DOE/EIS-0399

Federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement

and

State of Montana Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

for the

Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230-kV Transmission Line

VOLUME 2 – Responses to Comments

February 2008

United States
Department of Energy

State of Montana
Department of Environmental Quality

COVER SHEET

Responsible Agencies: U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) and Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) are co-lead agencies; the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Department of the Interior, is a cooperating agency.

Title: Federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement and State of Montana Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230-kV Transmission Line (DOE/EIS-0399)

Location: Cascade, Teton, Chouteau, Pondera, Toole, and Glacier Counties, Montana.

Contacts: *For further information about this Federal Draft EIS, contact:* Ellen Russell, Project Manager, Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, U.S. Department of Energy, Washington, D.C. 20585, (202) 586-9624, or Ellen.Russell@hq.doe.gov. *For general information on DOE's National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, contact:*
Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance, at the above address, (202) 586-4600, or leave a message at (800) 472-2756.

For general information on the State of Montana Major Facility Siting Act process, contact: Tom Ring, Environmental Sciences Specialist, Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, or (406) 444-6785. *For general information on the State of Montana Environmental Policy Act process, contact:* Greg Hallsten, Environmental Science Specialist, at the above address, (406) 444-3276.

Comments: For the convenience of commentors, the Montana DEQ has agreed to receive all comments on this document and to provide them to DOE for consideration. Comments may be submitted to Tom Ring at the above address or via electronic mail at matl@mt.gov.

Abstract: MATL proposes to construct and operate a merchant 230-kV transmission line between Great Falls, Montana, and Lethbridge, Alberta, that would cross the U.S.-Canada border north of Cut Bank, Montana. The transmission line would transmit 300 megawatts (MW) of electric power south and 300 MW north. In order to build and operate the line, MATL must first obtain a Presidential permit from DOE to cross the U.S.-Canada border, a certificate of compliance from the Montana DEQ to construct the line in Montana, and a right-of- way grant from the BLM to cross any BLM-administered lands.

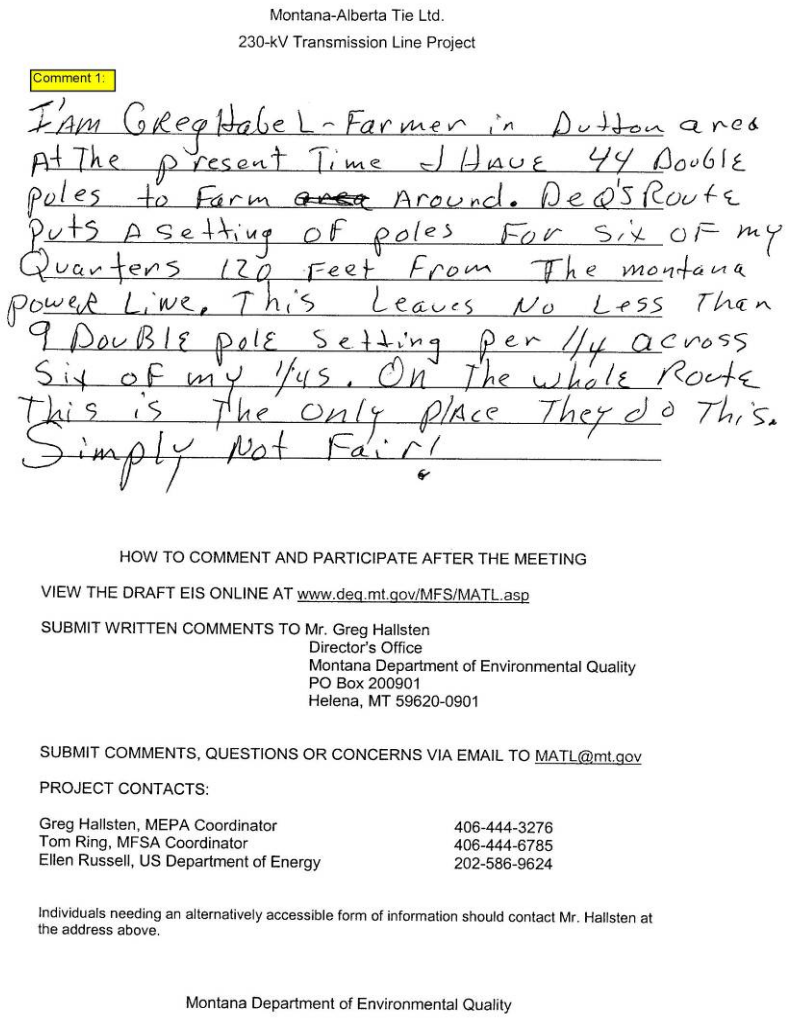
In March 2007, DOE and DEQ prepared a joint document that was a Draft Environmental Assessment for DOE and a Draft EIS for DEQ. Based largely on the public comments received on the March 2007 document, DOE determined that an EIS was the appropriate level of review. For the same reasons, DEQ decided to prepare a supplement to its Draft EIS. The Notice of Intent to prepare this Federal Draft EIS was published on June 7, 2007 (72 FR 31569).

This EIS analyzes the "No Action" alternative, three alternative transmission line alignments, and 11 local routing options. This EIS will be used by DOE, DEQ, and BLM to ensure that they have the environmental information needed to render informed decisions.

Comment Period: The agencies will prepare a Final EIS after considering all comments received or postmarked during the 45-day public comment period that will begin when the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency publishes a Notice of Availability of this Draft EIS in the *Federal Register*. The agencies will consider late comments to the extent practicable. Locations and times for public hearings will be announced in the *Federal Register* as well as in local media. The Draft EIS will be available on DOE's NEPA website at www.eh.doe.gov/nepa/documentspub.html.

INTRODUCTION

In this section the agencies present responses to comments received on the Draft EIS/EA issued in March 2007. Responses to written comments submitted at the public hearings and written comments that were received by mail or e-mail are presented first. Responses to oral comments received at the public hearings that differed from the written comments are presented at the end of this section. Readers will find the written comments reproduced in their entirety with a response to the comment presented to the side. Oral comments are summarized and responded to.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Comment 1:

I Am Greg Habel - Farmer in Dutton area At The present Time I Have 44 Double poles to Farm ~~area~~ Around. DEQ's Route puts A setting of poles For six of my Quarters 120 Feet From The montana power Line. This Leaves No Less Than 9 Double pole Setting per 1/4 across Six of my 1/4s. On The whole Route This is The Only place They do This. Simply Not Fair!

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE MEETING

VIEW THE DRAFT EIS ONLINE AT www.deq.mt.gov/MFS/MATL.asp

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

SUBMIT COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS VIA EMAIL TO MATL@mt.gov

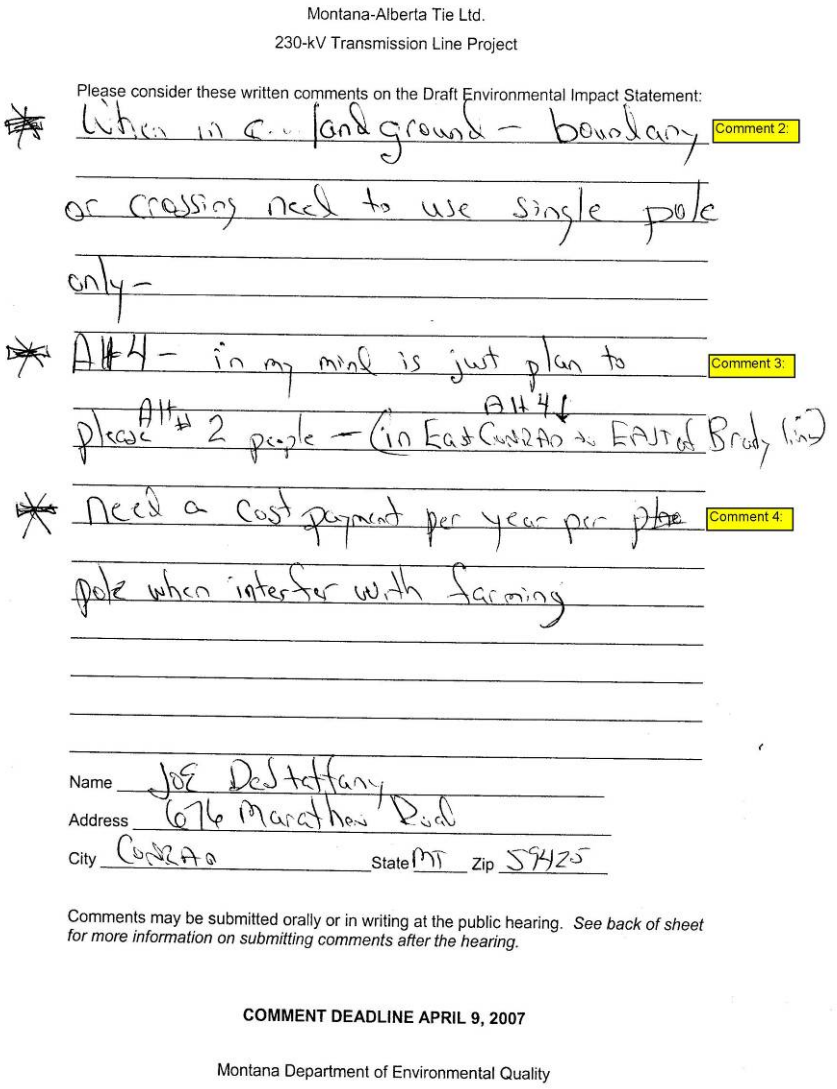
PROJECT CONTACTS:

Greg Hallsten, MEPA Coordinator	406-444-3276
Tom Ring, MFSA Coordinator	406-444-6785
Ellen Russell, US Department of Energy	202-586-9624

Individuals needing an alternatively accessible form of information should contact Mr. Hallsten at the address above.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Response 1: After reviewing this matter further with Mr. Habel and meeting with area landowners, the agencies are presenting three possible local routing options in the Diamond Valley area for public comment. One of these locations or portions of a combination of these could be required by the agencies to reduce impacts. See Sections 2.6 and 3.16 for more information.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

* When in C... land ground – boundary Comment 2:
or crossing need to use single pole
only –

* AH4 – in my mind is just plan to Comment 3:
please AH# 2 people – (in East Conrad to EAST of Brady line) AH4

* need a cost payment per year per ~~pole~~ Comment 4:
pole when interfer with farming

Name Joe DeStaffany
Address 676 Marathon Road
City Conrad State MT Zip 59425

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

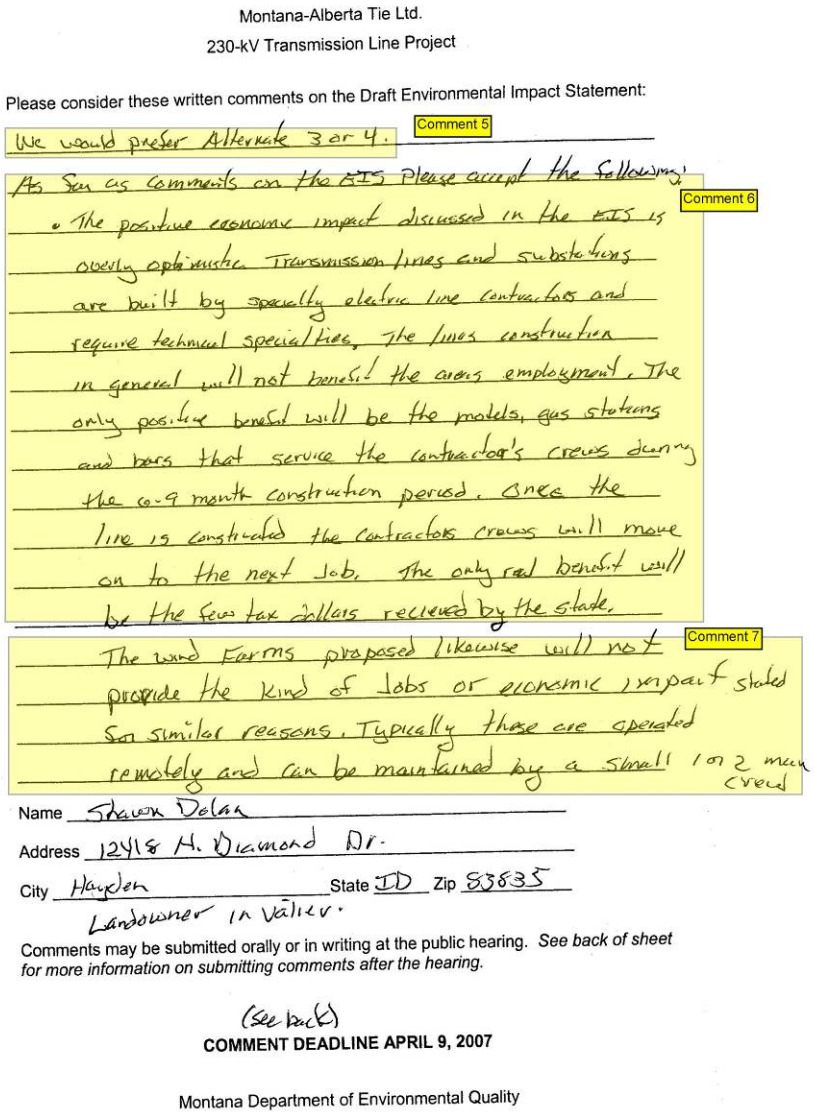
COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Response 2: Comment noted. Thank you for your comment. In response to comments, on July 30, 2007 MATL indicated that they would use long span mono pole construction for 53 miles of line that would cross cultivated lands diagonally that were identified in the Draft EIS along Alternative 2. Alternative 2 would not include single poles on the other 38.4 miles of cropland and CRP land crossed.

Response 3: Comment noted. Thank you for your comment.

