

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Permitting and Compliance Division
Air and Waste Management Bureau
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FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT (EA)

Issued for: Busch Agricultural Resources, Inc. (BARI)
Box 1402
Conrad, MT 59425

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**ENVIRONMENTAL
QUALITY COUNCIL**

Air Quality Permit Number: 2639-02

Preliminary Determination Issued: 5/20/98
Department Determination on Permit Issued: 6/5/98

Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) Compliance: An environmental assessment required by MEPA, was completed for this project as follows.

Legal Description of Site: NE¼ of Section 26, Township 28 North, Range 3 West, in Pondera County, Montana.

Description of Project: This permit is for the addition of a railcar receiving station, 10 grain storage bins, and reconstruction of the haul road at BARI's Conrad Grain Elevator.

Benefits and Purpose of Proposal: This plant receives raw grain by truck and rail. The process includes cleaning and storage, and bulk loadouts.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider: No reasonable alternatives available.

A listing and appropriate evaluation of mitigation, stipulations and other controls enforceable by the agency or another government agency: A list of enforceable conditions, including a BACT analysis, are contained in permit #2639-02.

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 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			X
2	Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution			X			X
3	Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture			X			X
4	Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality			X			X
5	Aesthetics			X			X
6	Air Quality			X			X
7	Unique Endangered, Fragile or Limited Environmental Resource			X			X
8	Demands on Environmental Resource of Water, Air and Energy			X			X
9	Historical and Archaeological Sites			X			X
10	Cumulative and Secondary Impacts			X			X

Potential Impact on Human Environment

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

Potential Impacts on Physical Environment

1. Terrestrial and Aquatic Life and Habitats

Common terrestrial species occupy the same areas as the grain elevator. However, the proposed expansion will be located on the facility's existing property. There will be no new habitat destruction as a result of this project. In addition there is no evidence of any unique, threatened, rare, or endangered species in the area, or any wetlands or riparian areas. The department feels that the proposed expansion at this site will only represent a minor affect on terrestrial life. Aquatic life will not be affected by this permitting action.

2. Water Quality, Quantity and Distribution

Water will be used as a means of pollution control at this facility, and will cause only minor disturbances to the area. Any spills, or leaks, from this operation will be properly handled by the operator.

3. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability and Moisture

This site is located just south of the Conrad City limits. The soils in the immediate area will likely be impacted by the proposed construction at this facility. However, the impacts will be minimal because the proposed expansion is minor.

4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity and Quality

Currently, the surrounding area is residential and commercial. There is no evidence that any rare plants, or vegetative communities exist in the area.

5. Aesthetics

The site is an established grain elevator near the City of Conrad. The proposed expansion at this facility will generate excess light and noise, but the impacts on local residence will be minimal.

6. Air Quality

Air quality impacts from this facility will be minor. Permit #2639-02 includes conditions that will limit particulate and PM-10 emissions through a permit condition that requires BARI to receive less than 7.68 million bushels of grain per year. The permit also contains opacity limits and requires a stack test be completed to show the facility can operate in compliance with the limits contained in the permit. In addition, this facility will operate and maintain high efficiency pollution control equipment that will further limit the emissions, thus minimizing any affects it might have on air quality in the area.

7. Unique Endangered, Fragile, or Limited Environmental Resources

The affects on Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources will be minor since the facility is existing and only a small portion of the surrounding plant property will be disrupted during construction and operation of the proposed expansion.

8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Water, Air, and Energy

No significant demands will be placed on environmental resources. In order for the facility to operate, minor demands will be placed on local air, water, and energy resources.

9. Historical and Archaeological Sites

Since this facility is existing, and only a small portion of the plant property will be disrupted as a result of the proposed expansion, the affects on historical and archeological findings are expected to be minimal.

10. Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

The facility will have minor impacts on the area due to the conditions and limitations contained in permit #2639-02. If the facility wants to expand more in the future, they will be required to apply for, and receive another air quality permit prior to construction of any new sources. If there are cumulative and secondary impacts, they will be addressed at that point. Other environmental regulations would apply if there are discharges into state waters, or if there are spills of regulated substances.

Potential Impacts on Human Environment

1. Social Structures

There will be no significant impact on social structures as a result of this permitting action.

2. Cultural Uniqueness and Diversity

The proposed facility will not cause a change in the cultural uniqueness and/or diversity of the area.

3. Local and State Tax Base and Tax Revenue

The facility is expected to have a minimal affect on the local and state tax base and tax revenue because other similar sources in the state have had little impact. In addition, the facility will serve a need and will generate local revenue in the process.

4. Agricultural of Industrial Production

This facility will create increased agricultural production, but is considered small by industrial standards. Therefore, any impacts this facility has on industrial production will be minimal. However, this facility will have positive affects on agricultural producers, as BARI will be able to better serve the industry.

5. Human Health

Permit #2639-02 contains conditions that ensure the facility operates in compliance with all applicable standards.

6. Access to and Quality of Recreational and Wilderness Activities

The proposed facility may cause minor impacts to the quality of recreational and wilderness areas nearby as a result of air emissions and noise.

7. Quantity and Distribution of Employment

The proposed facility will not greatly affect the quantity and distribution of employment in the area. The facility is not proposing to hire any new employees as a result of this expansion.

8. Distribution of Population

The proposed facility will not require any additional, or less, housing in the area. Since this is an existing operation, there will be no need to increase the number of workers at the facility.

9. Demands of Government Services

The only government services required by this project are the agencies involved in issuing permits to the facility.

10. Industrial and Commercial Activity

This facility will represent a minor increase in the industrial activity in the area.

11. Locally Adopted Environmental Plans and Goals

The local zoning authority has been notified, and granted clearance for this project. There are no other local authorities that require approval/notification.

12. Cumulative and Secondary Impacts

Overall, the facility will have only minor impacts on the human environment. The limitations and conditions contained in permit #2639-02 will limit the impacts the facility has on the surrounding area. Any future plans to expand this facility will require appropriate analysis by the department. This analysis will address any potential impacts associated with additional sources operating at this location. Other environmental regulations may apply if there are discharges into state waters, or spills of regulated substances.

Recommendation: No EIS is required.

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is an appropriate level of analysis: The emissions from this facility are minimal. In addition, the controls contained in permit #2639-02 will further limit the emissions.

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: Jeff Bellino
Date: May 12, 1998**