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FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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PREPARED BY STATE DOCUMENTS

STATE OF MONTANA
DEPARTMENT OF HIGHWAYS

FINAL
ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

FOR
PROJECT F-188(7)
CROW AGENCY - HARDIN ROAD
PROJECT F-46(7)
HARDIN-CUSTER ROAD



PLEASE RETURN

ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT (Final)
Project F-188 (7) CROW AGENCY - HARDIN ROAD and Project F-46 (7) HARDIN - CUSTER ROAD

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THIS HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT IS PROPOSED FOR FUNDING UNDER TITLE 23, U.S.C. THIS STATEMENT FOR THE IMPROVEMENT WAS DEVELOPED IN CONSULTATION WITH THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND IS SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO:

SECTION 102(2) (C)
PUBLIC LAW 91-190

H. J. ANDERSON, DIRECTOR OF HIGHWAYS
Date 6-20-72 By [Signature]
ADMINISTRATOR,
ENGINEERING DIVISION

REVIEWED FOR CONTENT AND ACCEPTED BY FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Date _____ By _____
F.H.W.A. REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR

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Attachments: Aerial Photo Project Vicinity Map

Letters of Comment on Draft Environmental Statement
(Letter #1 through #19)

SUMMARY

1. ADMINISTRATIVE ACTION

Action: Final Environmental Statement

2. BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This project is primarily an urban type facility which provides a connection from the North Hardin Interchange to the East Hardin Interchange, through the main business area of Hardin, Montana. The project is located primarily within the urban growth area of Hardin and will be four-lane and two-lane curbed facilities, with the two projects described as follows:

F 46(7) Hardin-Custer Road

This project begins at the intersection of Center Avenue and 3rd Street in Hardin, Montana, proceeds northerly along Center Avenue to approximately 13th Street, then curves and proceeds westerly to tie to Crawford Avenue (Montana Highway 47) for a total distance of approximately 1.1 mile of which 0.5 mile lies within the city limits.

F 188(7) Crow Agency-Hardin Road

This project begins at the intersection of Center Avenue and 3rd Street in Hardin, Montana and proceeds easterly along 3rd Street and U.S. 87 to connect with the Interstate Interchange, the distance being 0.9 mile with 0.2 mile within the city limits.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

This project should have minimum adverse effects upon the area and local residents. The impact upon the population, health, education, employment, area growth and economy will be beneficial. As this project is designed to provide a fast, safe, adequate and efficient facility for the Interstate connection through Hardin, it will benefit and promote the future and potential growth of the undeveloped areas through which these improvements will be constructed.

The environment within the influence pattern of this new facility will not significantly be changed from what would be the long term future growth pattern and development of this urban area.

The future growth and development within the urban influence pattern will develop along and tie into these new facilities.

4. ALTERNATIVES

At the Corridor Public Hearing held in Hardin, six different alternates were presented and reviewed with those attending the hearing. The F-188(7) Crow Agency - Hardin Project, which is the connection from the East Hardin Interchange along U.S. 87 to the intersection of Third Street and Center Avenue would be common for all the different alternates reviewed for the F-46(7) Hardin - Custer Project.

The different F-46(7) alternates all had a common point which commenced at the intersection of Third Street and Center Avenue, with the different alternate alignments briefly summarized as follows:

- (a) West on Third Street to Crawford Avenue and north on Crawford Avenue
- (b) North on Center Avenue to Seventh Street, then west on Seventh Street to Crawford Avenue and north on Crawford Avenue
- (c) North on Center Avenue to Eighth Street, then west on Eighth Street to Crawford and north on Crawford Avenue
- (d) North on Center Avenue to Tenth Street, then west on Tenth Street to Crawford and north on Crawford Avenue
- (e) North on Center Avenue to 13th Street, then west on 13th to Crawford Avenue and north on Crawford Avenue
- (f) North on Center Avenue to 14th Street, then west on 14th Street to Crawford Avenue and north on Crawford Avenue
- (g) A "do-nothing" alternate which would maintain a "status quo" traffic pattern and street condition for the community

The final design alignment of the Center Avenue to 14th Street alternate was adopted or selected as the route desired by the majority of the community of Hardin.

5. INTER-AGENCY REVIEW OF THE DRAFT STATEMENT

The following agencies and organizations were supplied copies of the Draft Environmental Statement from which comments were requested that would be pertinent to the project's effect on the environment. Those agencies and organizations that returned written comments are hereby listed, with the suggestions, recommendations and constructive evaluations herein commented on, summarized, or incorporated within the Final Environmental Statement. It is assumed that those agencies or organizations who did not return comments were satisfied that the project had no adverse effects so far as their agencies are concerned.

AGENCIES SELECTED FOR REVIEW OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT

Mayor City of Hardin Hardin, Montana 59034	National Park Service (D01) 1709 Jackson Street Omaha, Nebraska 68102
Crow Indian Tribal Council Crow Agency, Montana 59022	Bureau of Outdoor Recreation (D01) Room 407, U.S. Courthouse Seattle, Washington 98104
County Commission Big Horn County Hardin, Montana 59034	Bureau of Land Management Federal Building 316 North 26th Street Billings, Montana 59101
Economic Development Administration Chicago Title Building 909 17th Street, Suite 505 Denver, Colorado 80202	Bureau of Reclamation Region Six Billings, Montana 59103
Corps of Engineers Missouri River Division Division Engineer U.S. Army Engineer Division, Missouri River P.O. Box 10 (Downtown Station) Omaha, Nebraska 68101	Soil Conservation Service Federal Building 316 North 26th Street Billings, Montana 59101
Dept. of Health, Education & Welfare 9017 Federal Office Building 19th and Stout Street Denver, Colorado 80202	Environmental Protection Agency Room 916, Lincoln Tower 1860 Lincoln Street Denver, Colorado 80203
	Bureau of Mines Intermountain Field Operations Center Denver, Colorado 80225

