

Department of Environmental Quality
Permitting and Compliance Division
Air and Waste Management Bureau
1520 E. Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901
(406) 444-3490 FAX (406) 444-1499

FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

ISSUED TO: Montana Power Company
Colstrip Project Division
P.O. Box 38
Colstrip, MT 59323

RECEIVED

SEP 16 1998

**ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY COUNCIL**

PERMIT NUMBER: 1187-04

PRELIMINARY DETERMINATION ON PERMIT ISSUED: August 28, 1998
DEPARTMENT DECISION ISSUED: September 14, 1998

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA) COMPLIANCE: An environmental assessment required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act, was completed for this project as follows:

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF SITE: Section 34, Township 2 North, Range 41 East, Rosebud County

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: MPC submitted an application to alter permit #1187-03 for the Colstrip 3&4 facility. The alteration includes incorporation of a 3-hour rolling average SO₂ limit, the 1% inlet sulfur standard that was inadvertently removed during the previous modification, and the removal of the inlet monitor requirement. The 3-hour SO₂ limit is being incorporated in the permit to ensure protection of the 3-hour SO₂ standard. The 1% inlet sulfur limit existed in the original permit, but was inadvertently removed during the last permit modification. MPC has continued to maintain compliance with the 1% inlet sulfur limit, even though it was not stated in the permit. The requirement for the inlet sulfur monitor as a compliance demonstration for the inlet sulfur content is being replaced with an on-going fuel sampling analysis.

BENEFITS AND PURPOSE OF PROPOSAL: The proposed limit will protect the 3-hour SO₂ ambient standard as well as ensure that the 1% sulfur content limit is in the permit. The change in the compliance demonstration for the sulfur limit will benefit both the MPC and the department. The sampling will provide on-going accurate information regarding the sulfur content of the fuel. The advantage to MPC is the monitors are expensive and difficult to assure data quality.

DESCRIPTION AND ANALYSIS OF REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES WHENEVER ALTERNATIVES ARE REASONABLY AVAILABLE AND PRUDENT TO CONSIDER: No reasonable alternatives are available.

A LISTING AND APPROPRIATE EVALUATION OF MITIGATION, STIPULATIONS AND OTHER CONTROLS ENFORCEABLE BY THE AGENCY OR ANOTHER GOVERNMENT AGENCY: A list of enforceable permit conditions are contained in Air Quality Permit 1187-04.

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 to demonstrate compliance with those requirements and do not unduly restrict private property rights.

Potential Impact on Physical Environment

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

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats
 Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution
 Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture
 Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality
 Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality
 Aesthetics
 Unique Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resource
 Demands on Environmental Resource of Water, Air and Energy
 Historical and Archaeological Sites

The incorporation of the 3-hour SO₂ limit, 1% sulfur content limit, and compliance demonstration through fuel sampling at the MPC Colstrip 3&4 facility will not change the allowable emissions from the facility. No other changes will be seen at the facility and the facility is currently complying with the limits and conducting the fuel sampling.

2. Air Quality
 Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

MPC Colstrip 3&4 will be required to comply with all applicable requirements and permit #1187-04. Compliance with the 3-hour SO₂ limit will be confirmed with the SO₂ CEM and compliance with the 1% sulfur limit will be demonstrated with the on-going fuel sampling. There will be no change in allowable emissions as a result of this permit alteration.

Potential Impact on Human Environment

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

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

1. Social Structures and Mores
 Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity
 Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue
 Agricultural or Industrial Production
 Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities
 Quantity and Distribution of Employment
 Distribution of Population
 Demands for Government Services
 Industrial and Commercial Activity
 Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals

MPC operates Unit 3&4 in Colstrip, Montana. The facility's operates two tangential coal-fired boilers and will not change this operation through the current permit action. The current permit action will incorporate a 3-hour SO₂ limit which will demonstrate protection of the ambient standard, and re-states the 1% sulfur content limit. Compliance with sulfur content limit will be demonstrated with the on-going fuel sampling.

2. Human Health
 Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

MPC Colstrip 3&4 will be required to comply with all applicable requirements and permit #1187-04. Compliance with the 3-hour SO₂ limit will be confirmed with the SO₂ CEM and compliance with the 1% sulfur limit will be demonstrated with the on-going fuel sampling. There will be no change in allowable emissions as a result of this permit alteration.

RECOMMENDATION: An EIS is not required.

IF AN EIS IS NOT REQUIRED, EXPLAIN WHY THE EA IS AN APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF ANALYSIS:
The current permitting action results in no increase in the current allowable emissions for the facility and will require the facility to demonstrate compliance with the ambient standards. In addition, there are requirements in permit #1187-04 that further limit the facility.

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: Vickie Walsh
DATE: August 18, 1998