Response 4: Comment noted. The cost payments are negotiated between MATL and the land owner. The agencies are not involved in those negotiations. The agencies have estimated a cost to farmers per pole per year from the line. See Section 3.13 for additional information.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

We would prefer Alternate 3 or 4. Comment 5

As far as comments on the EIS Please accept the following:

- The positive economic impact discussed in the EIS is overly optimistic. Transmission lines and substations are built by specialty electric line contractors and require technical specialties. The lines construction in general will not benefit the areas employment. The only positive benefit will be the motels, gas stations and bars that service the contractor's crews during the 6-9 month construction period. Once the line is constructed the contractors crews will move on to the next job. The only real benefit will be the few tax dollars recieved by the state. Comment 6

The wind Farms proposed likewise will not provide the kind of jobs or economic impact stated for similar reasons. Typically these are operated remotely and can be maintained by a small 1 or 2 man crew. Comment 7

Name Sharon Dolan

Address 12418 N. Diamond Dr.

City Hayden State ID Zip 83835

Landowner in Valley.

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

(See back)

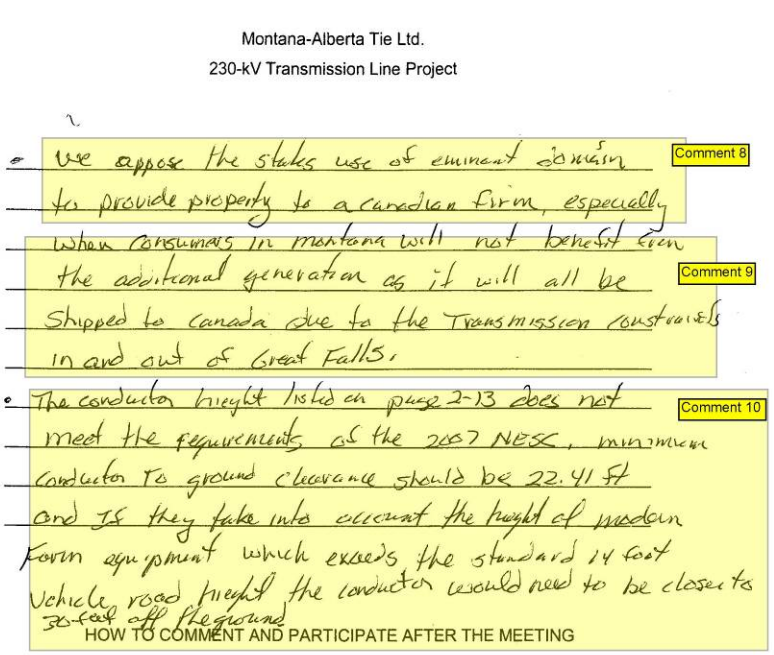
COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Response 5: Comment noted. Thank you for your comment.

Response 6: The beneficial impacts from this project are described as "small and short term" to the local area in Section 3.13.3.2. The income, job, and secondary benefits were estimated with the best information available, and it is understood that many of these jobs would go to out-of-state residents. Also, some benefits would be felt outside the study area by customers of the line.

Response 7: Comment noted. Information for wind farms economics was taken from the best available information, and is an estimate only. It is acknowledged in the draft EIS that the number of permanent jobs as a result of wind farms would be low. Please refer to Section 4 which contains information on the potential impacts of wind farms.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

- We oppose the states use of eminent domain to provide property to a canadian firm, especially when consumers in montana will not benefit from the additional generation as it will all be shipped to canada due to the transmission constraints in and out of Great Falls. (Comment 8, Comment 9)
- The conductor height listed on page 2-13 does not meet the requirements of the 2007 NESC, minimum conductor to ground clearance should be 22.41 ft and if they take into account the height of modern farm equipment which exceeds the standard 14 foot vehicle road height the conductor would need to be closer to 30-feet off the ground (Comment 10)

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Response 8: While the Major Facility Siting Act provides the procedure for obtaining approval to construct a major facility, including electric transmission lines, it does not provide a procedure for acquiring property on which to construct the facility. The property must be obtained through negotiations between a project sponsor and a landowner or if negotiations are not successful, a condemnation proceeding under the laws of eminent domain may be used.

Eminent domain may only be exercised if the purpose for which it is being exercised is a public use. Those public uses are identified and listed by the Legislature in Section 70-30-102, MCA. Subsection 37 of that statute lists electrical power lines as a public use. Section 70-30-102, MCA, does not distinguish between electrical power lines built by private enterprise and a publicly owned utility.

Before private property can be taken, Section 70-30-111, MCA, requires the condemner to demonstrate that the public interest requires the taking based on the following findings:

1. the use to which the property is to be applied is a use authorized by law;

2. the taking is necessary to the use;

3. if already being used for a public use, that the public use for which the property is proposed to be used is a more necessary public use; and

4. an effort to obtain the property interest sought to be taken was made by submission of a written offer and the offer was rejected.

As indicated above, an electric transmission line is a use for which condemnation is authorized by law. In regard to whether the taking is necessary, Montana courts have determined that the necessity need not be absolute or indispensable. Rather, a taking is necessary if it "is reasonable, requisite, and proper for the accomplishment of the end in view, under the particular circumstances of the case." As indicated in Section 3.17, DEQ has determined the necessity of the electric transmission line proposed by MATL.

As indicated in the handbook entitled Eminent Domain in Montana published by the Legislative Environmental Policy Office in May of 2001, "[a] public use does not have to be a project that directly benefits the entire public or even the landowner whose property is taken through eminent domain. It may be a project that benefits Montana citizens as a whole through greater economic development or increased access to communications." As stated by the Montana Supreme Court in Ellinghouse v. Taylor (1897), 19 Mont. 462, 48 P. 757, "Persons have been allowed the right of eminent domain on the theory of public use, in the construction of dams for the operation of grist and saw mills, in the reclamation of swamp lands, and in other similar instances that might be enumerated where the public had no direct interest in these operations, whose main end was mere private gain, and where the benefit to the people at large could result indirectly and incidentally only from the increase of wealth and development of natural resources."

Response 9: Table 4.1-2 lists the four instances where MATL and shippers have reached agreements. As can be seen from the revised table, bids have been accepted by MATL for 300 MW to be shipped from north to south and 300 MW south to north. The line should be capable of shipping electricity both north into Canada and south into Montana. Whether these shippers have secured agreements to move power south beyond Great Falls is not known. The benefits of MATL to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13.

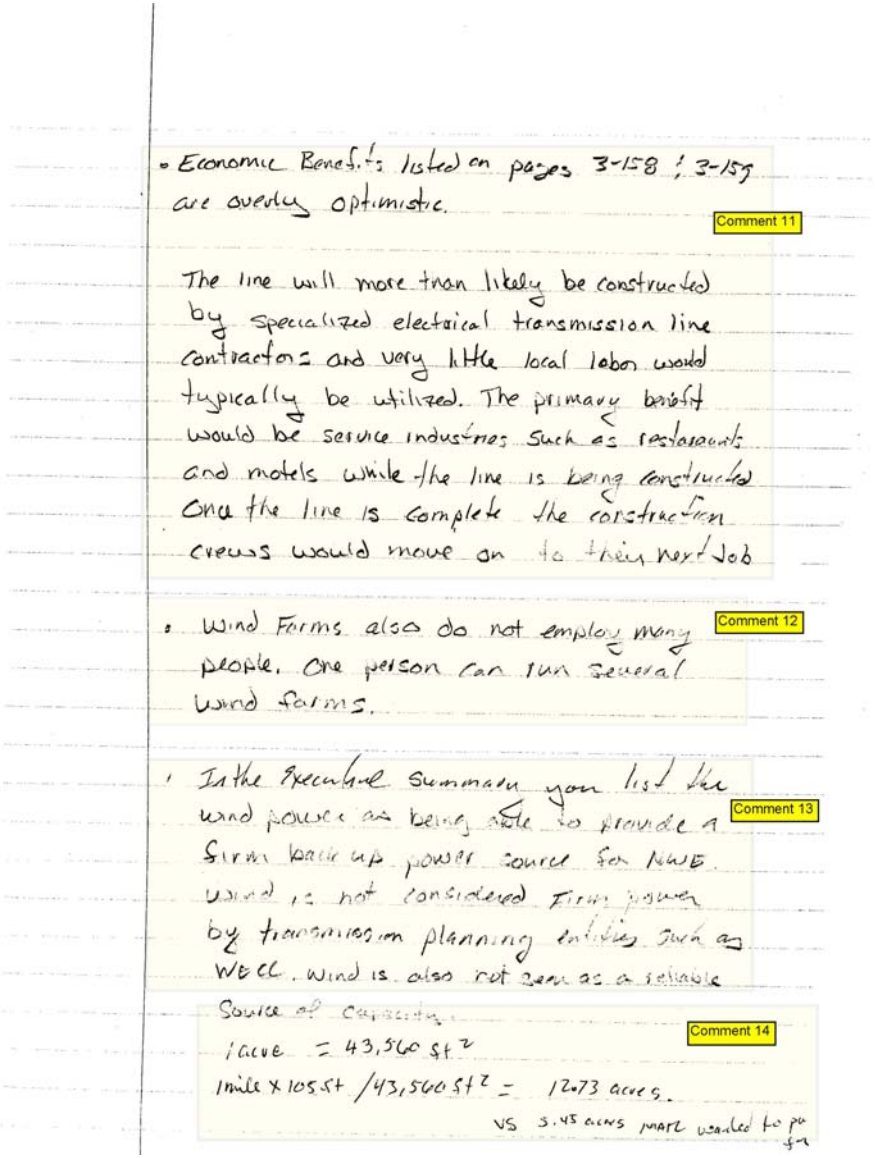
Response 10: The agencies contracted with an independent engineer (HDR, Billings) to examine this issue more carefully. He reported that the general National Electric Safety Code (NESC) rule 232 (C) and table 232-1 are used to calculate the minimum ground clearances for different voltages. Assuming an elevation of 4500 feet, the calculation is as follows:

Table 232-1 Basic Clearance	18.50 feet
Adder for voltage above 22 kV	3.91 feet
Adder for voltage above 3,300 feet - 3.6percent	0.14 feet
22.55 feet	
Applying the NESC rounding rule	22.60 feet

An alternate method, for voltage above 98 kV, can be used to calculate the minimum ground clearance using NESC Rule 232 (D). This is the method used by SNC LAVALIN, the MATL consultant. This calculation is as follows:

Reference height from Table 232-3	14.00 feet
Adder for Electrical Component Table 232-4	7.10 feet
Adder for elevation above 1,500 feet – 9percent	.64 feet
21.74 feet	
Applying the NESC rounding rule	21.80 feet

These calculated clearance minimums are based on a maximum vehicle height of 14 feet. As has been pointed out by several commenters, farming equipment often exceeds this height, but what height is appropriate to use for a design height is debatable. According to HDR "It does seem prudent to design for clearance in excess of the minimum to allow for the increase in heights of vehicular traffic near the transmission line. HDR's experience with our utility clients has always resulted in 230-kV minimum design clearance between 25 feet and 30 feet. Rural Utilities Services (RUS) requires 25 feet of ground clearance in their design manual for 230-kV transmission lines. Another client, Xcel Energy in Minneapolis, MN requires a design clearance of 30 feet for all 230-kV lines and their service area is largely rural farm land similar to the farm land traversed by the MATL transmission line."



- Economic Benefits listed on pages 3-158 & 3-159 are overly optimistic.

Comment 11

The line will more than likely be constructed by specialized electrical transmission line contractors and very little local labor would typically be utilized. The primary benefit would be service industries such as restaurants and motels while the line is being constructed. Once the line is complete the construction crews would move on to their next job.

- Wind Farms also do not employ many people. One person can run several wind farms.

Comment 12

- In the Executive Summary you list the wind power as being able to provide a firm back up power source for NWE. Wind is not considered firm power by transmission planning entities such as WECC. Wind is also not seen as a reliable source of capacity.

Comment 13

1 acre = 43,560 ft²

1 mile x 105 ft / 43,560 ft² = 12.73 acres.

vs 3.45 acres MATL wanted to pay for

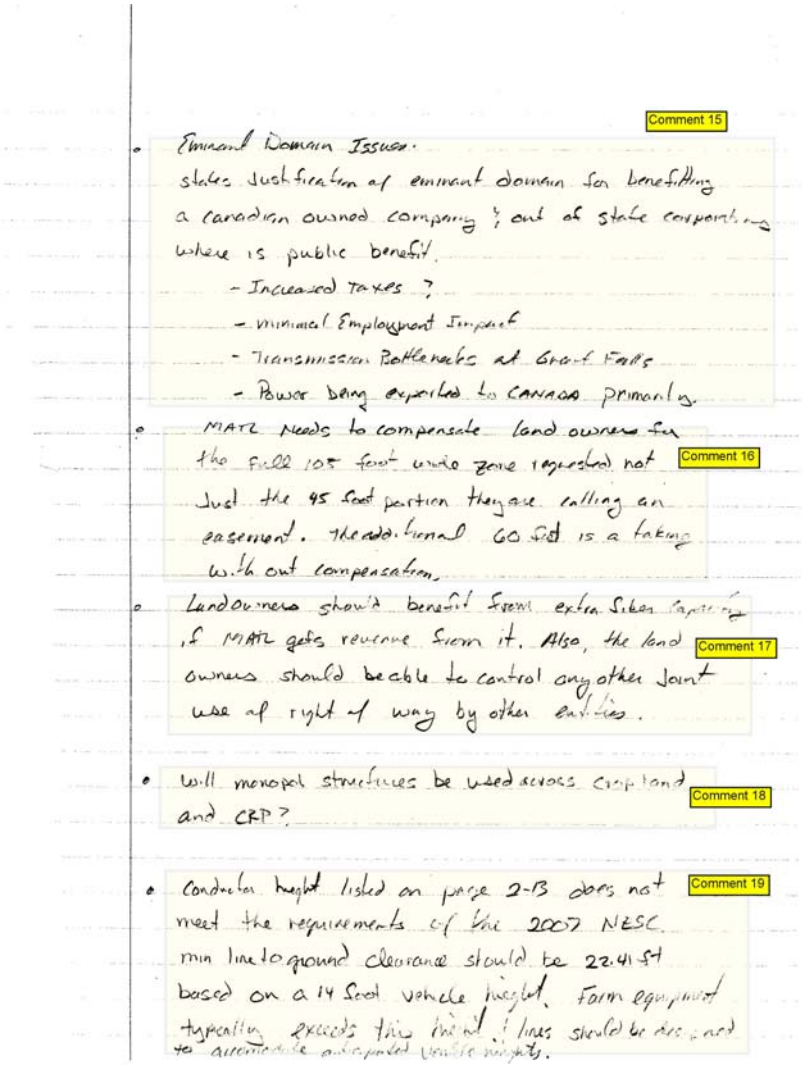
Comment 14

Response 11: See response to comment 6.