Dept. of Housing & Urban Development
Federal Office Building
19th and Stout Streets
Denver, Colorado 80202

Indian Health Service
3 Seventh Street, West
P. O. Box 2143
Billings, Montana 59103

Bureau of Sport Fisheries &
Wildlife (D01)
P.O. Box 3737
Portland, Oregon 97232

Superintendent
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Crow Agency, Montana 59022

Montana Soil Conservation
Committee
Room 224
Sam W. Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Montana Water Resources Board
Sam W. Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

State Council of Natural Resources
Sam W. Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Director
Montana Fish and Game Department
Helena, Montana 59601

Council on Natural Resources and
Development
425 Sam W. Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Montana Aeronautics Commission
P. O. Box 1698
Helena, Montana 59601

School Board
Hardin, Montana 59034

Rural Electrification Administration
Montana Associated Utilities
Rainbow Western Hotel
Great Falls, Montana 59401

Agricultural Stabilization and
Research Service
112 West 13th Avenue
Helena, Montana 59601

Postmaster
Hardin, Montana 59034

Director
State Department of Health
Helena, Montana 59601

Department of Planning and Economic
Development
Capitol Post Office
Helena, Montana 59601

AGENCIES REPLYING TO THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL STATEMENT AND THEIR COMMENTS

Letter #1

From: Montana Water Resources Board
Sam W. Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Comment: Acknowledges receipt of Draft Environmental Statement and states that this has been turned over to the "Environmental Coordinating Committee" for review, with review comments to be submitted at a later date.

(Signed: Douglas G. Smith, Director)

Letter #2

From: State of Montana
State Department of Health
Helena, Montana 59601

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement by this office, and states that adequate consideration of environmental effects from their standpoints appears to have been made. (Signed: Claiborne W. Brinck, Director, Division of Environmental Sanitation)

Letter #3

From: U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Regional Office, Region 6
P. O. Box 2553
Billings, Montana 59103

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and states that the Bureau of Reclamation does not anticipate any projects in the vicinity of this project and therefore has no comment to submit. (Signed: Martin H. Oleson, Jr., Assistant Regional Director)

Letter #4

From: State of Montana
Department of Planning and Economic Development
Capitol Station
Helena, Montana 59601

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and states that the alternative chosen appears to be the least disruptive and concurs with the statement as written. (Signed: Lloyd F. Meyer, A-95 Coordinator)

Letter #5

From: State of Montana
Aeronautics Commission
P. O. Box 1698
Helena, Montana 59601

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environment Statement by the commission and that their conclusion is that the project will provide a betterment rather than deterring from the environment in the area included under the project. Also stated that the Hardin airport will not be adversely

affected in any way. (Signed: Worthie M. Rausher, Deputy Director)

Letter #6

From: State of Montana
Department of Fish and Game
Helena, Montana 59601

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and states that they concur with the statement. (Signed: Ralph W. Boland, Assistant Chief, Environmental Resources Division)

Letter #7

From: U. S. Department of the Interior.
Bureau of Outdoor Recreation
Pacific Northwest Region
1000 Second Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104.

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement by their staff and states that they know of no public recreation areas, projects, or proposals that would be adversely affected by this project. The statement, as it relates to their programs and interests appears to be adequate. (Signed: Maurice H. Lundy; Regional Director, by E. E. Allen, Acting Regional Director)

Letter #8

From: U. S. Department of Transportation
Office of The Secretary
Washington, D.C.

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and states that they have no specific comments to make. (Signed: Herbert F. DeSimone, Assistant Secretary)

Letter #9

From: U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Indian Affairs
Crow Indian Agency
Crow Agency, Montana 59022

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and makes the following comments in support of the statement: (1) the alignment seems very adequate and should facilitate traffic entering the Town of Hardin, (2) the improvements planned should be of benefit to the

residents of the surrounding communities. (Signed: Anson Baker, Superintendent)

Letter #10

From: Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Region VIII, Federal Office Building
19th and Stout Streets
Denver, Colorado 80202

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and states that their department has no comments on the project.

(Signed: Rulon R. Garfield, Ph. D., Action Regional Director)

Letter #11

From: Department of the Army
Omaha District, Corps of Engineers
7410 U.S. Post Office and Court House
Omaha, Nebraska 68102

Comment: States that the proposed work would have no effect upon existing projects or projects under consideration. Also states that since the majority of the project is within the city limits, there does not appear to be any significant disruption of the local environment. It also offered the following recommendations: (1) "Paragraph two of the introduction would appear to be unnecessary, as it states what paragraph one implies". (2) "To any proposed work, there is always the "no-action" alternative when this option is not presented, one wonders why!" (Signed: H. G. Burnett, Chief Engineering Division, by M. G. Eller)

Discussion: Revisions in the Final Environmental Statement will eliminate duplicated information and a "do-nothing" alternate has been included and discussed.

Letter #12

From: Department of Housing and Urban Development
Federal Building, 19th and Stout Streets
Denver, Colorado 80202

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and states that it provides adequate information for evaluation of the urban environmental impact. Also states that there is no basis for reservations or

comments with regard to any adverse impact which this project may have on the urban environment. (Signed: John J. Wilder, Assistant Regional Administrator for Community Planning and Management)

Letter #13

From: Frank A. Rowland
Postmaster
Hardin, Montana 59034

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and states that the route chosen seems to be the best of the possible alternates - the most direct from the interchanges, the least disruptive of residential areas, channelled through the business district, the most economically advantageous to the community. Also discussed the routes effect on the-Postal Service - that during construction some changes would be necessary, but not of permanent nature and as growth would be along this route, adjustment and expansion of mail service would be necessary. Also, expresses concern or hopes that there would be one or two traffic lights at intersections on Center Avenue to regulate traffic. (Signed: Frank A. Rowland, Postmaster)

Discussion: The concern for the problem of changes in line of travel for postal service during construction cannot be avoided, but in the course of this project construction, access can be maintained for normal traffic flow. The intersection of Third Street and Center Avenue will be signalized as this is the existing condition, but additional signalized intersections along Center Avenue is apparently not warranted at this time, with future investigations and traffic studies to be conducted to determine additional traffic control.

Letter #14

From: Department of Housing and Urban Development
Federal Building, 19th and Stout Streets
Denver, Colorado 80202

Comment: Acknowledges review of Draft Environmental Statement for Interstate Highway I-90, and states that they have no basis for reservations

or comments with regard to any adverse impact which this Interstate project may have on the urban environment. (Signed: John J. Wilder, Assistant Regional Administrator for Community Planning and Management)

Letter #15

From: Montana Water Resources Board
Sam W. Mitchell Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Comment: The Draft Environmental Statement was referred to the "Environmental Coordinating Committee" (Letter #1) who had one comment to make - that adequate storm drainage be provided for the project within the city. Also, that storms of high intensity are common in this locality. (Signed: Douglas G. Smith, Director)

Discussion: The project has been designed to provide adequate storm drainage for the entire length of the project. The City of Hardin will be under construction this year with an overall storm drainage system, which in conjunction with the project will provide adequate drainage for the entire area.

Letter #16

From: U. S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Mines
Intermountain Field Operation Center
Building 20, Denver Federal Center
Denver, Colorado 80225

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement and makes references to the fact that no gasfield background has been included in the statement. Reply includes timely information on mineral production for Big Horn County. It further states that the proposed project should benefit mineral and other commercial enterprises of the area and that they do not anticipate any significant adverse impacts. (Signed: D. M. Bishop, Chief, Intermountain Field Operation Center)

Letter #17

From: U. S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration
Helena, Montana 59601

Comment: Acknowledges review of the Draft Environmental Statement

and makes the following comments: (1) requested that the alternates should be discussed and described in the summary; (2) points out that statements are being mailed to the FWQA which is now EPA, and that EPA is now located in Denver; (3) criticized area economic development background information, that this is not wanted, requests additional project vicinity environment discussion, requests under project description right-of-way widths, access control provisions and deficiencies of existing streets; (4) states that it is not relevant to state that the Public Health Service Hospital is located at Crow Agency and that Hardin is not served directly by I-94; (5) objects to including statements on education levels and training; (6) same as (5); (7) points out that there is only one spur line on the east side of Hardin and that the "and" between Burlington Northern is incorrect; (8) requests that the alternates again be discussed and included and shown on a map. Also, a "do-nothing" alternate should be included, properly critique for not following proper format for ease of review and acceptance; (9) requests that the impact of routing through-traffic through Hardin be discussed, that the displacement of people is an adverse environment effect and should be discussed, and the relocation assistance program reviewed; (10) objects to conclusion of adverse environmental effects and states that paragraph is questionable and contradictory, and that clarification is needed, once again requests that the amount of right-of-way needed for the project is desirable information; (11) states that street projects neither enhance nor detract from any recreation or religious opportunities; (12) objects to conclusion or statement made, and that conclusion is highly questionable and warrants further discussion and clarification, points out that all alternates included portions of existing residential streets.

(Signed: W. S. Dunbar, District Engineer)

Discussion: This reply contains valid and constructive comments which have been incorporated into the final statement, and which make direct reference or contribution to the improvement of the environmental statement.

Discussion is herein included for each of the numbered comments and are as follows:

- (1) The different alternatives as presented have been briefly discussed and described in this summary.
- (2) The correct name and address of the various Federal Agencies will be used.
- (3) The primary purpose for including some general background information and economic development data, was to acquaint those people reading the statement with the Hardin area and its conditions. It was felt that those people who review those statements would appreciate this type of information, which is directly or indirectly interconnected with or had a relationship with what is called the environment. Reference to this type of information has been excluded from the final statement. Additional discussion of the project vicinity environment will be included as requested, but it is rather difficult to determine or establish a parameter for the term "vicinity environment" and decide what is to be included or excluded. The right-of-way widths, access control provisions, and existing street conditions have been included in the final statement.
- (4) This irrelevant statement has been excluded from the statement.
- (5) & (6) Reference to any educational levels and training has been excluded from the statement
- (7) This error has been corrected as there is actually only one spur which has two at-grade crossings on the F-188(7) project. Also the "and" between Burlington Northern has been excluded from this grammatical error.
- (8) The different alternatives as presented plus a "do-nothing" alternate along with relative environmental effects has been discussed in the final statement.

A map was included in the draft statement which had some of the

alternate street names depicted thereon. The alternate routes can be easily followed when used with the route description, but a revised map has been included which hopefully will eliminate any difficulty in designating the different alternate routes.

Hopefully, this final statement is in the proper format for ease of review and acceptance.

- (9) The impact of routing through-traffic through the Hardin business district has been discussed in the final statement. The displacement of people has been discussed within this proper Section, and the State's relocation assistance program and availability of relocation housing has been discussed in the final statement.
- (10) Discussion as to the adverse environmental effects of reconstruction of an existing highway within an urban area and the relationship to the necessary right-of-way taking has been discussed in the final statement. Also, the amount of right-of-way needed has been included in the proper section.
- (11) The statement that recreational and religious opportunities will be enhanced by this project has been deleted from the final statement.
- (12) The different alternates have been discussed in the final statement in regard to the environmental effects which the alternates would have. The fact that all the alternates included existing streets can not be denied, but as this is an urban, platted, and developed area, the alternatives were limited to and controlled by these conditions.

