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Richard H. Opper, Director

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December 2, 2011

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Dept. of Transportation, Jim Skinner, Helena, MT 59620

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Pursuant to the Administrative Rules of Montana, 17.4.609, the following Environmental Assessment has been prepared by the Department of Environmental Quality concerning Pacific Steel & Recycling a motor vehicle wrecking facility in Billings, MT.

The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to inform all interested governmental agencies, public groups or individuals of the proposed action and to determine whether or not the action may have a significant effect on the human environment. This Environmental Assessment will be circulated for a period of thirty **(30) days** at which time a decision will be made as to our future action.

If you wish to comment on this proposed action, please do so in writing, within the allotted time.

Sincerely,

Bruce W. Meyer
Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Program
(406) 444-2835 or e-mail at brmeyer@state.mt.us
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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Division/Bureau: Permitting & Compliance \ Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Program

Project or Application: Pacific Steel & Recycling, MT - A proposed private auto wrecking facility.

Description of Project: Pacific Steel & Recycling located at 777 4th Ave N, in Billings, Montana, has submitted a motor vehicle wrecking facility license application to this department for review. The proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility will be situated in Yellowstone County. The legal description of the facility is in the NE ¼ of the NW ¼ Section 17, Township 1 North, Range 27E. The facility is approximately 23.5 acres in size and located on Coulson Rd east of Lockwood. The Certificate of Survey is 2009 Tract 2.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal: Pacific Steel & Recycling is proposing to establish a motor vehicle wrecking facility east of Lockwood on Coulson Road, Lockwood, Montana. As required by the Motor Vehicle Recycling and Disposal Act, all wrecking facilities must be shielded from public view. "Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen. By obtaining a motor vehicle wrecking facility license, Pacific Steel & Recycling would be allowed to: (1) Buy, sell, or deal in four or more vehicles per year of a type required to be licensed, for the purpose of wrecking, dismantling, disassembling, or substantially altering the form of the motor vehicle, (2) Buy or sell component parts, in whole or in part, and deal in second-hand junk vehicles, and (3) Purchase wrecked vehicles from insurance companies. Insurance companies are required by state law to sell junk vehicles only to licensed motor vehicle wrecking facilities. This business would provide a commercial source of automotive parts which would provide a cost saving to the consumer and would conserve energy and natural resources otherwise used to manufacture new parts.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider:

Alternative #1. Not to establish and license a facility at this location. This would limit public access to used automotive parts.

Alternative #2. To establish and license a facility at a location other than the one proposed in the license application. This would require the applicant to find and acquire by purchase or lease a different parcel of property for the proposed usage.

Alternative #3. To establish and license a facility at the proposed location.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency: Automotive fluids must be drained from the vehicles prior to the vehicle being placed in storage. All fluids removed from the vehicles must be captured over an impermeable surface, properly containerized, and properly stored for reuse, recycling, or proper disposal. This is a management method intended to alleviate the potential for groundwater contamination. This is a license condition enforceable by the agency.

CFCs (Freon) must not be released to the environment. This is a federally enforceable requirement and is enforced by the U.S. EPA.

Recommendation: N/A

If an EIS is needed, and if appropriate, explain the reasons for preparing the EA: N/A

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: Based on the information submitted for review with the license application, it is the preliminary determination of the department that an Environmental Assessment (EA) will provide an adequate review for this proposal.

Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction:
Yellowstone County Commissioners.

Individuals or groups contributing to this EA: Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation; United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service; Montana Historical Society, and State Historic Preservation Office.

EA prepared by Bruce W. Meyer

Date: December 2, 2011

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitat			xxx			xxx
2. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution			xxx			xxx
3. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture			xxx			xxx
4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality			xxx			xxx
5. Aesthetics				xxx		xxx
6. Air Quality				xxx		
7. Unique, Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resources				xxx		
8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air, and Energy				xxx		
9. Historical and Archaeological Sites				xxx		xxx

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: The potential impacts on the physical environment will be minimal because of the proposed management practices. Upon closure of the facility and removal of the junk vehicles the aesthetics of the site will return to their original state.

POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

	Maj	Mod	Min	None	Unkn	Att
1. Social Structure and Mores				xxx		
2. Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity				xxx		
3. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue			xxx			xxx
4. Agricultural or Industrial Production				xxx		
5. Human Health				xxx		
6. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities				xxx		
7. Quantity and Distribution of Employment			xxx			xxx
8. Distribution of Population				xxx		
9. Demands for Government Services			xxx			xxx
10. Industrial and Commercial Activities				xxx		
11. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals				xxx		xxx

*Maj = Major; Mod = Moderate; Min = Minor; Unkn = Unknown; Att = Attached

CUMULATIVE AND SECONDARY IMPACTS: The impacts will be minor for local and state tax base and tax revenue due to the size of the facility. The quantity and distribution of employment will be minor to none because of the number employed. The demands for government services will be minor to none and will be covered by county staff and state staff.

PACIFIC STEEL & RECYCLING - ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

General Comments

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality licenses and regulates motor vehicle wrecking facilities under the authority of the Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Act (75-10-501, MCA) and Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM 17.50.201).