Response 12: Your comment is noted; see response to comment 7. In the cumulative impacts section of the draft EIS, only a few permanent jobs are predicted as a result of wind farms.

Response 13: The Executive Summary does not indicate that wind power would provide a firm back-up power source for NorthWestern Energy (NWE). The Executive Summary states: "The MATL line could also create another opportunity for Montana's largest privately owned transmission and distribution utility, NWE, to obtain regulating reserves for its transmission system control area." This statement does not indicate that wind generation would be the source of regulating reserves. Other sources may be available from Canada, outside NWE's control area.

Response 14: Comment noted. The agencies understand that MATL proposes to pay for an easement 45 feet wide.



Response 15: See response to comment 8.

Response 16: Comment noted. Thank you for your comment.

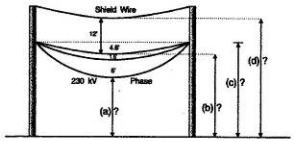
Response 17: Comment noted. Thank you for your comment.

Response 18: The use of monopoles varies by alternative. See chapter 2 for more details.

Response 19: See response to comment 10.

Clearances 232 — From 2007 NESC Clearance Calculations, Answers

7. Ruff Woods is a forest along Highway 1. **What vertical clearance is required** for a phase conductor of a 19.9/34.5kV effectively grounded wye line running along the highway and: a. within the highway R/W? b. on private R/W?	Comment 19 (Continued) **18.5'-Category 9—See Table 232-1, Column 4** **18.5'-Category 4**
8. What clearance above a roadway is required for a span of 230kV conductors?	**[230kV/1.732=132.79] = *nominal* phase-to-neutral voltage.** **[132.79 x 1.05=139.4kV] = *maximum operating* voltage.** **[139.4-22=117.4kV] = kV above 22kV-to-ground** **[117kV x 0.4"/kV=46.96"] = 4' voltage adder 18.5' + 4' = 22.5'.**
9. Now assume that a 230kV line in the Light Loading District has a maximum design temperature of 156 deg F. We know that the conductor will change in sag with time and with temperature. Assume that the sag change from initial unloaded sag of 4.6 feet at 60 deg F down to final unloaded sag at 60 deg F is 1.5 feet. When the conductor temperature increases to 156 deg F, the conductor sags a further 6 feet lower, i.e., the sag at 156 deg F is 4.6 + 1.5 + 6 = 12.1 feet.	**a. The basic clearance at closest approach is 18.5 feet. To this must be added the voltage adder of 4 feet (as calculated in Answer 8). This gives us 22.5' as the lowest conductor position allowed above the road under any circumstances.**
a. What is the least clearance allowed above the road during maximum sag conditions?	**b. Add the difference between worst case sag and initial stringing sag (7.5') to the required clearance (22.5') to get the required height above the road at initial installation of 30 feet.**
b. If you originally install the conductor at 60 degrees F initial sag, **how high above the roadway must it be** to meet the vertical clearance requirements?	**c. Add the initial sag of 4.6 feet to get the height of the LOS above the roadway of 34.6 feet.**
c. How high is the line of sight between the 230 kV conductor attachments above the road? Now assume that our 230kV conductor is initially installed 12 feet below the level of an overhead shield (static) surge protection wire.	
d. **What is the height of that shield wire above the roadway** at initial installation?	**d. 30' + 12' = 42'**



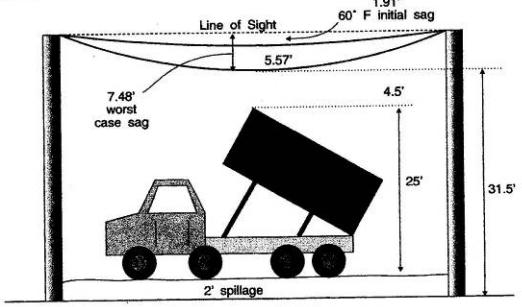
Clearance Development — Answers

Segment 6: Clearance Development Answers

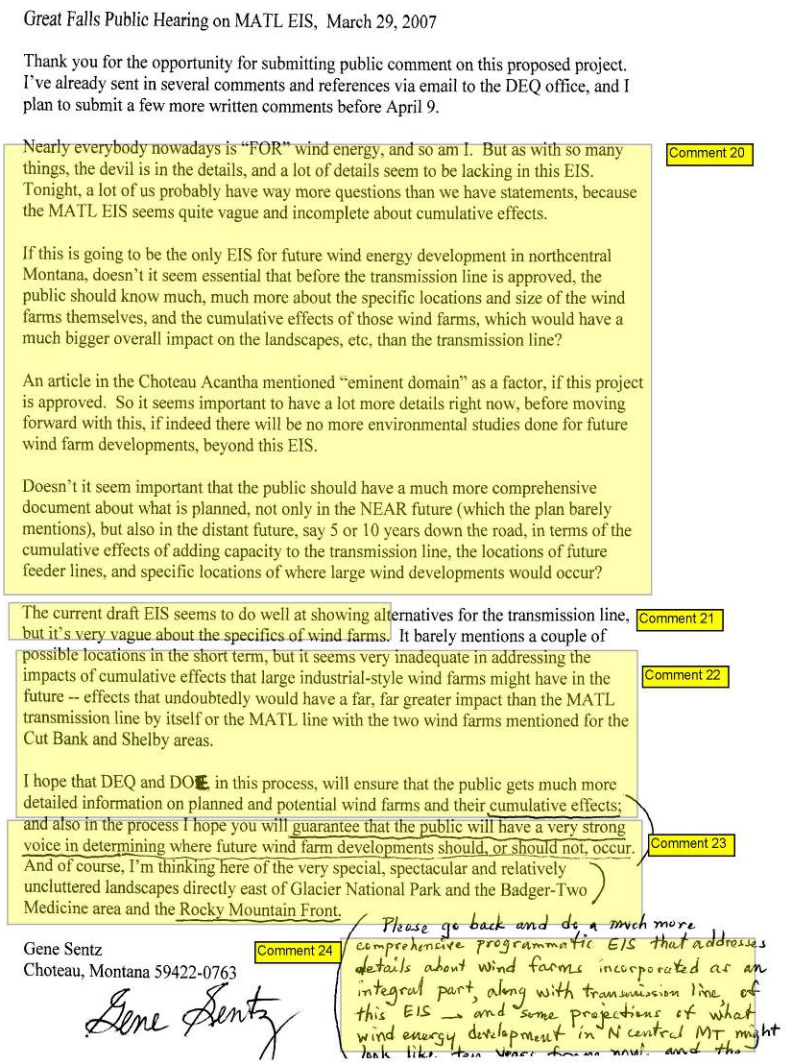
Comment 19 (Continued)

There are two ways to consider this problem:

METHOD 1		METHOD 2	
25.0'	Truck Height	18.5'	Normal Road Clearance
-14.0'	Included in Code Clearance (See Appendix A, Table A2)	-14.0'	Reference Height for a Truck
11.0'	Needed Extra Above Table Value	4.5'	Over the Reference Height
+2.0'	Planned Road Elevation Change	+25.0'	Actual Truck Height (See Appendix A, Table A1)
13.0'	Total Extra Needed @ Worst Case Condition	+2.0'	Planned Road Elevation Change
+18.5'	Table Value		
=31.5'	Total Needed @ Worst Case Condition	=31.5'	



METHOD A		METHOD B	
Worst case total final sag @ 32 degrees F with 1/2" radial ice	7.48'	Worst case total final sag @ 32 degrees F with 1/2" radial ice	7.48'
Less Initial Sag @ 60 degrees F	-1.91'	Plus required "not-less-than" clearance	+31.50'
= Sag change from 60 degrees F initial to 32 degrees F final with ice	=5.57'	= Required Line-of-Sight (LOS) between conductor attachment points	=38.98'
Plus required "not-less-than" clearance	+31.50'	Less Initial Sag @ 60 degrees F	-1.91'
= Required clearance at 60 degrees F initial sag	=37.07'	= Required clearance at 60 degrees F initial sag	=37.07'



Great Falls Public Hearing on MATL EIS, March 29, 2007

Thank you for the opportunity for submitting public comment on this proposed project. I've already sent in several comments and references via email to the DEQ office, and I plan to submit a few more written comments before April 9.

Nearly everybody nowadays is "FOR" wind energy, and so am I. But as with so many things, the devil is in the details, and a lot of details seem to be lacking in this EIS. Tonight, a lot of us probably have way more questions than we have statements, because the MATL EIS seems quite vague and incomplete about cumulative effects. Comment 20

If this is going to be the only EIS for future wind energy development in northcentral Montana, doesn't it seem essential that before the transmission line is approved, the public should know much, much more about the specific locations and size of the wind farms themselves, and the cumulative effects of those wind farms, which would have a much bigger overall impact on the landscapes, etc, than the transmission line?

An article in the Choteau Acantha mentioned "eminent domain" as a factor, if this project is approved. So it seems important to have a lot more details right now, before moving forward with this, if indeed there will be no more environmental studies done for future wind farm developments, beyond this EIS.

Doesn't it seem important that the public should have a much more comprehensive document about what is planned, not only in the NEAR future (which the plan barely mentions), but also in the distant future, say 5 or 10 years down the road, in terms of the cumulative effects of adding capacity to the transmission line, the locations of future feeder lines, and specific locations of where large wind developments would occur?

The current draft EIS seems to do well at showing alternatives for the transmission line, but it's very vague about the specifics of wind farms. Comment 21 It barely mentions a couple of possible locations in the short term, but it seems very inadequate in addressing the impacts of cumulative effects that large industrial-style wind farms might have in the future -- effects that undoubtedly would have a far, far greater impact than the MATL transmission line by itself or the MATL line with the two wind farms mentioned for the Cut Bank and Shelby areas. Comment 22

I hope that DEQ and DOE in this process, will ensure that the public gets much more detailed information on planned and potential wind farms and their cumulative effects; and also in the process I hope you will guarantee that the public will have a very strong voice in determining where future wind farm developments should, or should not, occur. Comment 23 And of course, I'm thinking here of the very special, spectacular and relatively uncluttered landscapes directly east of Glacier National Park and the Badger-Two Medicine area and the Rocky Mountain Front.

Gene Sentz
Choteau, Montana 59422-0763 Comment 24

Gene Sentz

Please go back and do a much more comprehensive programmatic EIS that addresses details about wind farms incorporated as an integral part, along with transmission line, of this EIS — and some projections of what wind energy development in N central MT might look like. [illegible]

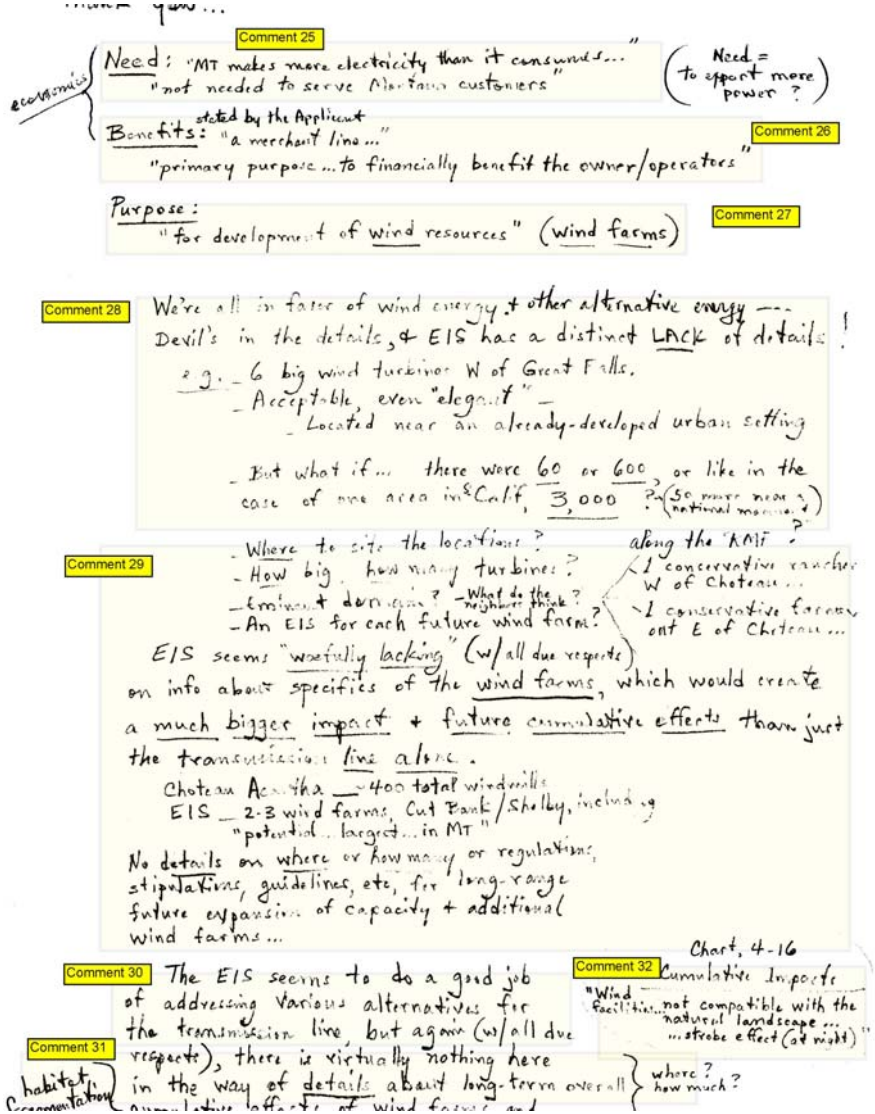
Response 20: The Montana Environmental Policy Act and the National Environmental Policy Act require state and federal agencies to analyze the potential impacts of their actions on the human environment. The proposed actions are the issuance of a certificate of compliance for the transmission line by DEQ, under the Major Facility Siting Act, and issuance of a Presidential permit by DOE. The agencies have no regulatory authority over wind farms, and none has applied for permits administered by the agencies. The potential impacts of wind farms that might be connected to the transmission line in the future are discussed in Chapter 4, as far as available information allows. Individual taller wind turbines would be more visible than the individual structures for the proposed transmission line. The wind turbines are expected to be clustered in individual wind farms and would not stretch between Great Falls and Lethbridge.