5. Design Standards

The design of this project is in accordance with Montana Highway Commission's Standard Drawings, Field and Office Standards and AASHO Standard Specifications for Primary Highways.

All access and traffic control provisions including street intersections, street approaches and pavement markings have been designed in accordance with the Montana Highway Commission's Approach Standards and Pavement Markings manuals.

6. Purpose of Project

This project is designed to provide a fast, safe, adequate and efficient facility for the connection of the North Hardin Interchange through Hardin to the East Hardin Interchange. As this project is basically urban, it will benefit and promote the future and potential growth of the undeveloped areas through which these improvements will be constructed. The future growth pattern will develop along and tie into these new facilities.

Also, this proposed improvement will incorporate, and/or include reconstruction of that length of existing U.S. No. 87 from the intersection of Center Avenue and 3rd Street easterly to the connection with the Interstate construction and Center Avenue from 3rd Street to 8th Street.

This will be an upgrading from the existing condition of these streets, which are older, well travelled, broken, and deteriorated sections. Reconstruction of these existing streets as affected by this project will be definitely beneficial and an improvement to the area.

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

I. Human Resources

The town of Hardin, which is the county seat of Big Horn County, has been selected as the Growth-Center of the Big Horn Economic Development District, and provides services as the only major retail trade center for Big Horn County, the Crow Indian Reservation, and the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation. The major economy for this area is agriculturally based, with commercial-industrial growth being the major economic goal that is being developed.

The Big Horn Economic Development District encompasses an area which contains the Crow Indian Reservation, the Northern Cheyenne Indian Reservation, and Hardin, Montana. It is situated so that its southern boundary is also a portion of the southern boundary of the State of Montana, adjacent to the State of Wyoming.

Located throughout the District are ten Indian Reservation villages and towns with small retail outlets for goods and services. Included are the Agencies for the Crow Indians at Crow Agency and the agency for the Northern Cheyenne Indians at Lame Deer.

Hardin, the only incorporated town in the District, is the county seat of Big Horn County and lies north of and adjacent to the Crow Reservation. The 1970 population of Hardin was 2733, which is about twice the size of any other town in the District.

The trade pattern within the District indicates the necessity of Hardin being the growth center. Most of the durable consumer goods are sold in Hardin and not in the communities in the rest of the District. Nearly all of Hardin's volume of sales originate from within the District.

Hardin is the major trade center for the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Reservations. The primary reason that all areas of the District trade at

Hardin is the proximity and a fairly complete selection of consumer goods and services. In recent years the trend in Indian population residents is increasing. Some Indians currently employed at Crow Agency are living at Hardin and driving to work each day.

The Town of Hardin has a Mayor-City Council type of municipal government which operates a municipal water system, with the source of supply being the Big Horn River, and a sanitary sewer collection and treatment system, with treatment by a sewage lagoon. Electrical service is provided by the Montana Power Company, and natural gas service is provided by Montana-Dakota Utilities.

2. Physiography and Geology

The topography within the Hardin area consists mainly of gently rolling prairie grasslands cut by intermittent coulees, draining into the Bighorn River. The river valley areas where practical, is utilized as irrigated crop land, with the higher benches primarily suited for ranching and dry-land grain production. The greater part of the area is grass covered and considered to be very good grazing land for livestock.

Climatic conditions year around are mild, and all four seasons are distinct and pleasant. Snow seldom exceeds five inches in depth with an average snowfall of approximately 36 inches. Average precipitation at Crow Agency is 15.1 inches, with a record summer high temperature of 110° F. and a winter all-time low of -48° F.

Hardin and vicinity is located on the northeast flank of the Bighorn Mountains. It is considered to be in the extreme northwestern edge of the Powder River Basin Province. The immediate surface area around the Hardin area is covered with shales, clays and sands of Late Cretaceous Age. The river valley consists of alluvium, gravels and sands of a more recent age. The consolidated Cretaceous formations all dip gently, up to three or four degrees, to the east.

Because of oil being discovered in the Powder River Basin in both Montana and Wyoming, the oil industry is at present intensely exploring the Cretaceous beds in their search for oil with much leasing and drilling to be expected in the future.

3. Land Use

The existing land use of the major portion of the area which this project alignment goes through is primarily urban and rural residential. As the major portion of the project follows existing alignments, the land use is not changed. Only that portion of Center Avenue north of 8th Street, which is existing agricultural land, would have its use altered. This area is also mainly a rural residential area, with many areas already built-up.

4. Fish and Wildlife Resources

The area through which this project will cross does not have any natural streams and does not support any wildlife. As this is primarily an urban and built-up area, no known wildlife will be affected.

5. Vegetation Resources

The area in general is a built-up urban area, with commercial-business development. The areas which are not developed are primarily used for agricultural purposes and rural residential areas.

6. Air Quality

Since the area is free of major industrial manufacturing, the air quality is very high and carries a low volume of suspended particulate matter.

7. Water Resources

The Big Horn River is the primary drainage in the project area and is not affected within the limits of the project.

The quality of the water is quite high and is satisfactory for domestic use, with the Big Horn River developing into a major fishing stream.

Flooding within the Hardin area has not been a problem since the construction of Yellowtail Dam, as regulation of stream flow is now possible.

8. Transportation Systems

Presently, Hardin is served by Federal Highways 87, 90, and 212; and by State Highways 47 and 313, with this highway system forming a network that makes it possible to reach Hardin even from outlying areas of the District. Although parts of the Northern Cheyenne Reservation are somewhat remote, there continues to be a great deal of shopping done in Hardin by the Cheyenne people.

