

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Environmental Assessment

PERMITTING AND COMPLIANCE DIVISION
Water Protection Bureau

Name of Project: Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) Permit No. MT0020656 for the Hinsdale Count Water and Sewer District Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) renewal.

Type of Project: MPDES permit renewal.

Location of Project: 446 Ohio Street

City/Town: Hinsdale

County: Valley

Description of Project: DEQ proposes to renew the MPDES permit for the WWTP that serves the approximately 217 people in the Town of Hinsdale for another five years. Domestic wastewater is treated in an activated sludge, extended aeration package plant. Treated wastewater effluent is discharged to the Milk River.

Agency Action and Applicable Regulations: The proposed action is to renew the MPDES permit for another five-year cycle.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 2 - Water Quality Permit Application and Annual Fees.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 5 - Mixing Zones in Surface and Ground Water.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 6 - Surface Water Quality Standards.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 7 - Nondegradation of Water Quality.

ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, Sub-chapter 12 and 13 - Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Standards.

Montana Water Quality Act, MCA 75-5-101 et. seq.

Summary of Issues: The Milk River in the vicinity of the discharge is listed on the 2012 Clean Water Act Section 303(d) list for not supporting drinking water and primary contact recreation uses due to leels of *E. coli*, lead, and mercury. A TMDL has yet to be developed for the Milk River. Effluent limits for *E. coli* will be included in the renewed permit. Prior effluent testing at the facility appears to indicate it is not a source of lead or mercury.

Benefits and Purpose of Action: The permit will ensure compliance with the Montana Water Quality Act and protect beneficial uses of the Milk River.

Affected Environment & Impacts of the Proposed Project:

Y = Impacts may occur (explain under Potential Impacts). Include frequency, duration (long or short term), magnitude, and context for any significant impacts identified. Reference other permit analyses when appropriate (ex: statement of basis). Address significant impacts related to substantive issues and concerns. Identify reasonable feasible mitigation measures (before and

after) where significant impacts cannot be avoided and note any irreversible or irretrievable impacts. Include background information on affected environment if necessary to discussion.

N = Not present or No Impact will likely occur. Use negative declarations where appropriate (wetlands, T&E, Cultural Resources).

IMPACTS ON THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
1. GEOLOGY AND SOIL QUALITY, STABILITY AND MOISTURE: Are soils present which are fragile, erosive, susceptible to compaction, or unstable? Are there unusual or unstable geologic features? Are there special reclamation considerations?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
2. WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION: Are important surface or groundwater resources present? Is there potential for violation of ambient water quality standards, drinking water maximum contaminant levels, or degradation of water quality?	[N] No impact will likely occur. Additional effluent limits (BOD ₅ and TSS removal, Nitrate plus Nitrite as N) will improve effluent quality and protect beneficial uses of the Milk River.
3. AIR QUALITY: Will pollutants or particulate be produced? Is the project influenced by air quality regulations or zones (Class I airshed)?	[N] Not present.
4. VEGETATION COVER, QUANTITY AND QUALITY: Will vegetative communities be significantly impacted? Are any rare plants or cover types present?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
5. TERRESTRIAL, AVIAN AND AQUATIC LIFE AND HABITATS: Is there substantial use of the area by important wildlife, birds or fish?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
6. UNIQUE, ENDANGERED, FRAGILE OR LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are any federally listed threatened or endangered species or identified habitat present? Any wetlands? Species of special concern?	[N] Not known to be present and no impact will likely occur.
7. HISTORICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITES: Are any historical, archaeological or paleontological resources present?	[N] Not known to be present and no impact will likely occur.
8. AESTHETICS: Is the project on a prominent topographic feature? Will it be visible from populated or scenic areas? Will there be excessive noise or light?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
9. LAND USE: (waste disposal, agricultural lands [grazing, cropland, forest lands, prime farmland], recreational lands [waterways, parks, playgrounds, open space, federal lands), access, commercial and industrial facilities [production & activity, growth or decline], growth, land-use change, development activity)	[N] No impact will likely occur.
10. IMPACTS ON OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES: Are there other activities nearby that will affect the project?	[N] Not present.

IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT	
RESOURCE	[Y/N] POTENTIAL IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES
11. HUMAN HEALTH AND SAFETY: Will this project add to health and safety risks in the area?	[N] Additional effluent limits will help protect public health.
12. INDUSTRIAL, COMMERCIAL AND AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND PRODUCTION: Will the project add to or alter these activities?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
13. QUANTITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF EMPLOYMENT: Will the project create, move or eliminate jobs? If so, estimated number.	[N] No impact will likely occur.
14. LOCAL AND STATE TAX BASE AND TAX REVENUES: Will the project create or eliminate tax revenue?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
15. DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT SERVICES: Will substantial traffic be added to existing roads? Will other services (fire protection, police, schools, etc.) be needed?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
16. LOCALLY ADOPTED ENVIRONMENTAL PLANS AND GOALS: Are there State, County, City, USFS, BLM, Tribal, etc. zoning or management plans in effect?	[N] Not present.
17. ACCESS TO AND QUALITY OF RECREATIONAL AND WILDERNESS ACTIVITIES: Are wilderness or recreational areas nearby or accessed through this tract? Is there recreational potential within the tract?	[N] Not present.
18. DENSITY AND DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION AND HOUSING: Will the project add to the population and require additional housing?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
19. SOCIAL STRUCTURES AND MORES: Is some disruption of native or traditional lifestyles or communities possible?	[N] Not present.
20. CULTURAL UNIQUENESS AND DIVERSITY: Will the action cause a shift in some unique quality of the area?	[N] No impact will likely occur.
21. OTHER APPROPRIATE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES:	[N] No impact will likely occur. Removal of WET sampling requirement will likely offset additional background sampling required.
22(a). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Are we regulating the use of private property under a regulatory statute adopted pursuant to the police power of the state? (Property management, grants of financial assistance, and the exercise of the power of eminent domain are not within this category.) If not, no further analysis is required.	[N] Not present.
22(b). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: Is the agency proposing to deny the application or condition the approval in a way that restricts the use of the regulated person's private property? If not, no further analysis is required.	[N] Not present.
22(c). PRIVATE PROPERTY IMPACTS: If the answer to 21(b) is affirmative, does the agency have legal discretion to impose or not impose the proposed restriction or discretion as to how the restriction will be imposed? If not, no further analysis is required. If so, the agency must determine if there are alternatives that would reduce, minimize or eliminate the restriction on the use of private property, and analyze such alternatives. The agency must disclose the potential costs of identified restrictions.	[N] Not present.

23. **Description of and Impacts of other Alternatives Considered:** Not issuing a renewal of the permit would place extreme hardship on the Town of Hinsdale.

- 24. **Summary of Magnitude and Significance of Potential Impact:** Changes in monitoring requirements may provide some financial relief to the town, but are mostly likely offsetting.
- 25. **Cumulative Effects:** None known.
- 26. **Preferred Action Alternative and Rationale:** The preferred action is to reissue the MPDES permit. This action is preferred because the permit program provides the regulatory mechanism for protecting water quality by enforcing the terms of the MPDES permit.

Recommendation for Further Environmental Analysis:

EIS More Detailed EA No Further Analysis

Rationale for Recommendation: An EIS is not required under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) because the project lacks significant adverse effects to the human and physical environment.

- 27. **Public Involvement:** A 30-day public comment period will be held.
- 28. **Persons and agencies consulted in the preparation of this analysis:** None

EA Checklist Prepared By:

EA prepared by: Matthew Kent
Date: April 18, 2012

Approved by:

Jenny Chambers, Chief
Water Protection Bureau

Date