Response 21: Comment noted. See the discussion of wind farm related impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 22: While several firms have contracted for transmission capacity on the MATL line, they have not identified specific locations for their wind farms or wind turbines. Chapter 4 describes potential locations for wind farms in the area, but readers should recognize that locations could change, some project sponsors may choose to locate their projects in other areas, and additional wind farms may be proposed. The agencies do not have regulatory authority over wind farm siting, so they cannot demand information from prospective wind farm developers, nor can the agencies require developers to publicly disclose their plans. The agencies agree that it would be good for developers to be open with the public with regard to their plans.

Response 23: Since 1995 Montana's legislature has decreased the amount of regulatory control over generation facilities under the Montana Major Facility Siting Act. In 2001 the legislature removed the DEQ's authority to regulate the location of most types of generation facilities. DEQ does not have the authority to regulate the location of wind farms under other statutes it administers. Without statutory authority, DEQ cannot guarantee that the public would have a voice in determining where future wind farm developments should or should not be located. The agencies understand that the wind farms would be located on privately owned land.

Response 24: With regard to preparing programmatic EISs, the rules implementing the Montana Environmental Policy Act say, "The agency may also prepare a programmatic review whenever required by statute, whenever a series of actions under the jurisdiction of the agency warrant such an analysis as determined by the agency, or whenever prepared as a joint effort with a federal agency requiring a programmatic review" (ARM 17.4.628(2)). DOE generally completes programmatic environmental reviews when several proposals will have cumulative or synergistic environmental impact upon a region or when proposing a new agency program that would affect the environment. Neither DEQ nor DOE is contemplating a series of actions or creating a new program that will have an impact on the environment. No programmatic review is required for the MATL line.



Response 25: Montana does produce more electricity than it consumes. The need for the MATL line as stated in Section 1.2.1 is "to connect the Montana electrical transmission grid with the Alberta electrical transmission grid (no direct connection currently exists), provide access to potential markets for new and existing power generation facilities in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line, and improve transmission access to markets seeking new energy resources." The need for the line is not primarily to export more electricity out of Montana.

Response 26: Comment noted. MATL has proposed a merchant line, one that would provide a service to persons generating or purchasing power. As such, it would benefit generators that would not otherwise have a transmission path to market their product. The line also would benefit MATL financially when it would make a profit on the service it provides. Finally, the line may provide benefits to Montana consumers by providing another transmission path into the state which could help improve the reliability of transmission in Montana through additional redundancy.

Response 27: Comment noted. While the line could facilitate the development of wind resources and other generation facilities, it would be a merchant line and provide another transmission path to and from Montana. When the wind is not blowing or when wind generators are not fully exercising their agreements to transmit power over MATL's line, the proposed line could be available to other generators and power users on a short-term, non-firm basis.

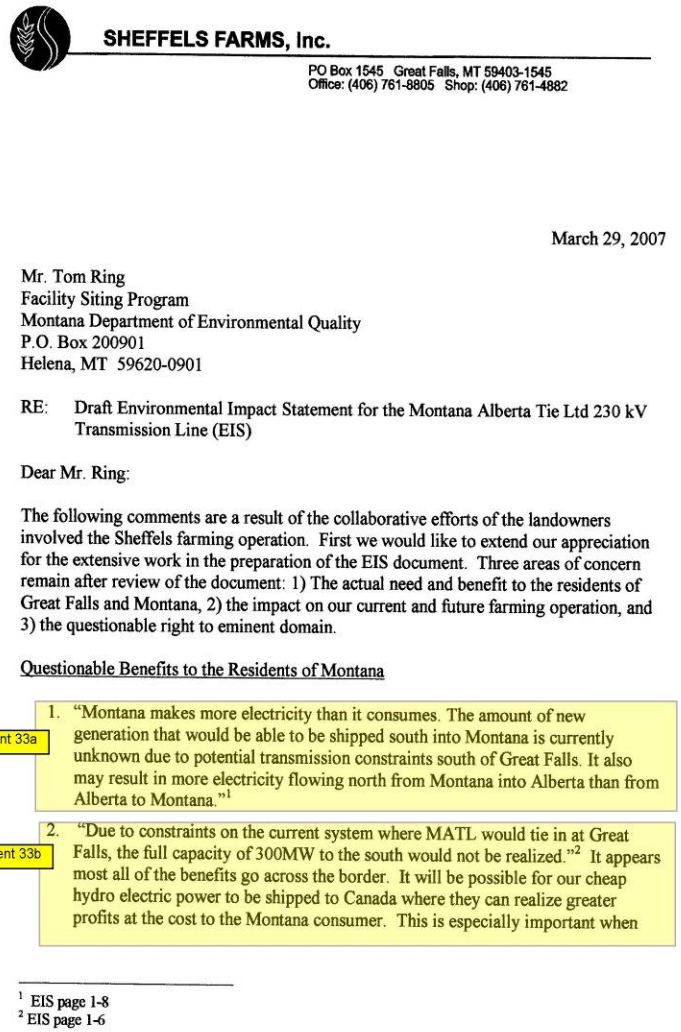
Response 28: The discussion of impacts for the proposed MATL transmission line has been expanded in Chapter 4 for more description of potential visual impacts associated with wind farm development.

Response 29: See response to comment 20. Wind farms are most likely to be located in windy areas, within about 30 to 40 miles of an existing transmission line with available transmission capacity, and where agreements can be negotiated with affected landowners. For the proposed MATL transmission line, an area within 30-40 miles of the line has the highest probability for future wind farm development directly associated with the MATL line due to the cost of interconnecting transmission lines between individual wind farms and the MATL line. Different areas could be developed depending on project economics and availability of the wind resource. Other than the McCormick Ranch Wind Park, which would have about 60 turbines located north of the Marias River between the McCormick and Sullivan Bridge roads, additional details on wind farm locations, number of turbines, and other project-specific information are lacking. This information is not necessary for certification of the transmission line. See also response to comment 28 for more description of potential visual impacts associated with wind farm development along with Section 3.15 and the revised discussion of impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 30: Comment noted. Thank you.

Response 31: See Chapter 4.

Response 32: Comment noted.



SHEFFELS FARMS, Inc.

PO Box 1545 Great Falls, MT 59403-1545
Office: (406) 761-8805 Shop: (406) 761-4882

March 29, 2007

Mr. Tom Ring
Facility Siting Program
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd 230 kV Transmission Line (EIS)

Dear Mr. Ring:

The following comments are a result of the collaborative efforts of the landowners involved the Sheffels farming operation. First we would like to extend our appreciation for the extensive work in the preparation of the EIS document. Three areas of concern remain after review of the document: 1) The actual need and benefit to the residents of Great Falls and Montana, 2) the impact on our current and future farming operation, and 3) the questionable right to eminent domain.

Questionable Benefits to the Residents of Montana

Comment 33a

1. "Montana makes more electricity than it consumes. The amount of new generation that would be able to be shipped south into Montana is currently unknown due to potential transmission constraints south of Great Falls. It also may result in more electricity flowing north from Montana into Alberta than from Alberta to Montana."[1]

Comment 33b

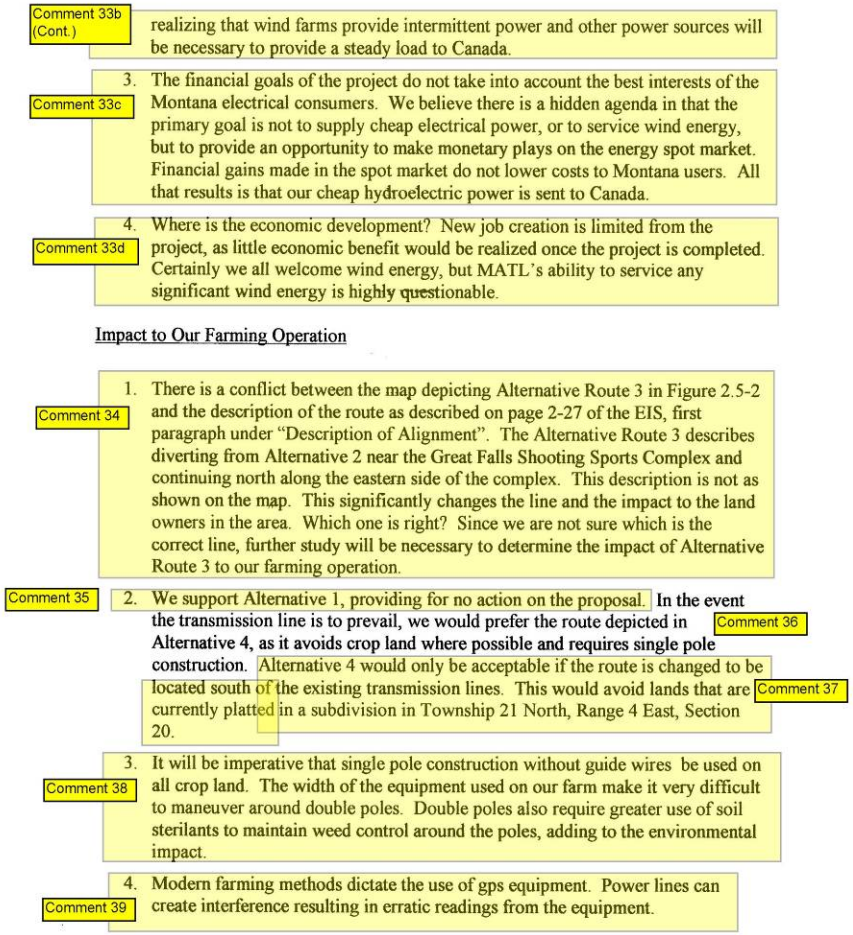
2. "Due to constraints on the current system where MATL would tie in at Great Falls, the full capacity of 300MW to the south would not be realized."[2] It appears most all of the benefits go across the border. It will be possible for our cheap hydro electric power to be shipped to Canada where they can realize greater profits at the cost to the Montana consumer. This is especially important when

[1] EIS page 1-8
[2] EIS page 1-6

Response 33a: Comment noted. See comment 25.

Response 33b-d: Refer to response to comment 25. The primary goal of the line is to connect Montana and Alberta's systems and to allow for the development of wind farms in the Cut Bank area. The benefits of MATL to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are also discussed in Section 3.13.

Although the purpose of this line is stated to increase transfer capacity and allow for new energy development, the line could be used by utilities and other entities to make purchases and sales on the spot market (short-term non-firm transactions might occur on the spot market when the wind is not blowing or when a wind farm holding a firm contract with MATL is not fully exercising its rights). Such transactions would be limited by the amount of firm and non-firm power left over on the line after the firm contract obligations are met. Electricity prices are higher in Alberta than in Mid-C about 75 percent of the time, so it is possible that some monetary plays could be made on the spot market as a result of this line. (Mid-C means the Mid Columbia trading hub, a commonly used location where electricity prices in the Pacific Northwest are compared) This 75 percent figure comes from a paper entitled "Montana Alberta Tie-Line: What are the Economic Benefits to Alberta?" by Aidan Hollis, Department of Economics, University of Calgary, ahollis@ucalgary.ca. This paper states that "when there is a price difference between two markets, there is generally an economic inefficiency. It means that there are buyers in the lower priced market who would be willing to sell into the higher priced market just below the prevailing higher price, and buyers in the higher-priced market who would be willing to buy at that price. If they were to undertake such a transaction, both parties would benefit. The same applies in electricity markets, and the benefits accrue to



Comment 33b (Cont.) realizing that wind farms provide intermittent power and other power sources will be necessary to provide a steady load to Canada.

Comment 33c 3. The financial goals of the project do not take into account the best interests of the Montana electrical consumers. We believe there is a hidden agenda in that the primary goal is not to supply cheap electrical power, or to service wind energy, but to provide an opportunity to make monetary plays on the energy spot market. Financial gains made in the spot market do not lower costs to Montana users. All that results is that our cheap hydroelectric power is sent to Canada.

Comment 33d 4. Where is the economic development? New job creation is limited from the project, as little economic benefit would be realized once the project is completed. Certainly we all welcome wind energy, but MATL's ability to service any significant wind energy is highly questionable.

Impact to Our Farming Operation

Comment 34 1. There is a conflict between the map depicting Alternative Route 3 in Figure 2.5-2 and the description of the route as described on page 2-27 of the EIS, first paragraph under "Description of Alignment". The Alternative Route 3 describes diverting from Alternative 2 near the Great Falls Shooting Sports Complex and continuing north along the eastern side of the complex. This description is not as shown on the map. This significantly changes the line and the impact to the land owners in the area. Which one is right? Since we are not sure which is the correct line, further study will be necessary to determine the impact of Alternative Route 3 to our farming operation.

Comment 35 2. We support Alternative 1, providing for no action on the proposal. In the event the transmission line is to prevail, we would prefer the route depicted in Comment 36 Alternative 4, as it avoids crop land where possible and requires single pole construction. Alternative 4 would only be acceptable if the route is changed to be located south of the existing transmission lines. This would avoid lands that are Comment 37 currently platted in a subdivision in Township 21 North, Range 4 East, Section 20.

Comment 38 3. It will be imperative that single pole construction without guide wires be used on all crop land. The width of the equipment used on our farm make it very difficult to maneuver around double poles. Double poles also require greater use of soil sterilants to maintain weed control around the poles, adding to the environmental impact.