The Burlington Northern Railroad provides north-south rail transportation through the Town of Hardin. There is one spur line from this railroad located at the east side of town, which serves the Holly Sugar Company located approximately one mile north of Hardin, and the livestock shipping pens that are located just east of town.

Hardin presently does have a light-plane airport located on the south side of town. The closest commercial air service available to the area is located in Billings, Montana, which is approximately 50 miles west.

IV. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

I. Human Resources

The environmental impact of this project upon the human resources is expected to be minimal, with the impact being more significant during construction of the new facility, which would be an inherent part of any construction activity. The area will be subject to noise and dust pollution and transportation will be a problem, but as these effects are unavoidable, every means will be taken to insure individual safety and reduce inconvenience.

This project will provide the short term high increase of employment during construction of the project, and should provide increasing employment within the area due to the business-commercial development which will be generated along the new facility.

There will be no detrimental effect upon school opportunities. Safety will be provided by the sidewalks in the project for children walking to and from school. These improved facilities will provide for a safer and faster school bus operation.

As this project is within the business-commercial influence of Hardin, the potential economic growth along and adjacent to this new facility will be beneficially affected and should provide many opportunities for new business-commercial development. The new project will provide faster trip time for the local people to and from work, and within the town area.

On the F-46(7) Hardin - Custer Road project, on the curve from Center Avenue extension going to the west, two residences and related garages and out buildings will be within the proposed right-of-way take for this project. On the F-188(7) Crow Agency - Hardin Road project, the Chevron Bulk Oil Plant will be within the proposed right-of-way take. The Camp Custer Market, which has gasoline pump islands within the present right-of-way, will be disrupted by the new alignment and construction.

The impact of routing through-traffic through the Hardin business-commercial area would not appear to have a significant adverse effect, as this type of traffic is normally expected and probably desired, to the extent that some economic gain would be obtained from that traffic which would stop in the area.

A large portion of that traffic which would use this new facility would be regionally and locally generated and would not be through-traffic which would utilize the Interstate and not detour through the business-commercial area of Hardin.

While it cannot be denied that there would always be some adverse environmental effects when locating a highway within an urban area, the question is, where could a highway be located which would have a minimum amount of adverse effects. As this project is upgrading a large portion of existing business-commercial type highway, many of the inherent adverse effects are already present, and this project would alleviate and mitigate many of them due to the increased pavement width and additional traffic lanes.

The project route or alignment appears to have the least amount of adverse effects as it affects mainly existing highway and street and open areas which are not developed.

2. Physiography and Geology

The project will have no effect upon the existing physical features other than the actual construction right-of-way area.

A large portion of the project utilizes existing highway and street right-of-way with the new required right-of-way being presently used for agricultural and rural residential purposes. Adequate construction measures and construction procedures will be taken to minimize damage to the existing character of the area. The projects earthwork should balance, with no need for needing additional waste or borrow areas.

3. Land Use

Due to this project being primarily an urban type project, the future land development and growth will be of an urban nature. The future growth pattern for the major portion of this new facility will be orientated toward this business-commercial type development.

The expected growth pattern will be primarily along that portion of Center Avenue north of 8th Street, which is now being utilized for agricultural and residential purposes.

4. Fish and Wildlife Resources

As the major portion of this project is within the urban area of Hardin and follows existing alignments consisting of present U.S. No. 87 and Center Avenue and with remaining alignment adjacent to developed and built-up areas, there will be no disruptive effect upon any fish, game or other wildlife patterns within the project area.

The project does not cross any natural streams or disturb any wildlife nesting or feeding grounds.

5. Vegetation Resources

As the major portion of new design and alignment will follow existing alignments, mainly 3rd Street and U.S. No. 87, and Center Avenue from 3rd Street to 8th Street, there will not be any significant alteration of the existing character of the area, from previous character, due to this project.

The new alignment from 8th Street northerly on the extension of Center Avenue to the intersection with Crawford Avenue, is presently utilized for agricultural purposes and a rural residential area. As this area is within the rural residential vicinity of Hardin, the growth potential will just be accelerated by this new design. The same growth or change would normally occur, but at a slower rate.

6. Air Quality

No additional air pollution problems are anticipated as the project construction is within, or in close proximity to an urban area. During construction, the contractor's equipment will be made to conform to the Montana State Department of Health regulations covering air pollution.

7. Water Resources

This project construction will not contribute any additional water pollution due to storm drainage run-off, as the entire area has many irrigation ditches and natural drainage courses where run-off is presently being taken.

Storm drainage for the project will be provided by an underground storm drainage system with storm drainage inlets provided as necessary for adequate drainage of these improvements.

The City of Hardin will be constructing an overall storm drainage system which has been incorporated into this project's drainage system, by increasing the size of the different sections of outfall line to accommodate the storm drainage flow.

8. Transportation Systems

The Hardin area transportation system will directly be benefited as the new alignment and typical section provides for a safer, faster and more efficient transportation arterial than would be with the existing alignments. The project construction will up-date the present facilities to the standards required by the present and future generated traffic from within the area.

The railroad transportation system will not be affected by this project.

V. MINIMIZING ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

Adequate measures and construction procedures will be taken to minimize environmental damage in all cases.

All areas within the construction limits will be adequately prepared for seeding to prevent serious erosion problems; drainage will be provided to eliminate standing water areas; adequate access will be provided where necessary; provision will be made to extend and provide for all irrigation and drainage facilities as necessary, so that the existing facilities are not disturbed.

On the entire project, adequate size culverts will be included to adequately handle storm drainage discharge. Irrigation ditch sizes will be maintained, and with the new drainage ditches to be included, the low swampy area north of 8th Street will be adequately drained, which will definitely improve this area. There should be no effect on the normal water table from this construction.

