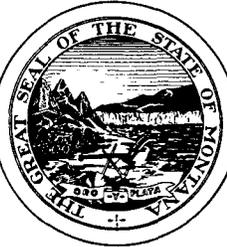


DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
PLANNING, PREVENTION & ASSISTANCE DIVISION

Revd  
06-05-98  
EQC



MARC RACICOT, GOVERNOR

LEE METCALF BUILDING  
1520 EAST SIXTH AVENUE

STATE OF MONTANA

(406) 444-6697  
fax (406) 444-6836

May 29, 1998

PO BOX 200901  
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-0901

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS

As required by state and federal rules for determining whether an Environmental Impact Statement is necessary, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed action below:

Project	Helena Wastewater Treatment Facility
Location	Helena, Montana
Project Number	C301034
Total Cost	\$9,950,000.00

The City of Helena, through the 1997 Wastewater Facility Plan, has identified the need to upgrade their existing wastewater treatment system. The City is currently being served by a central gravity collection system and a 6 mgd secondary treatment plant. The plant processes include preliminary treatment, primary clarification, an activated biofilter, aeration basins, final clarification, disinfection, WAS thickening, anaerobic digestion, biosolids dewatering, and land application. The existing facility can not satisfy the current MPDES discharge permit requirements. Therefore, the system is in need of an upgrade. The City of Helena initiated the 1997 wastewater facility plan to address possible upgrades to the existing wastewater treatment facility. The recommended alternative is to upgrade the existing facility to improve secondary treatment and to accomplish significant ammonia removal. Improved and expanded secondary treatment aeration basins will replace the ABF Tower which is currently at risk of imminent failure. Improved sludge thickening equipment will be installed and various components throughout the facility that have reached the end of their useful life will be replaced thereby improving the reliability and performance of the facility. Improvements to the sludge thickening process will improve plant process control and efficiency. The improved wastewater effluent quality and facility reliability will reduce the pollutant load to a currently impaired Prickly Pear Creek, but will not increase or decrease the current volume of wastewater discharged to the Creek. All improvements to the wastewater treatment facility will be conducted within the boundaries of the existing facility. The project will be funded by Treasure State Endowment Grant (TSEP) and a State Revolving Fund Loan (SRF). Environmentally sensitive characteristics such as historical sites, wetlands, floodplain and threatened or endangered species are not expected to be adversely impacted as a result of the proposed project. No significant long-term environmental impacts were identified. An environmental assessment which describes the project and analyzes the impacts in more detail is attached to this Finding of No Significant Impact.

These documents are available for public scrutiny at the following locations:

Department of Environmental Quality  
1520 East Sixth Avenue  
P.O. Box 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

City of Helena  
316 North Park Avenue  
Helena, MT 59624

Comments supporting or disagreeing with this decision may be submitted for consideration by the Department of Environmental Quality. After evaluating the comments received, the agency will make a final decision. However, no administrative action will be taken on the project for at least 30 calendar days after release of the Finding of No Significant Impact.

Sincerely,



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Tom Livers, Bureau Chief  
Technical and Financial Assistance Bureau  
Planning, Prevention & Assistance Division