Comment 39 4. Modern farming methods dictate the use of gps equipment. Power lines can create interference resulting in erratic readings from the equipment.

parties in both jurisdictions, regardless of which one has the higher price." (p. 6). The paper also states on page 7 that "given, as discussed above, the likely increase in prices in Alberta in the near future, it appears that there will continue to be ample scope for imports of Mid-C priced electricity." Page 8 states that "on days when prices are higher in Alberta, we would expect imports into Alberta from Montana, if the MATL tie-line were available." The reason for this is that importing electricity from Montana could make Alberta electricity prices lower on certain days as Alberta could avoid some of its highest cost generation. This same gain from lower prices could happen in Montana when Alberta prices are lower than Montana prices.

However, the amount of Montana-generated electricity that could flow up to Alberta is limited by the relatively small size of the line (300 MW) and would be a small portion compared to the amount of electricity Montana generates each year (about 3,000 aMW) and exports each year (over 1,000 aMW). Much of the time, a large portion of MATL's 300 MW would be used for firm commitments from generators rather than for trading opportunities. The paper also states that both Alberta and Montana could benefit from the MATL line from less of a chance of volatile spot market prices as well as less of a chance of the exercise of market power by electricity suppliers.

Response 34: Thank you for pointing out the mistake. Figure 2.4-2, Alternative 3 Alignment South, is correct. The text in Section 2.4 should have indicated that the alternative would follow the western edge of the Shooting Sports Complex and has been corrected. Figures throughout the draft EIS correctly depict Alternative 3 in this area. Land use categorizations in Appendix H has been corrected by milepost and the summaries of land use categories crossed in

Chapter 3 have been updated. Before rejoining Alternative 2, Alternative 3 would cross about 1.5 miles of crop land owned by the Sheffels families. These crossings would be near the edges of fields or strip farming patterns.

Response 35: Comment noted.

Response 36: Comment noted.

Response 37: Alternative 4 remains on the north side of existing transmission lines along the southern edge of Section 21, Township 21 North, Range 4 East. There are several reasons for this. First, to locate the MATL line on the south side of existing lines the MATL line would have to cross WAPA's existing single pole 230-kV line twice. While not impossible, these crossings are likely to be done with very tall structures in order to maintain adequate clearance between the two lines. Because of the visual sensitivity associated with the Missouri River recreational corridor and conservation easement bordering the Missouri River, the agencies opted to avoid unnecessary visual intrusion in this area. Secondly, as indicated in comment 64, locating the MATL line south of the existing transmission lines in this area would restrict development of a new grain milling business in the northwest ¼ of Section 28, Township 21 North, Range 4 East.

Response 38: Comment noted. Unguyed single pole structures would add costs as indicated below. In addition, the agencies recognize that some agricultural producers would choose to sterilize the soil between the poles of an H-frame structure or between the structure and the guy wire anchors to control weeds. Others would choose to establish a more permanent perennial grass cover that would compete with weedy species.

Both the single pole and three pole structures would be classified into three types: small angle, medium angle, and deadend. The unguyed structures would require large foundations with anchor bolts and much larger steel poles to hold the conductor loads. This results in higher costs for unguyed structures as compared to guyed structures. The following estimates are labor and material cost comparisons per structure for the three types:

Single Pole Structure	Guyed	Unguyed
Small Angle	$15,000.00	$ 35,000.00
Medium Angle	$20,000.00	$ 50,000.00
Deadend	$30,000.00	$100,000.00

Three Pole Structure	Guyed	Unguyed
Small Angle	$30,000.00	$ 50,000.00
Medium Angle	$40,000.00	$ 70,000.00
Deadend	$50,000.00	$120,000.00

Source: HDR 2007

Response 39: Comment noted. See response to comment 599.

Comment 40

In closing, we emphatically do not see the need for additional transmission lines in our area, when the existing lines are not utilized to capacity. We were informed that MATL could use the existing lines, but were reluctant because surcharges would be placed on their use. Further research needs to be done to study the use of the existing lines.

Respectfully submitted,

Jim Sheffels

John Sheffels

Doug Croghan

Response 40: The concept of MATL using existing lines is analyzed in Section 2.7, Alternatives Considered but Dismissed section. Two major transmission systems currently exist in the area. The first is NorthWestern Energy's 115-kV line from Cut Bank to Great Falls built in the 1960s. According to NorthWestern Energy this line has a capacity of about 130MW under the best conditions. The actual amount of MW that the line and interconnected system can handle in any given moment depends on various line limits (thermal limits, system stability, etc). This line already carries electricity and is currently being used for load-serving purposes in the Conrad-Cut Bank area. Thus, this line does not provide the additional capacity offered by the proposed MATL line of 300 or more MW. NorthWestern Energy also operates a 161-kV line from Havre to Great Falls.

The second transmission system in the area is operated by WAPA. It consists of a 230-kV transmission line built in the 1980s between Great Falls and Conrad and between Conrad and Shelby in the 1990s. The capacity of this line under the best conditions is about 240MW. The second related WAPA line in this area is a 115-kV line between Cut Bank and Havre and an interconnected 161-kV line from Havre to Great Falls. The 115-kV line currently has about an 80MW limit and a conductor limit of about 120MW for future expansion. WAPA is considering rebuilding the Havre to Great Falls line and upgrading the line to 230-kV specifications which could give that line about a 240MW capacity. However the line would still be operated at its existing voltage until transformers are upgraded in substations near Great Falls and Havre. All of these WAPA lines already have firm commitments for available capacity and can sometimes run at capacity due to system characteristics. Thus, this system does not provide the additional firm capacity offered by the MATL proposal.

In addition, neither the NorthWestern Energy system nor the WAPA system directly connects to the transmission system in Alberta. Thus, the existing direct transmission capacity between Great Falls and Lethbridge is essentially zero. MATL's line would make it possible for transactions to take place between Alberta and Montana.

Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.

230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

See attached

Name [illegible] L. Olson

Address HC 35 Box [illegible]

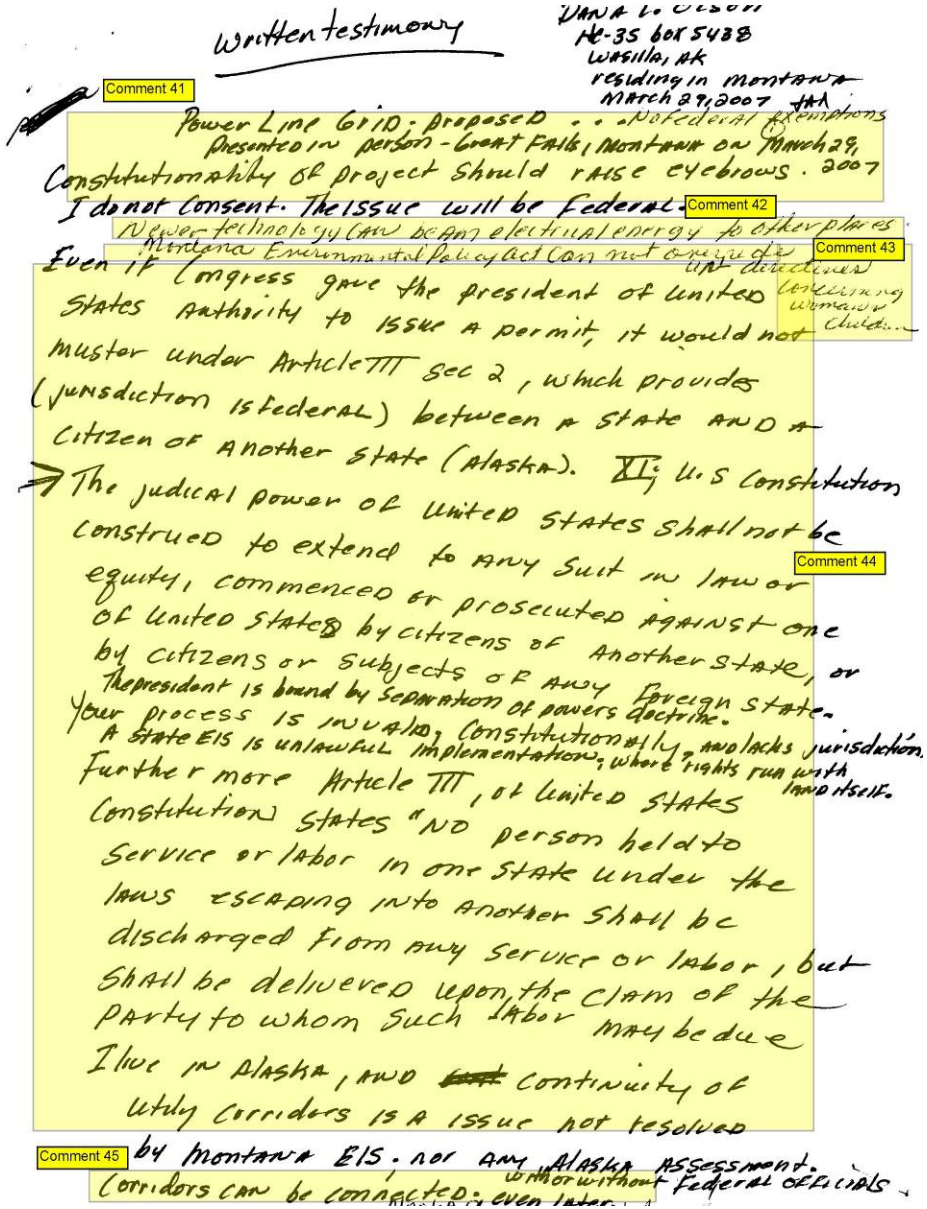
City [illegible] State AK Zip 99654

resident in Montana - contact - [illegible]

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality



Response 41: Comment noted. See response to comments 44 and 46 in which the commenter cites specific provisions of the U.S. Constitution.

Response 42: The concept of beaming energy has been around since the 1960s. The idea involves converting light to energy with a series of satellite mounted photovoltaic cells or solar collectors based on the moon. Light energy would be converted to electricity and then to microwave radiation. The microwave radiation would be beamed down to a combination rectifier-antenna, called a rectenna, located in an isolated area. The rectenna would convert the microwave energy back to DC (direct current) power. Lasers have also been considered as a way to transmit the energy from space. Such a system might provide electricity at a cost of about 60 to 80 cents per kilowatt-hour using today's technology but costs might come down to 7 to 10 cents per kilowatt-hour in 15 to 20 years. Clearly this is currently not a cost competitive source of power today when many in Montana are paying about 8.83 cents per kilowatt hour.

Experimental earth-based methods of beaming electricity have been developed. However, according to the Smithsonian/NASA ADS Astronomy Abstract Service "the best experimentally verified wireless power transmission DC-to-DC efficiencies are 54 percent for a microwave transmission measured over a short distance; the longest range wireless power transmission stands at 1.6 km in 1975 (Brown, 1998; Dickinson, 1975, 2002)." Beaming electricity is not seen as a viable alternative to the proposed transmission line at this time.

Response 43: The agencies are unaware of any United Nations directives concerning women and children that are affected by the agencies' environmental review of the MATL project under the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The agencies are not able to be more specific in its response without a direct reference to a United Nations directive.

Response 44: The commenter mistakenly identifies Article III as stating "no person held to service or labor in one State under the laws escaping into another shall be discharged from any service or labor, but shall be delivered upon the claim of the party to whom such labor may be due." This provision is found in Article IV, Section 3, and was superseded by the adoption of Amendment XIII in 1865 that abolished slavery within the United States. Neither has application to the agencies' consideration of the MATL project.

Article III, Section 2, of the United States Constitution allowed federal courts to accept jurisdiction of legal controversies between a State and a citizen of another State. The United States Supreme Court accepted such jurisdiction of such an action in Chisholm v. Georgia 2 U.S. (2 Dall.) 419 (1793). Congress proposed Amendment XI to the United States Constitution which was ratified in 1798. The sovereign immunity granted States under Amendment XI overturns Chisholm, preventing suits against States by citizens of other States. Neither of the federal jurisdiction provisions of Article III, Section 2, or Amendment XI apply to the agencies' consideration of the MATL Project application.

Response 45: See response to comment 41.

D.L. Olson

Power grid continued / proposed

IX U.S Constitution provides:

Comment 46

The enumeration in the Constitution of certain rights shall not be construed to deny or disparage other retained by the people.

USDA, and Bureau of Land management can not effecuate different interpretations on me and to concede to this project. I object.
I cite due process of law, and just compensation.

The decision fails to denote implementation of highly erodible land and wet lands provisions of Federal Agriculture Improvement and reform Act of 1966.

Comment 47

I denny NRCS standards of ① climate ② living organisms ③ parent materials ④ topography ⑤ time

Comment 48

NRCS standards of Montana were challenged in Alaska and codified law
The revised model buisness corporation Act defeats the easements running upon Federal land grants and is opposed outright. SB 196 sec 19 (1987)
I object, and it is my right to object.

Comment 49

-2

Response 46: Amendment IX to the United States Constitution addressed a concern that passage of the Bill of Rights would allow government infringement of other fundamental rights that were not expressly included in the Bill of Rights. Courts have relied on Amendment IX as an affirmation of the existence of rights which are not enumerated but which are nonetheless protected by other provisions. The agencies' consideration of the MATL Project does not infringe on any fundamental rights, whether listed in the Bill of Rights or protected by other provisions of the United States Constitution.

Response 47: Comment noted. The Federal Agriculture Improvement and Reform Act of 1966 and as amended provides incentives for property owners to enroll highly erodible land in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The agencies did recognize that certain lands in the study area are currently enrolled in the CRP. However, these enrollments are not believed to be permanent and thus when the contract period is completed these lands may be converted to other uses such as grazing or cropland. Because presence of a transmission line is expected to have greater impacts to crop land than to grazing land, agencies treated CRP land as crop land when analyzing impacts.

Response 48: No decision has been issued at this time. The draft EIS recognized the importance of climate, living organisms, parent material, topography, and time in the development of soils in this area of Montana (see Section 3.2).

Response 49: The Revised Model Business Corporation Act is published by the Committee on Corporate Law of the Section of Corporation, Banking and Business Law of the American Bar Association. Montana has, in large part, adopted this model act in the provisions of Title 35, Montana Code Annotated. None of its business corporation provisions apply to the agencies' consideration of the MATL project.