The displacement of the herein discussed people and businesses which are within the right-of-way of this project is an adverse effect, but the Montana Highway Commission does provide assistance through its relocation assistance program. There is adequate housing available within the Hardin area which should not present too much of a hardship on those people who will have to be relocated as a result of this project's construction. The impact of this adverse effect cannot be avoided as the taking of right-of-way is necessary for the project construction.

A small triangular park-like area which is privately owned lies in the southwest corner of 3rd Street and Crook Avenue. The existing trees will not be disturbed and with the addition of the new sidewalk, this area will be enhanced.

VI. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

A Corridor Public Hearing relating to the proposed location of this project was held in Hardin on November 20, 1970, by the Preconstruction Division of the Montana Highway Commission, with the decision to use the Center Avenue - 14th Street alignment being based upon the presentations and petitions received at this public hearing.

At the Corridor Public Hearing that was conducted, six different alternates were presented and reviewed with those attending the hearing. The connection from the East Interchange along U.S. 87 to Third Street and Center Avenue would be common for all the different alternates. The different alternates are as follows:

(a) Third Street - Crawford Avenue

From the common point of Third Street and Center Avenue, and continuing west on Third Street to Crawford Avenue, then north on Crawford Avenue to the North Interchange.

(b) Center Avenue - 7th Street - Crawford Avenue

From the common point of Third Street and Center Avenue, north on Center Avenue to Seventh Street, the west on Seventh Street to Crawford Avenue, then north on Crawford Avenue to the North Interchange.

(c) Center Avenue - 8th Street - Crawford Avenue

From the common point of Third Street and Center Avenue, north on Center Avenue to Eighth Street, then west on Eighth Street to Crawford Avenue, then north on Crawford Avenue to the North Interchange.

(d) Center Avenue - Tenth Street - Crawford Avenue

From the common point of Third Street and Center Avenue, north on Center Avenue to Tenth Street, then west on Tenth Street to Crawford Avenue, then north on Crawford Avenue to the North Interchange.

(e) Center Avenue - 13th Street - Crawford Avenue

From the common point of Third Street and Center Avenue to 13th Street, then west on 13th Street to Crawford Avenue, then north on Crawford Avenue to the North Interchange.

(f) Center Avenue - 14th Street - Crawford Avenue

From the common point of Third Street and Center Avenue, north on Center Avenue to 14th Street, then west on 14th Street to Crawford Avenue, then north on Crawford Avenue to the North Interchange.

(g) A "do-nothing" alternate which would maintain a "status quo" traffic pattern and street condition.

The various alternates were thoroughly discussed along with the advantages and disadvantages, and all comments by those in attendance.

The Mayor of the City of Hardin officially presented City of Hardin Resolution No. 883, which opposed alternate routes and advocated the 14th Street to Center Avenue access as the best route to serve the people of the City of Hardin, Montana.

The decision by the Montana Highway Commission to adopt this route was therefore based upon the wishes and desires of the majority of the people of the community.

The environmental affects of the alternates as herein discussed would basically be similar as each alternate would include portions of existing residential streets within the Hardin area.

The adverse effects of these alternates would be the carrying of the same traffic which would be using this interstate connection along and through mainly residential type areas, which would definitely be of a more adverse nature than through the business-commercial area of Hardin.

The "do-nothing" alternate would not in any way help alleviate the problem of the narrow, congested, poor condition highway connection as is presently existing.

The effects from not upgrading any portion of this highway system would be very adverse and would continue to degenerate and harm the entire community's environment.

VII. SHORT TERM VS. LONG TERM PRODUCTIVITY

As the urban development of the area within the growth pattern of Hardin is directly dependent upon an economical, safe, and fast transportation system, these new facilities will, by long-term enhancement, be more beneficial rather than the short-term enhancement. As economic growth develops, it will follow and be dependent upon the transportation plan of the area of which this project will be the main artery around which the area will grow.

As the major portion of new design and alignment will follow existing alignments, mainly Third Street and U.S. No. 87, and Center Avenue from Third Street to Eighth Street, there will not be any significant alteration of the existing character of the area, from previous character, due to this design.

VIII. COMMITMENTS OF RESOURCES

This project makes no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources, except in the sense that the land as necessary for right-of-way will be unusable for any other purpose as long as the facility is used for this purpose. Gravel aggregates will be used in the construction of the project, but this resource is readily available within the area and should be considered as an economic commodity which is salable.

IX. OTHER BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSED ACTION

Other benefits resulting from this project will be mainly that the new alignment and typical section provide for a safer, faster and more efficient transportation arterial than would be with the existing alignments. The project construction will up-date the present facilities to the standards required by the present and future generated traffic from within the area.

Also, the new alignment will provide the additional driving lanes and parking lanes which are necessary to relieve the congestion, and provide adequate parallel parking in the business-commercial portion of this project. The through traffic which will be using the connection between the Interchanges, will be adequately provided for by the additional lanes.

Local generated traffic within the Hardin area and related urban areas will be directly benefited.



IN REPLY
REFER TO: 206

3 MAIL FILE ✓ 3

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION

REGIONAL OFFICE, REGION 6

P. O. BOX 2553

BILLINGS, MONTANA 59103

SEP 16 1971

State Highway Commission
Attention: Mr. Robert M. Hudnall
Helena, Montana 59601

Subject: Draft of Environmental Statement for Highway Project
No. F 188(7) Crow Agency-Hardin and F 46(7) Hardin-Custer

Gentlemen:

We appreciate the opportunity to review and comment on the environmental statement transmitted to us by your letter of September 9, 1971.

The Bureau of Reclamation does not anticipate any projects in the vicinity of these access roads between Hardin and the interchanges to Interstate I-90. Therefore, we have no comment to submit.

Sincerely yours,

Martin H. Cleary, Jr.

