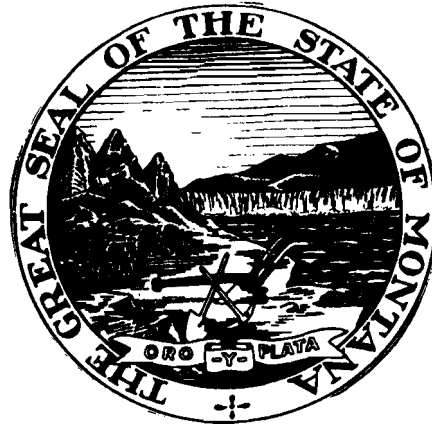


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ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY COUNCIL

The following are indexed summaries of the Environmental Quality Council's staff reports for 1978. These reports represent a departure from EQC's previous practice of publishing an annual comprehensive report on the condition of Montana's environment. This year, a number of individual reports were made in response to particular environmental issues, problems, or by request of our council.

The purpose of presenting a series of short issue papers instead of a single, large bound report is twofold. First, EQC felt that brief reports which focussed on particular issues would be of more use than a larger more generalized volume. Secondly, the council was skeptical about whether past volumes, although of high quality, were used frequently enough to justify printing costs. We hope this index format will make EQC's 1978 issue papers more accessible to you.

How to use these summaries: The summaries are arranged, with cross references, in the following categories

- A. ENERGY
- B. LAND USE ISSUES
- C. MINING
- D. MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)
- E. OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT
- F. WATER RESOURCES

Complete reports are available at EQC offices. Feel free to contact this office if you want a copy of a particular report or information on any environmental issue. Address Environmental Quality Council,



Box 215, Capitol Station, Helena, MT 59601 or telephone (406) 449-3742.

ENERGY

An Analysis and Review of Saskatchewan's Poplar River Complex

This report includes a chronology and description of the Poplar River complex from its announcement up to the present. It explores possible hurdles to a satisfactory settlement of the air and water quality problems the complex might create for northeastern Montana, and briefly describes the positions of the State of Montana, Saskatchewan and the U.S. State Department.

Framework for an Alternative Regional Power Planning Bill

This is a summary of a regional power planning bill giving increased responsibility to the individual states, particularly their siting authority. Other areas in which increased state responsibility is recommended include the allocation of BPA power and the administration of conservation measures. Also included is a schematic description of proposal.

Alternative Energy Standby Charge

This report analyzes standby charges and their relationship to questions concerning existing rate structures. Claims that alternative energy user's intermittent reliance on conventional energy sources create disproportionately high demand costs for utilities, and lead to rate discrimination against full time users are discussed. The report predicts a severe impact on the state's goal of conserving energy and encouraging renewable energy development if standby charges are implemented. It also points out the



technical problems of defining what constitutes an alternative energy system, and hence, when standby charges would be applicable. Responses to the report by the Montana Power Company are appended.

The Montana Environmental Policy Act and the Colstrip 3 & 4 Twin 500 KV Power Lines

This report critiques the Department of Natural Resources' handling of the centerline studies for the Colstrip 3 & 4 Powerlines in reference to the Montana Environmental Policy Act and recommends steps to facilitate compliance.

Streamlining the Siting Act

Changes in the Energy Facility Siting Act proposed by the Department of Natural Resources are discussed. The proposed changes attempt to shorten review time and divide the decision making process into two steps; the first dealing with questions of need, type and location, the second with the specifics of facility design. The report summarizes the reaction of state agencies and industry to the proposed changes.

Flathead Hydropower Study Workshop

These reports are based on a series of public workshops, sponsored by the Corps of Engineers, on possible hydropower sites in Western Montana. The workshops discussed the most likely sites for hydropower development and their potential environmental problems.

Notes From the Environmental Quality Council's Tour of the Colstrip and Decker Areas

See MINING



Three Short Reports on Gas Flaring

See OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Yellowstone Level "3" Study

See WATER RESOURCES

Uranium Solution Mining

See MINING

Report of the Department of State Lands, Oil, and Gas Leasing Program

See OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Northern Border Pipeline Proposal

See OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

The Montana Environmental Policy Act and Regional Development

See MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

Review of Board of Oil and Gas Conservation

See OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

LAND USE

Wilderness Studies Reports

The Environmental Quality Council's staff has monitored two wilderness controversies; the Elkhorn Wilderness Study, and RARE II. These reports review contending viewpoints and analyze the controversy.