D.L. Olson

Power grid: proposed / cont.

Comment 50

Furthermore without liability of federal government from past actions resulting in health impairment of prior Montana residents (myself ... wind drift from Nuclear bomb testing in Nevada. I claim Article 5; U.S Constitution allows me to seek injunctive relief, against Federal actions.

Comment 51

The project has no limitation of magnetic electric field, known to cause effect, on humans, animals, livestock, birds (migration) and children expressedly.

Comment 52

Use of power created can be put into battery cells and transported.

You don't want to address my sister (or myself) affected as children in Montana lack of thyroid function, then I will stop you in this degration, caused improportionately against children, and women.

Comment 53

The U.N directive has not been followed.

Contact me at Walmart if you wish.

Dana L Olson
residing in Montana
HC-35 box 5438
Wasilla, AK
99654

March 29, 2007

-3-

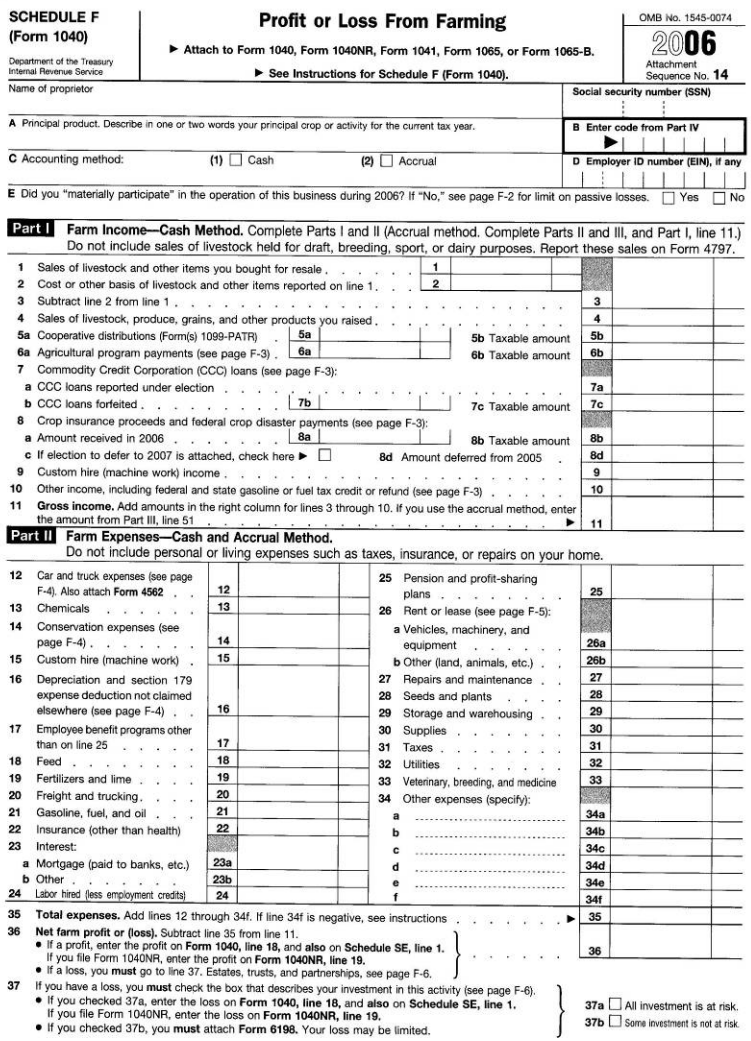
Response 50: Comment noted. However, the comment addresses an issue beyond the scope of this EIS.

Response 51: Before a certificate of compliance for the proposed line could be issued by the DEQ, as required by ARM 17.20.1602, DEQ must condition its approval with the requirement that "(c) for electric transmission facilities, that the facility will adhere to the national electric safety code regarding transmission lines and (d) for electric transmission facilities, that the electric field at the edge of the right-of-way will not exceed one kV per meter measured one meter above the ground in residential or subdivided areas unless the affected landowner waives this condition, and that the electric field at road crossings under the facility will not exceed seven kV per meter measured one meter above the ground."

Response 52: The rules implementing the Montana Environmental Policy Act require that alternatives to the proposed action "appreciably accomplish the same objectives or results as the proposed action." Storing and transporting electricity in batteries would not accomplish MATL's objective of building a transmission line to transmit electricity. The technology for battery cells on the transmission grid (for storing energy on the grid) has not yet been widely developed for commercial use, although it is being tested at the current time.

Fuel needed to transport the relatively heavy batteries would likely make this method of transmitting electricity uneconomical. If it were an efficient way to transport bulk electricity, it would have been done and there would be a fleet of trucks and trains transporting electricity in this manner.

Response 53: Your comment is noted but is beyond the scope of this document.



SCHEDULE F (Form 1040)

Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service

Profit or Loss From Farming

► Attach to Form 1040, Form 1040NR, Form 1041, Form 1065, or Form 1065-B.

► See Instructions for Schedule F (Form 1040).

OMB No. 1545-0074

2006

Attachment Sequence No. 14

Name of proprietor

Social security number (SSN)

A Principal product. Describe in one or two words your principal crop or activity for the current tax year.

B Enter code from Part IV

C Accounting method: (1) ☐ Cash (2) ☐ Accrual

D Employer ID number (EIN), if any

E Did you "materially participate" in the operation of this business during 2006? If "No," see page F-2 for limit on passive losses. ☐ Yes ☐ No

Part I **Farm Income—Cash Method.** Complete Parts I and II (Accrual method. Complete Parts II and III, and Part I, line 11.) Do not include sales of livestock held for draft, breeding, sport, or dairy purposes. Report these sales on Form 4797.

1 Sales of livestock and other items you bought for resale . . . 1

2 Cost or other basis of livestock and other items reported on line 1 . . . 2

3 Subtract line 2 from line 1 . . . 3

4 Sales of livestock, produce, grains, and other products you raised . . . 4

5a Cooperative distributions (Form(s) 1099-PATR) . 5a — 5b Taxable amount . 5b

6a Agricultural program payments (see page F-3) . 6a — 6b Taxable amount . 6b

7 Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) loans (see page F-3):

a CCC loans reported under election . . . 7a

b CCC loans forfeited . . . 7b — 7c Taxable amount . 7c

8 Crop insurance proceeds and federal crop disaster payments (see page F-3):

a Amount received in 2006 . . . 8a — 8b Taxable amount . 8b

c If election to defer to 2007 is attached, check here ► ☐ 8d Amount deferred from 2005 . 8d

9 Custom hire (machine work) income . . . 9

10 Other income, including federal and state gasoline or fuel tax credit or refund (see page F-3) . . . 10

11 **Gross income.** Add amounts in the right column for lines 3 through 10. If you use the accrual method, enter the amount from Part III, line 51 . . . ► 11

Part II **Farm Expenses—Cash and Accrual Method.** Do not include personal or living expenses such as taxes, insurance, or repairs on your home.

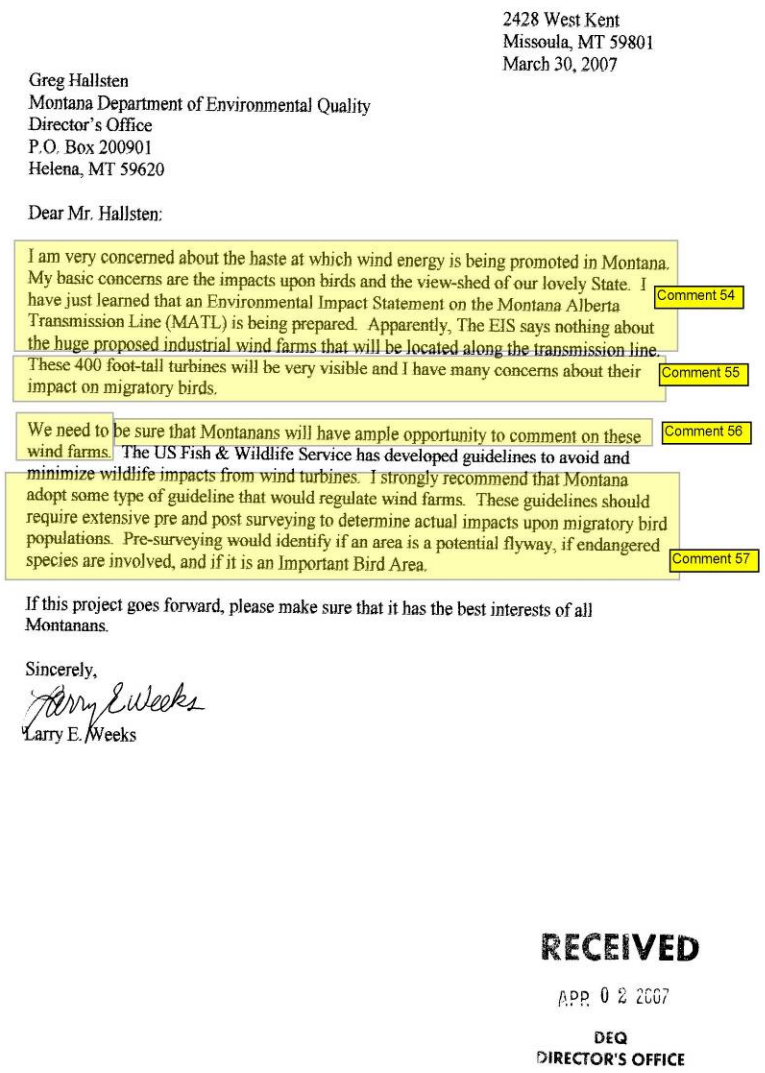
12 Car and truck expenses (see page F-4). Also attach **Form 4562**	12		25 Pension and profit-sharing plans	25	
13 Chemicals	13		26 Rent or lease (see page F-5):		
14 Conservation expenses (see page F-4)	14		a Vehicles, machinery, and equipment	26a	
15 Custom hire (machine work)	15		b Other (land, animals, etc.)	26b	
16 Depreciation and section 179 expense deduction not claimed elsewhere (see page F-4)	16		27 Repairs and maintenance	27	
17 Employee benefit programs other than on line 25	17		28 Seeds and plants	28	
18 Feed	18		29 Storage and warehousing	29	
19 Fertilizers and lime	19		30 Supplies	30	
20 Freight and trucking	20		31 Taxes	31	
21 Gasoline, fuel, and oil	21		32 Utilities	32	
22 Insurance (other than health)	22		33 Veterinary, breeding, and medicine	33	
23 Interest:			34 Other expenses (specify):		
a Mortgage (paid to banks, etc.)	23a		a	34a	
b Other	23b		b	34b	
24 Labor hired (less employment credits)	24		c	34c	
			d	34d	
			e	34e	
			f	34f	

35 **Total expenses.** Add lines 12 through 34f. If line 34f is negative, see instructions . . . ► 35

36 **Net farm profit or (loss).** Subtract line 35 from line 11.
- If a profit, enter the profit on **Form 1040, line 18,** and **also** on **Schedule SE, line 1.** If you file Form 1040NR, enter the profit on **Form 1040NR, line 19.**
- If a loss, you **must** go to line 37. Estates, trusts, and partnerships, see page F-6. . . . 36

37 If you have a loss, you **must** check the box that describes your investment in this activity (see page F-6).
- If you checked 37a, enter the loss on **Form 1040, line 18,** and **also** on **Schedule SE, line 1.** If you file Form 1040NR, enter the loss on **Form 1040NR, line 19.**
- If you checked 37b, you **must** attach **Form 6198.** Your loss may be limited.

37a ☐ All investment is at risk.
37b ☐ Some investment is not at risk.



2428 West Kent
Missoula, MT 59801
March 30, 2007

Greg Hallsten
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Mr. Hallsten:

I am very concerned about the haste at which wind energy is being promoted in Montana. My basic concerns are the impacts upon birds and the view-shed of our lovely State. I have just learned that an Environmental Impact Statement on the Montana Alberta Transmission Line (MATL) is being prepared. Apparently, The EIS says nothing about the huge proposed industrial wind farms that will be located along the transmission line. These 400 foot-tall turbines will be very visible and I have many concerns about their impact on migratory birds.

Comment 54

Comment 55

We need to be sure that Montanans will have ample opportunity to comment on these wind farms. The US Fish & Wildlife Service has developed guidelines to avoid and minimize wildlife impacts from wind turbines. I strongly recommend that Montana adopt some type of guideline that would regulate wind farms. These guidelines should require extensive pre and post surveying to determine actual impacts upon migratory bird populations. Pre-surveying would identify if an area is a potential flyway, if endangered species are involved, and if it is an Important Bird Area.

Comment 56

Comment 57

If this project goes forward, please make sure that it has the best interests of all Montanans.

Sincerely,

Larry E. Weeks

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DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Response 54: As indicated in the wildlife discussion in Chapter 3, "The Project area contains rolling hills, gentle ridges, and plateaus bisected by small drainages. There are no obvious "funnels," such as prominent ridgelines or mountain gaps that could potentially serve as large scale or regional migratory pathways. The relatively small ridges within the project area may serve as local pathways for birds passing through as a part of a large, broad front migration." Thousands of tundra swans, and snow and Ross's geese pass through the area each year along with neotropical migrant birds and migrating raptors. DEQ staff has observed flocks of snow geese on area lakes and has received reports of concentrations of other migratory waterfowl on area ponds and lakes. Raptors have been reported to migrate and to nest in some parts of the study area, notably the Kevin Rim area.