ASSISTANT Regional Director

Date Recd. Preconst. 9-17-71					
Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial	
		30 Comp. Plan			
		30 Field Design			
		30 Surveying Design			
		31 Office Engineers			
		32 West Region			
		32 Landscape			
		33 East Region			
		34 Hydraulic			
		35 Plans			
		37 Field Surveying			
		38 Surveying			
		39 Surveying			
		40 Surveying			
		41 Surveying			
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STATE OF
MONTANA

3
MAILING FILE 4
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

MAIL:
CAPITOL STATION
HELENA 59601

OFFICES:
1716 NINTH AVENUE
406 449-2400

September 17, 1971

Mr. Grover O. Powers
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Grover:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the Draft Environmental Statement relating to F 188(7), Crow Agency-Hardin and F 46(7), Hardin-Custer.

The alternative chosen appears to be the least disruptive and we concur with the statement as written.

Sincerely,

Lloyd F. Meyer
Lloyd F. Meyer
A-95 Coordinator

LFM:es

COMMISSIONERS

FORREST H. ANDERSON
GOVERNOR

PERRY F. ROYS
CHAIRMAN AND
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROSE W. CANNON
HELENA

FRANK CRISAFULLI
BLENDOVE

DALE C. HAWKINS
BILLINGS

W. L. BILL HOLTZ
GREAT FALLS

JOHN RUFFATTO
MISSOULA

Date Recd. Preconst. 9-17-71

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
		30 GUP/AMH		
		30 Field Design		
		30 Sanitary Design		
		31 Gravel Env. Notes		
		32 Area Elevation		
		32 Landshape		
		33 East Region		
		34 Hydraulics		
		35 Trench		
		37 Paving		
		Construction Design		
		Title		

STATE OF MONTANA



DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

Helena, Montana 59601
September 27, 1971

Mr. Grover O. Powers
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Highway Department
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Grover:

We have reviewed the draft environmental impact statement for projects F 155(7) Crow Agency-Hardin and F 46(7) Hardin-Custer as requested in your letter of September 9, 1971. We concur with this statement.

Sincerely,

Ralph W. Boland

RALPH W. BOLAND, ASSISTANT CHIEF
ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES DIVISION

RWB/sd

cc: Roger Fliger

4-28-71

Date Recd. Preconst.		Attach	Initial
Act	Info		
	30 GGP	sdm	
	31 Field Dist. M		
	32 Field Dist. M		
	33 Wildlife		
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Consulting Design



UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

PACIFIC NORTHWEST REGION
1000 SECOND AVENUE
SEATTLE, WASHINGTON 98104

IN REPLY REFER TO:

D36

Your reference:
F 188(7)
Crow Agency-Hardin
F 46 (7)
Hardin-Custer

SEP 28 1971

Lewis M. Chittim, P.E.
State Highway Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

The Draft Environmental Statement for the above referenced project, as was received with your letter dated September 9, 1971, has been reviewed by our staff. We know of no public recreation areas, projects, or proposals that would be adversely affected by this highway project. This statement, as it relates to our programs and interests, appears to be adequate.

Sincerely yours,

Maurice H. Lundy
Regional Director

E. E. Allen, acting
(S) E. E. Allen
Acting Regional Director

Date Recd. Preconst. 9-23-71				
Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
		20 Crow Agency		
		30 Hardin-Custer		
		31 Crow Agency		
		32 Crow Agency		
		33 East Helena		
		34 Helena		
		35 Helena		
		37 Helena		
		38 Helena		
		39 Consultant Position		
		40 Helena		

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
		20 Crow Agency		
		30 Hardin-Custer		
		31 Crow Agency		
		32 Crow Agency		
		33 East Helena		
		34 Helena		
		35 Helena		
		37 Helena		
		38 Helena		
		39 Consultant Position		
		40 Helena		

Hardin, Mont.
October 21, 1971

Montana Highway Commission
Lewis M. Chittim, Engineer
Helena, Mont. 59601

Sir:

As requested I have reviewed the draft of the Environmental Impact Statement for Project F-188(7) Crow Agency-Hardin; Project F-46(7) Hardin-Custer.

The route chosen seems to be the best of the possible alternates- the most direct route from the interchanges, the least disruption of residential areas, and being channelled through the business district, the most economically advantageous to the community.

Although I see no mention in the Statemt, I trust that there will be at least one, or two traffic lights at intersections on Center Ave. to regulate the flow of traffic. During periods of heavy traffic, especially during the summer months, it would be difficult, if not impossible, to cross the route without this sort of regulation.

As Postmaster I am naturally interested in the route's effect on the Postal Service. The rural delivery route from this office will travel parts of both Projects, so during construction will no doubt require some changes in the line of travel, or detours, but should require no permanent changes. An improvement in the economy of the town will bring about an increased demand for postal service, and an increase in the receipts of the Post Office. The location of the northerly portion of the route would undoubtedly bring about an acceleration in the growth of this area, which would soon require an adjustment and expansion of the mail service to this area.

Frank A. Rowland

Frank A. Rowland
Postmaster
Hardin, MT 59034

File Recd. Precinct: 10-27-71

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	32 Lewis				
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V

MAIL FILE ✓

14

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
FEDERAL BUILDING, 19th AND STOUT STREETS
DENVER, COLORADO 80202

October 20, 1971

REGION VIII

IN REPLY REFER TO:
8SDA

Mr. Grover O. Powers
Preconstruction Engineer
Montana Highway Commission
Helena, Montana 59401

Dear Mr. Powers:

Subject: Draft Environmental Statement - Construction of Interstate Highway I-90, Big Horn County, Montana

We have reviewed the subject draft Environmental Statement which was transmitted to us by your letter of August 26, 1971.

This draft Environmental Statement provides adequate information to enable us to generally evaluate the urban environmental impact of the proposed project.

Our review has revealed no basis for reservations or comments with regard to any adverse impact which this project may have on the urban environment.

Sincerely,

John J. Wilder
for *John J. Wilder*
John J. Wilder
Assistant Regional Administrator
for Community Planning and
Management

Date Recd. Preconst. 10-26-71	Initial	
	Attach	
	MAIL ROUTE	
	30 GMP/ RWH	
	30 Field Design	
	30 Section 42 & 43	
	30 Section 44 & 45	
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30 Section 738 & 739		
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30 Section 750 & 751		
30 Section 752 & 753		
30 Section 754 & 755		
30 Section 756 & 757		
30 Section 75		

- 6) Page 3, paragraph 2: Same as above.
- 7) Page 3, paragraph 3: There is only one spur line which serves both of the facilities mentioned. Burlington Northern should not be connected by "and".
- 8) The discussion on alternates on pages 6-7 should be included under Section IV starting on page 11. Also, the alternates should be shown on the map, with a discussion of the relative environmental effects for each alternate. A "do-nothing" alternate should be discussed.

By not following the proper format, the review process is delayed and could result in some adverse comments due to information being overlooked when it is scattered throughout the environmental statement. The final environmental statement should be in the proper format for ease of our review and acceptance.

- 9) The impact on routing through-traffic through the Hardin business district should also be discussed in Section II, pages 6-10.

Item 3 on page 8 mentions the displacement of people on the F 46(7) project. This is an adverse environmental effect and should also be discussed under Section III on page 10. Also, under Section VII, Steps Taken to Minimize Environmental Damage, the State's relocation assistance program and the availability of relocation housing in the project area should be discussed in the final environmental statement.

- 10) Section III, page 10: The conclusion arrived at in this paragraph is subject to question as it implies there are no adverse environmental effects when locating a highway within urban areas. The next sentence concerning right-of-way taking is contradictory to the first sentence. Clarification of the writer's intent is needed in the final environmental statement. Also, the amount of right-of-way needed for project construction is desirable information and should be included in the project description.

- 11) Page 10, paragraph 5: Street projects are in the commercial section of Hardin and should neither enhance nor detract from any recreation or religious opportunities.

- 12) Section IV, page 11: The general conclusion reached in this paragraph regarding the effects of any alignment in an urban area is highly questionable and warrants further discussion and clarification. This section needs expanding in the final environmental statement (see our comment No. 8). We note that all of the route alternates for Project F 46(7) included portions of existing residential streets.

STATE OF MONTANA
STATE CONSERVATION COMMISSION

CAPITOL STATION
HELENA, MONTANA
59601



NOV - 3 1971

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- TORLIEF C. AASHEIM
BOZEMAN, MONTANA
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VICE-CHAIRMAN
 - O. M. UELAND
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
ROOM 422
MITCHELL BLDG.
HELENA, MONTANA
PHONE 449-2505

October 28, 1971

Act	Imp	RETURN TO: & P
		MAY 1971
		STATE HIGHWAY
		CHIEF COUNSEL
		ASST. S.H.E. ADMIN.
		ACCOUNTING
		PLANNING STAFF
		ASST. S.H.E. - ENGR.
		BRIDGE
		FIELD - INSPECTION
		RIGHT OF WAY
		ASST. S.H.E. - VEGET.
		CONSTRUCTION
		MAINTENANCE
		MATERIALS
		OTHER

Mr. Lewis Chittim
State Highway Engineer
State Highway Building
Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

I have no objections to your environmental statement relative to F188(7) Crow Agency-Hardin and F46(7) Hardin-Custer.

Sincerely,

O. M. Ueland 1920

O. M. Ueland
Executive Secretary

OMU/jc

Date Recd. Preconst. 11-3-71

Mr. Beckwith

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
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MONTANA HIGHWAY COMMISSION
RECEIVED
 NOV -4 1971
 HELENA, MONTANA

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
 REGION VIII
 SUITE 900, 1860 LINCOLN STREET
 DENVER, COLORADO 80203

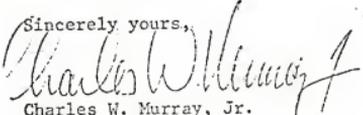
October 29, 1971

Mr. Lewis M. Chittim, P.E.
 State Highway Engineer
 Montana Highway Commission
 Helena, Montana 59601

Dear Mr. Chittim:

The Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the draft environmental statement for Projects F 188(7) Crow Agency-Hardin and F 46(7) Hardin-Custer.

We find that the statement generally covers most of the environmental impacts of the proposed projects in a satisfactory manner. However, a more detailed consideration of the noise aspects of the proposed project would significantly strengthen the statement. Specifically, present and projected traffic levels and accompanying noise levels should be included in the statement along with a description of the effects on the human environment.

Sincerely yours,

 Charles W. Murray, Jr.
 Acting Regional Administrator

7 10 1971

✓	ASST. DIR. (Admin.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Environ.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Tech. Serv.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Off. Aff.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Plan. & Insp.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Reg. Aff.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Spec. Inv.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Training)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Public Aff.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Records Mgmt.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Facilities)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Safety)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Legal Coun.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Gen. Inv.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Off. Liaison)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Int. Aff.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Contract Mgmt.)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Materials)
✓	ASST. DIR. (Other)

JCP

Date Recd. Precon: 11-5-71

Act	Info	MAIL ROUTE	Attach	Initial
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		30 FIAA DCP		
		30 SHERMAN DCP		
		31 UNCL. DCP		
		32 UNCL. DCP		
		33 UNCL. DCP		
		34 UNCL. DCP		
		34 Hydraulic		
		35 Traffic		
		37 Environmental		
		38 Construction Design		

