



DEPARTMENT OF STATE LANDS

STATE CAPITOL

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February 13, 1975

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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
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TO: Loren Bahls

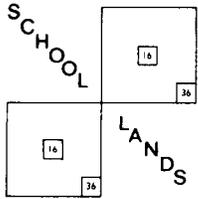
FROM: Sharon M. Solomon *AMS*

Enclosed is a copy of our intradepartmental environmental assessment on the impact of the proposed Montana Power Company 230 KV line from Billings to Great Falls on certain state sections. Pursuant to the Department's mandate under MEPA and according to the conversation you and I had on February 10, 1975, this will fulfill the Department's responsibilities under Section 69-6504(b) (3) of MEPA.

TED SCHWINDEN
COMMISSIONER

SMS:ph

Enclosure



A
RESOURCE
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Environmental Assessment

Division: Land Administration

Prepared by: Sharon M. Solomon

Date: February 13, 1975

Description of Proposed Action: Right of way easement to Montana Power Company for a 230 KV line across state sections 1, T17N, R8E; 6, 17, 18 & 21, T17N, R9E; 4, 5, 9, 10, 14, 23, 24, T16W, R10E; 25, 26, 36, T12N, R14E; 9, 15, 16, 22, T13N, R13E; 16, 22, 23, T14N, R12E; 31, T14N, R13E; 2, 11, T15N, R11E; 29, 39, T16N, R11E. Right of way is 100 ft. corridor.

Basis for considering action not significant: Montana Power Company, in routing their line has attempted to avoid all possible agricultural land. This has dictated a good deal of the route. On the route chosen all private land has been acquired by Montana Power Company and they have indicated construction has begun on those sections. The State land sections along the route do not appear to have any special characteristics such as natural areas, agricultural lands, or exceptional scenic values.

Comments: The State sections were inspected by Loren Bahls of the EQC, Kathy vanHook representing Dorothy Bradley as chairperson of the Natural Areas Advisory Council, and Robert Raundal and Sharon Solomon of the Land Department. All agreed that the impacts of the line would not be major on state lands although as a new route the visual impact would be greater than if an existing corridor were followed.

This line is currently the subject of litigation. The Department of Natural Resources contends that it should be subject to the Utility Siting Act. The preliminary district court decision, however, indicated that the line was under construction prior to passage of the act, and so was grandfathered out. Thus, no comprehensive study of the route was done from a state point of view. An environmental impact analysis was done by Montana Power Company in September, 1972, on the entire Billings - Great Falls line.