Chapter 4 describes the potential impacts of wind farms. Avian mortality estimates based on data collected from the various wind farms in the United States indicate an average of 2.19 avian fatalities per turbine per year for all species combined, and an average of 0.033 fatalities for raptors per turbine per year (Erickson et al. 2001). These estimates are based on survey methods that may or may not be equivalent between wind energy facilities, and may not accurately estimate actual mortality estimates. Excluding California, these averages are 1.83 total avian fatalities per turbine per year, and 0.006 raptor fatalities per turbine per year. The number of bird fatalities per turbine per year from individual studies has ranged from 0 birds per turbine per year (at Searsburg, Vermont, and Algona, Iowa) to 4.45 birds per turbine per year (at Buffalo Ridge Phase III, Minnesota). Recent estimates of raptor mortality for the Altamont Pass Wind Resource Area (WRA) ranged from 0.16 fatalities per turbine per year to 0.24 fatalities per turbine per year (Smallwood and Thelander 2004). The range of fatality rates

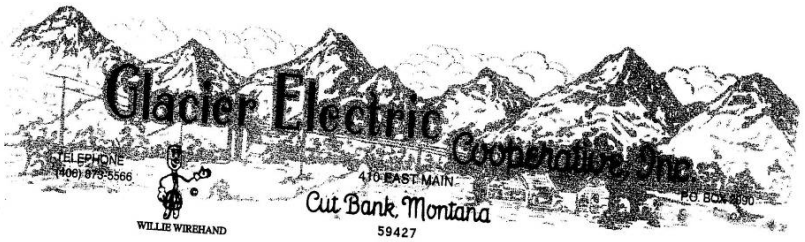
reported for these facilities probably reflects differences in the habitats and bird communities among the sites, as well as differences in the designs of the mortality monitoring studies that generated the reported data. Impacts of the proposed transmission line on avian species are described in Section 3.8.

Response 55: See the revised discussions of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 56: See response to comment 23.

Response 57: DEQ does not have authority to regulate wind farms under the Major Facility Siting Act or any other statutory scheme that it administers. Furthermore, the Montana Environmental Policy Act is procedural in nature. While the Montana Environmental Policy Act requires DEQ to disclose cumulative impacts, it does not give DEQ substantive authority to regulate the activity causing those impacts.

Your opinion has been noted and forwarded to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the wildlife management agency for the State of Montana.



RECEIVED
MAR 30 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

March 20, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Richard H. Opper, Director

Dear Mr. Opper:

Glacier Electric Cooperative, Inc. would like to offer its unequivocal support for the Montana Alberta Tie Line. In our opinion, it is one of the most promising and beneficial projects, not only for the local area, but for the State of Montana, that we have seen in many years. We encourage the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt, as quickly as possible, the "Proposed Action" approach as the preferred routing alternative to the project. Comment 58

Construction of the tie line, and the associated wind generation facility, will create a positive impact on our area in many ways. Comment 59

As a utility, it will offer an opportunity to interconnect, if the necessity arises, to utilize the capacity of the transmission line. It will also provide an opportunity for us to participate in the maintenance of the system in the future. Comment 60

Socially, it will create jobs both during the construction phases and after completion in the maintenance and operations stages. The activity associated with the construction itself will create additional business for local merchants and suppliers. Comment 61

Economically it will help our county, which has been suffering from a severe economic recession for many years, by improving the tax base which will assist all local residents. Comment 62

Last, but most significantly, it will benefit the entire state of Montana by providing a desperately needed transmission path for power created by new generation facilities that will develop in the vicinity of the new line, and elsewhere in Montana and in Alberta. Comment 63

Response 58: Comment noted.

Response 59: Comment noted.

Response 60: Comment noted.

Response 61: Comment noted. The benefits of the MATL line to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13.

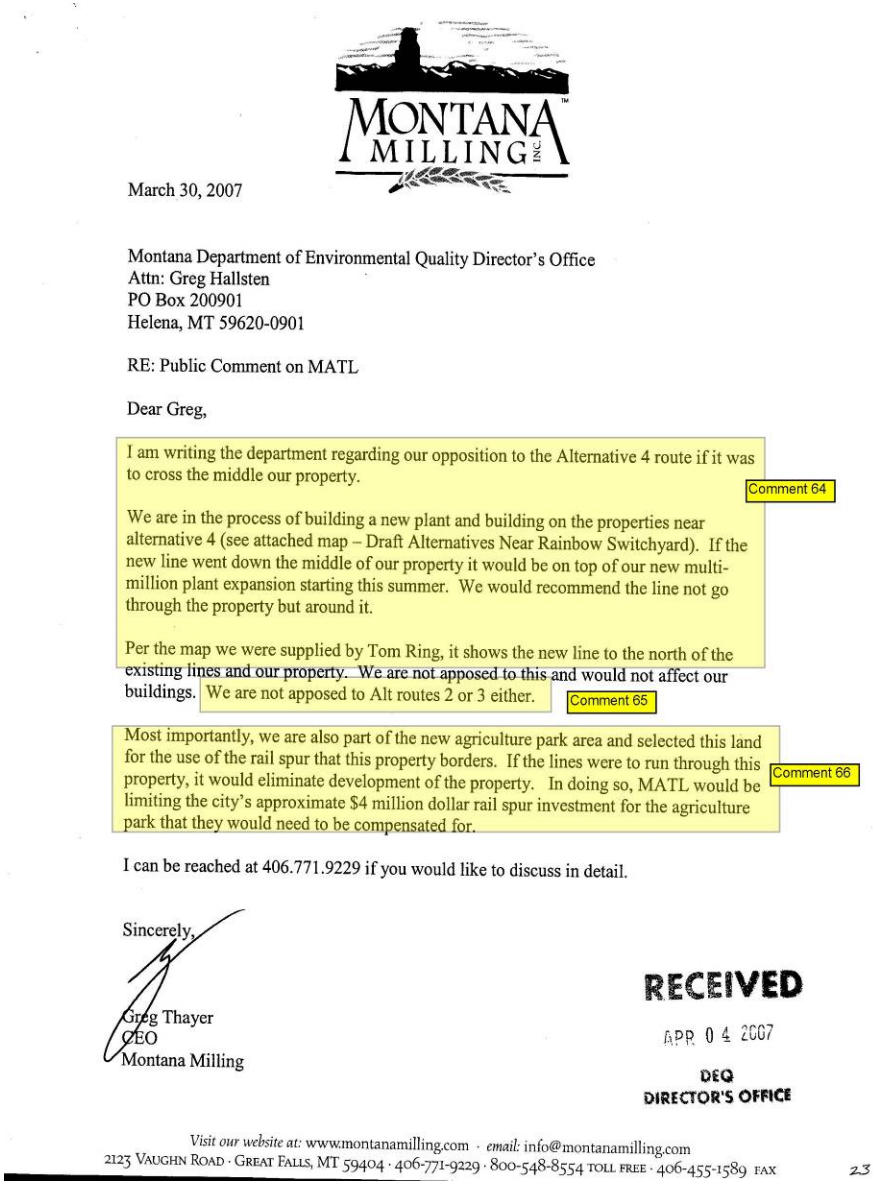
Response 62: Comment noted. The benefits of the MATL line to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13.

Response 63: Comment noted. The benefits of the MATL line to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13.

We congratulate the Montana Alberta Tie Line group on their innovative and progressive approach and wish them every success with the construction and operation of the transmission line.

Sincerely,

Jasen R. Bronec
General Manager



MONTANA MILLING INC.

March 30, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality Director's Office
Attn: Greg Hallsten
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: Public Comment on MATL

Dear Greg,

I am writing the department regarding our opposition to the Alternative 4 route if it was to cross the middle our property. Comment 64

We are in the process of building a new plant and building on the properties near alternative 4 (see attached map – Draft Alternatives Near Rainbow Switchyard). If the new line went down the middle of our property it would be on top of our new multi-million plant expansion starting this summer. We would recommend the line not go through the property but around it.

Per the map we were supplied by Tom Ring, it shows the new line to the north of the existing lines and our property. We are not apposed to this and would not affect our buildings. We are not apposed to Alt routes 2 or 3 either. Comment 65

Most importantly, we are also part of the new agriculture park area and selected this land for the use of the rail spur that this property borders. If the lines were to run through this property, it would eliminate development of the property. In doing so, MATL would be limiting the city's approximate $4 million dollar rail spur investment for the agriculture park that they would need to be compensated for. Comment 66

I can be reached at 406.771.9229 if you would like to discuss in detail.

Sincerely,

Greg Thayer
CEO
Montana Milling

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APR 04 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

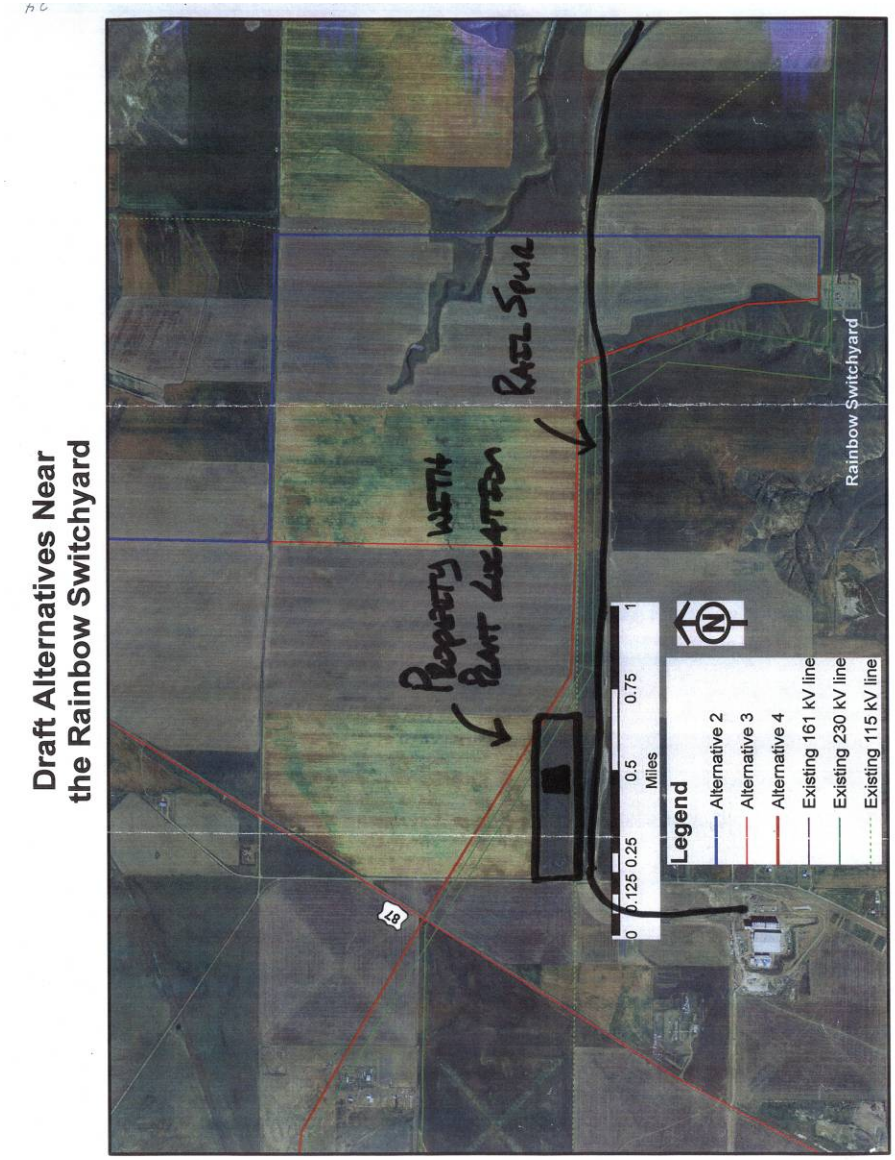
Visit our website at: www.montanamilling.com · email: info@montanamilling.com
2123 VAUGHN ROAD · GREAT FALLS, MT 59404 · 406-771-9229 · 800-548-8554 TOLL FREE · 406-455-1589 FAX

23

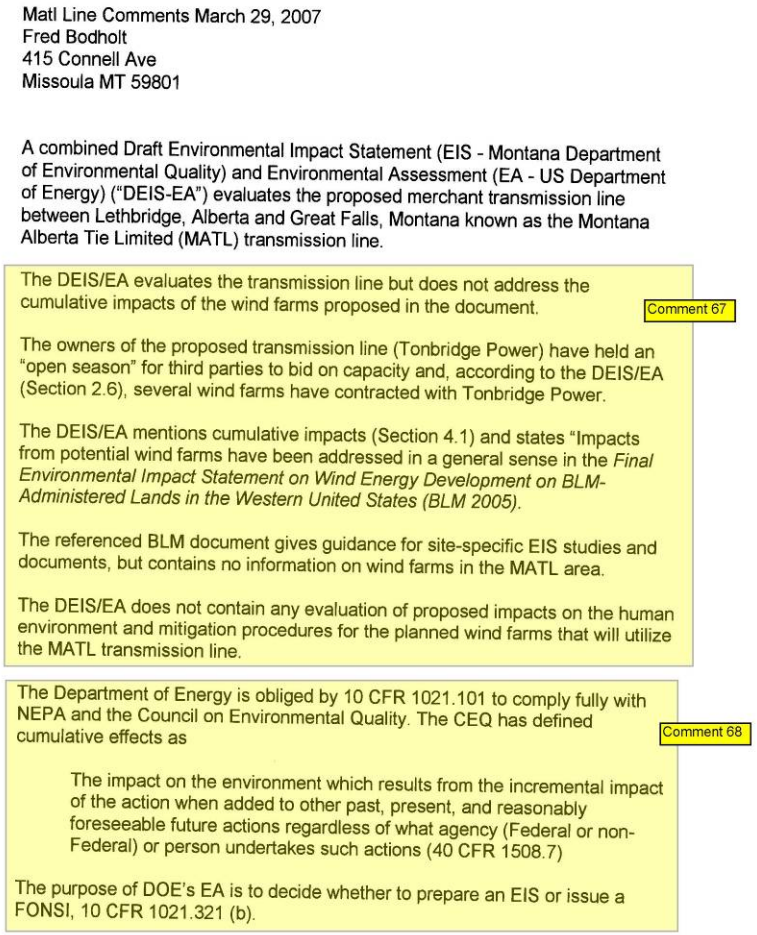
Response 64: Alternative 4 is located north of the two existing transmission lines that are located on the property in Section 20, Township 21 North, Range 4 East, and on the north side of WAPA's Great Falls to Conrad 230 kV line. A map received from the Cascade County Planning office has the location of the proposed mill southwest of the existing transmission lines. See response to comment 37.

Response 65: Comment noted.

Response 66: The three parcels you describe were rezoned from agricultural to light industrial on April 10, 2007.