Subdivisions and the Montana Environmental Policy Act

This report examines subdivision activity in four selected counties; Park, Gallatin, Ravalli, and Flathead. It focuses on subdivision impacts on agricultural and wildlife lands, and discusses development patterns which tend to impact those land uses. It reviews



the role of the Montana Environmental Policy Act in the Department of Environmental Health and Sciences subdivision review process, specifically in reference to the Hensler subdivision in Ravalli county. The implications of the Beaver Creek South Supreme Court decision on subdivision review are also discussed.

Report on Department of State Lands, Oil, and Gas Leasing Program

See OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Northern Border Pipeline Proposal

See OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Notes from the Environmental Quality Council's Tour of the Colstrip and Decker Areas

See MINING

Streamlining the Siting Act

See ENERGY

MINING

Notes from the Environmental Quality Council's Tour of the Colstrip and Decker Areas

A review of the issues discussed by council members on a tour of Southeastern Montana. Discussion centered on problems, successes and goals of state's reclamation efforts.

Uranium Solution Mining

This report is a synopsis of the Board of Environmental Health and Sciences hearing on proposed uranium solution mining regulations. It describes the uranium solution mining process and possible environmental problems which it might entail, and summarizes Industry's



response to regulations.

The Montana Environmental Policy Act and Regional Development

See MEPA

MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (MEPA)

A Review of Administrative Rules of the Department of Fish and Game Concerning the Montana Environmental Policy Act

Fish and Games' administrative rules are reviewed and compared with the recommended administrative rules adopted by the Montana Commission on Environmental Quality for the implementation of MEPA. Conflicts are discussed.

Proposed Revised Guidelines for Implementing the Montana Environmental Policy Act

This report outlines the suggested guidelines for revising MEPA rules. Their main thrust is to make the environmental review process more streamlined and more accessible to the public. The revised rules have been sent to the Montana Commission on Environmental Quality for approval.

The Montana Environmental Policy Act and Regional Development

This report describes the numerous proposed developments concentrated in the northwestern corner of the state, including copper-silver mining, hydroelectric development, powerline, and road construction. It discusses the potential for significant cumulative impacts from those developments, examines whether a regional environmental impact statement is required under MEPA and considers the obstacles to and benefits of such a review. The report includes



maps, and reports on public hearings on a proposed copper and silver mine and the Libby re-regulating dam are appended.

Statutes not Consistent with MEPA

A review of existing statutes that are in direct conflict or are inconsistent with the Montana Environmental Policy Act.

The Montana Environmental Policy Act and the Colstrip 3 & 4 Twin 500KV Lines

See ENERGY

Report on the Department of State Lands, Oil, and Gas Leasing Program

See OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Subdivision and MEPA

See LAND USE

OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT

Three Short Reports on Gas Flaring

#1 is a discussion of the "associated gas" produced as a byproduct of crude oil production and of factors which lead to "gas flaring" as a means of disposal. It breaks down into percentages the amount of Williston Basin gas which is sold, flared, or disposed of in other manners.

#2 is based on a Montana Petroleum Association meeting concerning the flaring of associated gas, which explores the economic and physical barriers which impair marketability of such gases.

#3 comments on a hearing by the board of Oil and Gas Conservation, elaborates on causes of gas flaring, and summarizes dialogue between



the board and the oil industry on the issue of the waste of natural gas through gas flaring.

Report on the Department of State Lands, Oil, and Gas Leasing Program

This is a review of the Oil and Gas Leasing Program, and its environmental review process. It describes the program's bid application process, environmental review process, stipulations attached to leased tracts, and provisions for public participation.

The congruence of the program with the goals of MEPA is examined. The report concludes that the programs mandate to generate as much revenue for school trust fund as possible, and its time frames, make adequate public participation and a thorough environmental review difficult to achieve. Report recommends changes in program which mitigate those problems.

Northern Border Pipeline

A brief description of Northern Border Pipeline proposed for northeastern Montana. The description includes a map.

Review of Board of Oil and Gas Conservation

This review describes the administrative structure of the Board of Oil and Gas Conservation and the environmental protection measures it enforces on the oil and gas industry. It critiques the Board's enforcement procedures and poses recommendations.

WATER RESOURCES

Yellowstone Level "B" Study

This report summarizes a meeting on the draft recommendations



of the Missouri River Basin Commission. It discusses slurry U.S. rail transport of coal, water rights, and scenic and recreational river proposals.

Report on Montana Water Development

This is a summary of the Montana Water Association's discussion of a proposed water appropriations and adjudications bill. Summarizes bill and criticisms of bill by industry, agriculture, and state agencies.

Analysis and Review of Saskatchewan's Poplar River Complex

See ENERGY

The Montana Environmental Policy Act and Regional Development

See MONTANA ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT

