

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
PERMITTING & COMPLIANCE DIVISION

METCALF BUILDING  
1520 E SIXTH AVE

MARC RACICOT, GOVERNOR



STATE OF MONTANA

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HELENA, MONTANA  
PO BOX 200901  
59620-0901

PUBLIC NOTICE NO. MT-98-15  
November 25, 1998

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ENVIRONMENTAL  
QUALITY COUNCIL

PURPOSE OF PUBLIC NOTICE

The purpose of this notice is to state the Department's intention to issue and/or renew wastewater discharge permits under the authority of MCA 75-5-402 and ARM 17.30.1301 et seq. (Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System.)

It is the Department's intention to issue and/or renew (1) industrial permit.

APPLICANT INFORMATION AND DEPARTMENT'S TENTATIVE DETERMINATIONS

APPLICANT NAME: Columbia Falls Aluminum Company (CFAC)  
APPLICANT ADDRESS: 2000 Aluminum Drive  
Columbia Falls, MT 59912  
APPLICANT STATUS: Permit Modification  
FACILITY LOCATION: Section 3, Township 30 North, Range 20 West  
PERMIT NUMBER: MT-0030066  
EXPIRATION DATE: February 28, 1999  
RECEIVING WATERS: Flathead River

This application is for the discharge of industrial wastewater to ground water that is hydrologically connected to the Flathead River. The discharge is from several major process components within the plant and from precipitation percolation through landfilled solid waste. The process discharges include carbon paste plant briquette cooling water, wet air emissions scrubber water, aluminum ingot cooling water, and plant domestic wastewater. The process discharges report to two sets of percolation ponds.

The ground water flowing beneath the plant site receives wastewater seepage from the percolation ponds in addition to other sources that include plant drywells and landfills used for historical waste disposal. Plant storm water is also routed to the ponds and drywells. The affected ground water enters the river along the reach adjacent to CFAC property. The location of the discharge to the river is Latitude 48° North, 23' 23", Longitude 144° East, 8' 30".

The CFAC permit application contains an application for mixing zones in both surface and ground water. A "mixing zone" is a limited area of a surface water body or aquifer where initial dilution of a discharge takes place and where water quality changes may occur. Also recognized as an area where certain water quality standards may be exceeded. The tentative permit grants the requested mixing zone.

The permit requires sampling at 10 monitoring wells, two production wells and three surface water monitoring points to observe measurable effects of the discharge on the ground water within the area of the plant and surface water in the Flathead River. The monitoring points will be points of compliance with The Montana Water Quality Act (75-5-101 *et seq.* MCA) and the Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM 17.30.608, 17.30.1001 *et seq.*, and 17.30.1301 *et seq.*).

Tentative determinations have been made by Department staff relative to effluent limitations and other conditions to be imposed by the permit. The surface water in the area of the discharge is classified as "B-1" by the State's Water Quality Standards. Waters classified as "B-1" are suitable for drinking, culinary and food processing purposes after conventional treatment; bathing, swimming and recreation; growth and propagation of salmonid fishes and associated aquatic life, water fowl and furbearers; and agricultural and industrial water supply. Ground water in the area of the discharge is classified as "Class I", suitable for public and private drinking water supplies, culinary and food processing purposes, irrigation, livestock and wildlife watering, and for commercial and industrial purposes with little or no treatment. The recommended date for expiration is February 28, 2003.

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#### REGISTER OF INTERESTED PERSONS

Any person interested in a particular application, or group of applications, may submit their name, address, and telephone number to the Department for the purpose of being included on the mailing list for public notice of tentative permits. The list of names will be maintained as a means for contacting persons with an interest in MPDES permit actions.

#### PUBLIC COMMENT

Public comments are invited ANYTIME PRIOR TO CLOSE OF BUSINESS December 28, 1998 or within 30 days of date of posting, whichever is later. Comments may be directed to the DEQ Permitting & Compliance Division, Water Protection Bureau, PO Box 200901, Helena, Montana, 59620. All comments received or postmarked PRIOR TO CLOSE OF BUSINESS December 28, 1998 or 30 days from posting date will be considered in the formulation of final determinations to be imposed on the permits.

If no objections are received within the specified comment period, the Department will issue final determinations within sixty days of the date of this notice. Additional information may be obtained upon request by calling (406) 444-3080, or by writing to the aforementioned address. The draft permit, environmental assessments, and related documents are available for review and reproduction at the aforementioned address.

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