of Intent" was sent to all persons and agencies considered to have an interest in the project. The mailing list is included with the letter. Following the letter are all the comments that were received. Also attached is an auto-screen print of the project.

Based on the foregoing, it is our opinion that the discussed project alternative do not significantly affect the environment and will not be a major action.

The return of one signed copy of this Agency Impact Determination indicating your concurrence will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

H. J. ANDERSON  
DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS

By Stephen C. Kologi  
Stephen C. Kologi, P. E., Chief  
Preconstruction Bureau

32-SCK:KFS:JCU:CAS:mg  
Enclosures

- cc: J. R. Beckert w/attach.
- D. D. Anderson "
- R. E. Champion "
- S. C. Kologi "
- K. F. Skoog "
- R. C. Holmes "

I concur H. M. Stewart  
H. M. Stewart, Division Engineer  
Federal Highway Administration

Date July 21 1975

*Handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom of the page, including "M. Lane" and "C. Kologi".*