To be eligible for licensing, a proposed wrecking facility must:

- 1) Be in compliance with all existing zoning ordinances on the date the license application is submitted to the department.
- 2) Be capable of being shielded from view of any existing public road. If the license application is approved, the applicant must construct all necessary shielding prior to the issuance of the license and commencement of operation at the facility.
- 3) Not create any adverse environmental impacts.

The department has made the preliminary determination that the applicant is in compliance with the existing zoning ordinances as of the date of the submittal of the application and can effectively shield the proposed facility from all public roads in the area. The purpose of the Environmental Assessment is to determine if the proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility can be established without posing significant adverse environmental impacts.

Potential Impacts on Physical Environment

1. Terrestrial & aquatic life habitats
4. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality

The proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility will be in Yellowstone County. This facility will be located just east of Lockwood on Coulson Rd, MT. The legal description of the facility is in NE ¼ NW ¼ of Section 17, Township 1 North, Range 27 East PMM. The certificate of survey number is 2009 tract 2. The facility is approximately 23.5 acres in size. Chain link fencing 8 feet high with slats and buildings will shield the junk vehicles from public view.

This wrecking facility is surrounded by agriculture land and two roads. This location would serve as habitat for birds and small mammals.

The establishment of a motor vehicle wrecking facility will disturb and displace a minor portion of the vegetation and wildlife habitat within the proposed location. The impacts caused by the wrecking facility should not be significant to the area's ecosystem since similar habitat surrounds the proposed site.

Water quality, quantity, and distribution

The properties in this area are on wells. The static ground water level in sections 3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,27,28,29,30 Township 1 N, Range 27 E varies from 1050 feet to 10 feet below ground surface (BGS) with an average of static water level of 50.26 feet (BGS). The static ground water level in sections 1,12,13,24,25 ,Township 1 N, Range 26 E varies from 1050 feet to 11.5 feet (BGS) below ground surface with an average of static water level of 33.63 feet (BGS). This proposed motor vehicle wrecking yard is not expected to have any impacts on the quality, quantity, and distribution of the ground water because of the proposed Management Practices. These practices will include the removal of the automotive fluids over an impermeable pad before the junk vehicles are processed. These auto fluids will be either reused or properly recycled. The facility will install a storm water retention pond to contain any run off from the facility.

3. Geology and soil quality, stability, and moisture

The soils in the vicinity of the site are classified by the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service as McRae and Haverson series. These soils are well drained, 1 to 4 and 0 to 1 percent slope, and more than 60 inches to water table. Waste anti-freeze, gasoline, and lubricating oils contain petroleum distillates, heavy metals, and possibly toxic compounds. If improperly disposed of, can cause surface and groundwater degradation. The applicant proposes to properly recycle all of the above-named automotive fluids. Some residual lubricating oils and anti-freeze may drip from the vehicles stored at the facility. This residual dripping is not expected to be significant or result in heavy soil accumulations because the junk vehicles will be processed over an impermeable surface.

5. Aesthetics

The applicant plans to use an 8 foot high chain link fence with slats and buildings to shield the junk vehicles from public view. An onsite evaluation by department personnel determined the chain link fence with the slants would be adequate to meet the shielding requirements of the Motor Vehicle Recycling & Disposal Act.

"Public view" is defined as any point six (6) feet above the surface of the center of a public road from which the junk vehicles can be seen.

9. Historical and archaeological sites

The file search for this area listed the Coulson Ditch which runs through the proposed property. The proposed facility will be located so it does not interfere with the Coulson Ditch. Based on the information gathered from the State Historic Preservation Office, it was concluded that the proposed facility would have a low likelihood of impacting cultural resources in area.

Potential Impacts on Human Environment

3. Local & state tax base & tax revenue
7. Quantity and distribution of employment

The establishment of the proposed motor vehicle wrecking facility may provide a source of used motor vehicles or component parts for sale to the public. The issuance of a motor vehicle wrecking facility license will allow the applicant to: (1) Buy, sell, or deal in four or more vehicles per year of a type required to be licensed for the purpose of wrecking, dismantling, disassembling, or substantially altering the form of the motor vehicle, (2) Buy or sell component parts, in whole or in part, and deal in second-hand motor vehicle parts, and (3) Purchase wrecked vehicles from insurance companies. Insurance companies are required by state law to sell junk vehicles only to licensed motor vehicle wrecking yards.

The establishment of a motor vehicle wrecking facility may create an additional labor requirement and may result in additional employment. This employment and the employment requirements for the support services of this yard may provide a neutral to positive employment impact for the community.

9. Demands for governmental services

The issuance of a motor vehicle wrecking facility license will require administrative and inspection services of the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the Yellowstone County Junk Vehicle Program personnel.

11. Locally adopted environmental plans and goals

The establishment of a motor vehicle wrecking facility at this location does not conflict with any existing zoning ordinances as certified by Nicole Cromwell AICP, Zoning Coordinator, Yellowstone County, Billings, MT.

Effect on Adjoining Landowners and Land Uses Other Site-Specific Information

Information gathered for the preparation of this Environmental Assessment reveals that directly adjacent to the proposed location is tracts of agricultural land, agricultural land with dwellings and two roads. The majority of the Ag properties are bare ground and few of the tracts of land contain dwellings. A small trailer park lies just east of the proposed site. The roads in the area are lightly travelled.

The location of this wrecking facility should have minor or no impact on the adjoining landowners and land uses because of the management practices that have been noted in this EA.