Draft Alternatives Near
the Rainbow Switchyard
Rainbow Switchyard
Legend
Alternative 2
Alternative 3
Alternative 4
Existing 161 kV line
Existing 230 kV line
Existing 115 kV line
0 0.125 0.25 0.5 0.75 1
Miles
49


WOLFF MARY E
STATE OF MONTANA
SHEFFELS ERIC B
SHEFFELS JAMES R
87
INTERNATIONAL MALTING COMPANY
L T H FARMS INC
Legend
Alternative 2
Alternative 3
Alternative 4
Existing Transmission Lines
Major Highways
Highlighted Parcels
0 0.125 0.25 0.5
Miles



Matl Line Comments March 29, 2007
Fred Bodholt
415 Connell Ave
Missoula MT 59801

A combined Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS - Montana Department of Environmental Quality) and Environmental Assessment (EA - US Department of Energy) ("DEIS-EA") evaluates the proposed merchant transmission line between Lethbridge, Alberta and Great Falls, Montana known as the Montana Alberta Tie Limited (MATL) transmission line.

The DEIS/EA evaluates the transmission line but does not address the cumulative impacts of the wind farms proposed in the document. Comment 67

The owners of the proposed transmission line (Tonbridge Power) have held an "open season" for third parties to bid on capacity and, according to the DEIS/EA (Section 2.6), several wind farms have contracted with Tonbridge Power.

The DEIS/EA mentions cumulative impacts (Section 4.1) and states "Impacts from potential wind farms have been addressed in a general sense in the *Final Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States (BLM 2005).*

The referenced BLM document gives guidance for site-specific EIS studies and documents, but contains no information on wind farms in the MATL area.

The DEIS/EA does not contain any evaluation of proposed impacts on the human environment and mitigation procedures for the planned wind farms that will utilize the MATL transmission line.

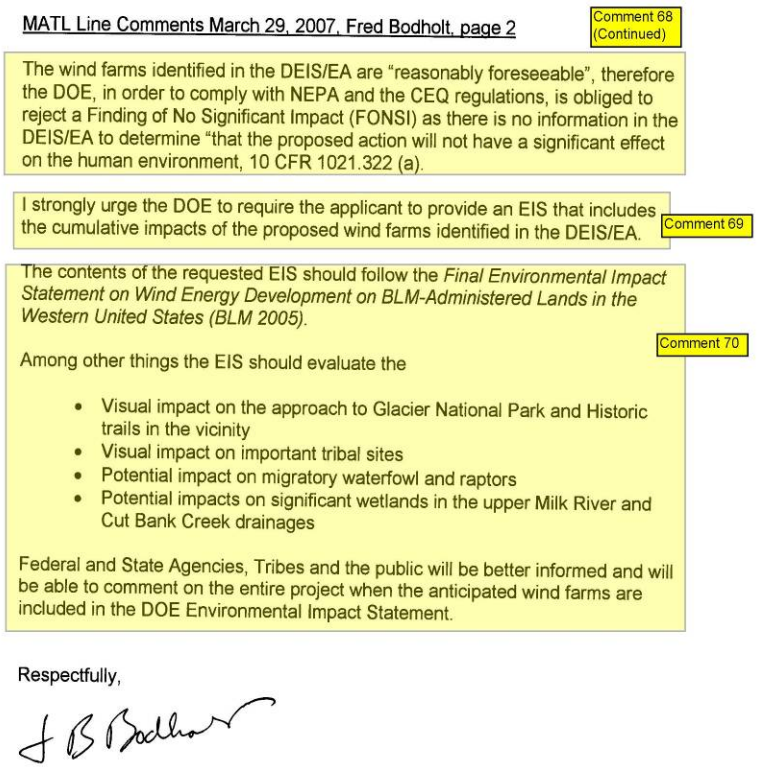
The Department of Energy is obliged by 10 CFR 1021.101 to comply fully with NEPA and the Council on Environmental Quality. The CEQ has defined cumulative effects as Comment 68

> The impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such actions (40 CFR 1508.7)

The purpose of DOE's EA is to decide whether to prepare an EIS or issue a FONSI, 10 CFR 1021.321 (b).

Response 67: See the revised discussion of impacts in Chapter 4and responses to comments 20 and 22.

Response 68: The impact analyses in Chapter 4 has been revised. However, information pertaining to the development of wind generation in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line lacks sufficient specificity to adequately analyze turbine size, location, and many project-specific impacts. DOE agrees with the commenter that the impacts identified in the March Environmental Assessment would not support a Finding of No Significant Impact. It is primarily for that reason that DOE has decided to prepare this EIS.



MATL Line Comments March 29, 2007, Fred Bodholt, page 2

Comment 68 (Continued)

The wind farms identified in the DEIS/EA are "reasonably foreseeable", therefore the DOE, in order to comply with NEPA and the CEQ regulations, is obliged to reject a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) as there is no information in the DEIS/EA to determine "that the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the human environment, 10 CFR 1021.322 (a).

I strongly urge the DOE to require the applicant to provide an EIS that includes the cumulative impacts of the proposed wind farms identified in the DEIS/EA.

Comment 69

The contents of the requested EIS should follow the *Final Environmental Impact Statement on Wind Energy Development on BLM-Administered Lands in the Western United States (BLM 2005).*

Comment 70

Among other things the EIS should evaluate the

- Visual impact on the approach to Glacier National Park and Historic trails in the vicinity
- Visual impact on important tribal sites
- Potential impact on migratory waterfowl and raptors
- Potential impacts on significant wetlands in the upper Milk River and Cut Bank Creek drainages

Federal and State Agencies, Tribes and the public will be better informed and will be able to comment on the entire project when the anticipated wind farms are included in the DOE Environmental Impact Statement.

Respectfully,

J B Bodholt

Response 69: See response 68 above. Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act is the responsibility of the Federal agencies, not the applicant. This Draft EIS contains a discussion of the impacts of wind farms in Chapter 4.

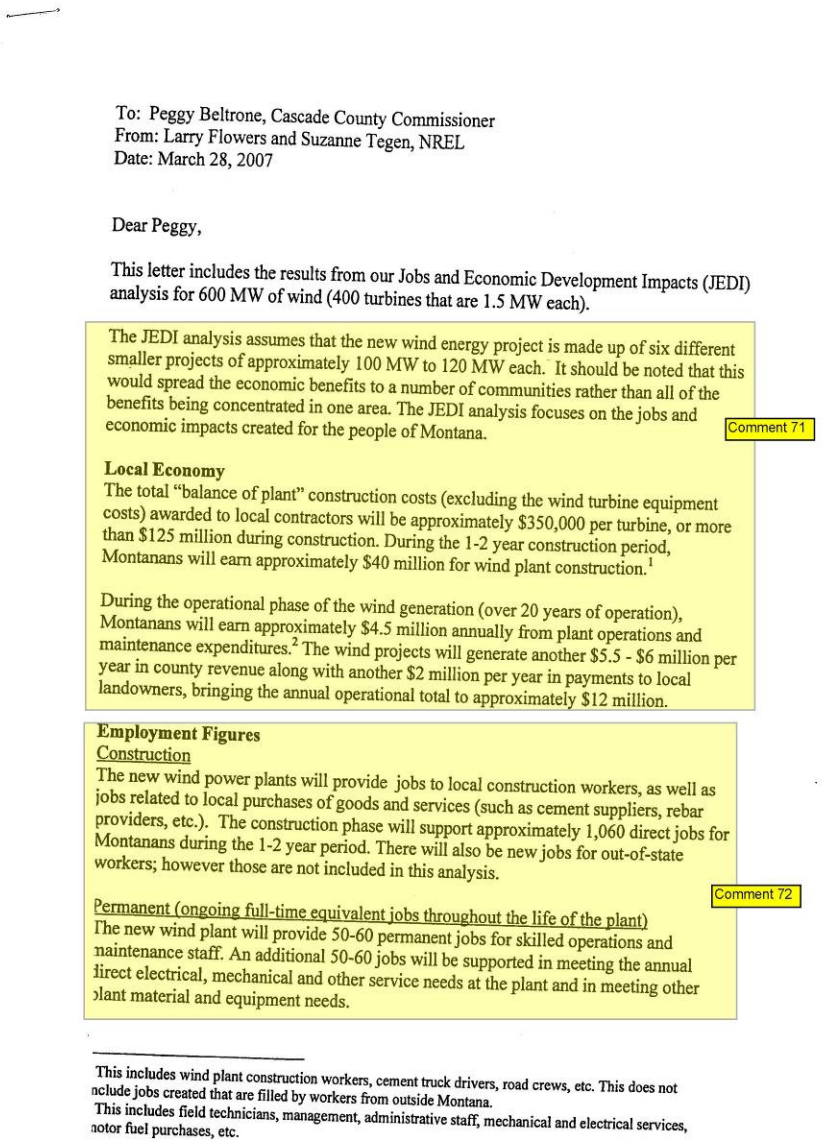
Response 70: See the revised discussion of impacts in Chapter 4 and response to comment 20. See also response to comment 415 regarding potential visual impacts of the MATL line and wind farms on viewpoints in Glacier National Park.

Proposed transmission lines would likely be minimal intrusive elements for historic trails and tribal sites when sensitive viewpoints are beyond three miles of the proposed facilities. Proposed wind farms could be more intrusive elements because of their larger size and scale. A detailed and site-specific analysis would be needed to determine potential effects. There are numerous historic trails crossing the region, primarily trending in a north-south direction along the Rocky Mountain Front. For minor trails, viewpoints within 3 miles of the transmission line could have some visual effect; however, the usual viewscape for a trail is along the trail, rather than toward peripheral areas. Unless the line crosses a trail, the effect on trail viewpoints would likely be minimal.

The Great North Trail is located more than 50 miles to the west of the proposed transmission line corridor and McCormick Ranch Wind Park; its visual qualities would not be affected. From elevated and distant viewpoints such as mountain tops where most sacred sites can be expected to occur, the proposed transmission line and wind farms would be no more intrusive visually than pre-existing roadways and highways, other transmission lines, cultivated fields, and

developed landscapes. The visual setting for these types of locations has already been severely modified.

Note that while there are wetlands in the area, these wetlands generally develop in low lying areas. Wind farms tend to be located on upland areas with more desirable wind regimes. The agencies have expanded Chapter 4 to respond to the need for additional discussion of visual impacts, migratory waterfowl and raptors, and prepared a floodplain and wetlands assessment as these pertain to cumulative impacts.



To: Peggy Beltrone, Cascade County Commissioner
From: Larry Flowers and Suzanne Tegen, NREL
Date: March 28, 2007

Dear Peggy,

This letter includes the results from our Jobs and Economic Development Impacts (JEDI) analysis for 600 MW of wind (400 turbines that are 1.5 MW each).

The JEDI analysis assumes that the new wind energy project is made up of six different smaller projects of approximately 100 MW to 120 MW each. It should be noted that this would spread the economic benefits to a number of communities rather than all of the benefits being concentrated in one area. The JEDI analysis focuses on the jobs and economic impacts created for the people of Montana.

Comment 71

Local Economy
The total "balance of plant" construction costs (excluding the wind turbine equipment costs) awarded to local contractors will be approximately $350,000 per turbine, or more than $125 million during construction. During the 1-2 year construction period, Montanans will earn approximately $40 million for wind plant construction.[1]

During the operational phase of the wind generation (over 20 years of operation), Montanans will earn approximately $4.5 million annually from plant operations and maintenance expenditures.[2] The wind projects will generate another $5.5 - $6 million per year in county revenue along with another $2 million per year in payments to local landowners, bringing the annual operational total to approximately $12 million.

Employment Figures
Construction
The new wind power plants will provide jobs to local construction workers, as well as jobs related to local purchases of goods and services (such as cement suppliers, rebar providers, etc.). The construction phase will support approximately 1,060 direct jobs for Montanans during the 1-2 year period. There will also be new jobs for out-of-state workers; however those are not included in this analysis.

Comment 72

Permanent (ongoing full-time equivalent jobs throughout the life of the plant)
The new wind plant will provide 50-60 permanent jobs for skilled operations and maintenance staff. An additional 50-60 jobs will be supported in meeting the annual direct electrical, mechanical and other service needs at the plant and in meeting other plant material and equipment needs.

This includes wind plant construction workers, cement truck drivers, road crews, etc. This does not include jobs created that are filled by workers from outside Montana.
This includes field technicians, management, administrative staff, mechanical and electrical services, motor fuel purchases, etc.

Response 71: Comment noted. The information provided is appreciated.

Response 72: Comment noted. The agencies appreciate the information provided.

In addition, the local economies will benefit from the indirect[3] and induced[4] job creation and earnings, resulting from direct expenditures listed above. The added benefits include over 1000 jobs ($24 million in earnings) during the construction period and 110 jobs ($2.5 million/year) during the operational phase of the plant. Comment 73

The following graphic representation shows the estimated *in-state* economic impacts from new wind generation in Montana. Inputs and assumptions for Montana Jobs and Economic Development Impact (JEDI) analysis are: Comment 74

- Wind capacity factor = 35%
- 600 MW or 400 1.5-MW wind turbines
- energy output of 1.84 TWh (1,840 GWh) per year
- Annual direct operations and maintenance costs = $12.50/kW/year
- Construction cost = $1,700/kW (or $2.55million/1.5-MW turbine)
- Property taxes = ~$9,000/MW/year
- Landowner royalties = $5,000/turbine/year = $2 million/year

We hope these results are useful for you. Please let us know if you have any questions.
Thank you,

Larry Flowers
(303)384-6910
Suzanne Tegen
(303) 384-6939

[3] Indirect jobs and earnings refer to the increase in economic activity that occurs when a contractor, vendor or manufacturer receives payment for goods or services and in-turn is able to pay others who support their business. For instance, this includes the banker who finances the construction contractor, the accountant who keeps the contractor's books, and the manufacturers and other suppliers that meet their material and equipment needs,

[4] Induced jobs and earnings result from the spending of those persons directly and indirectly supported by the project. This includes benefits to grocery store clerks, retail salespeople and child care providers among others.

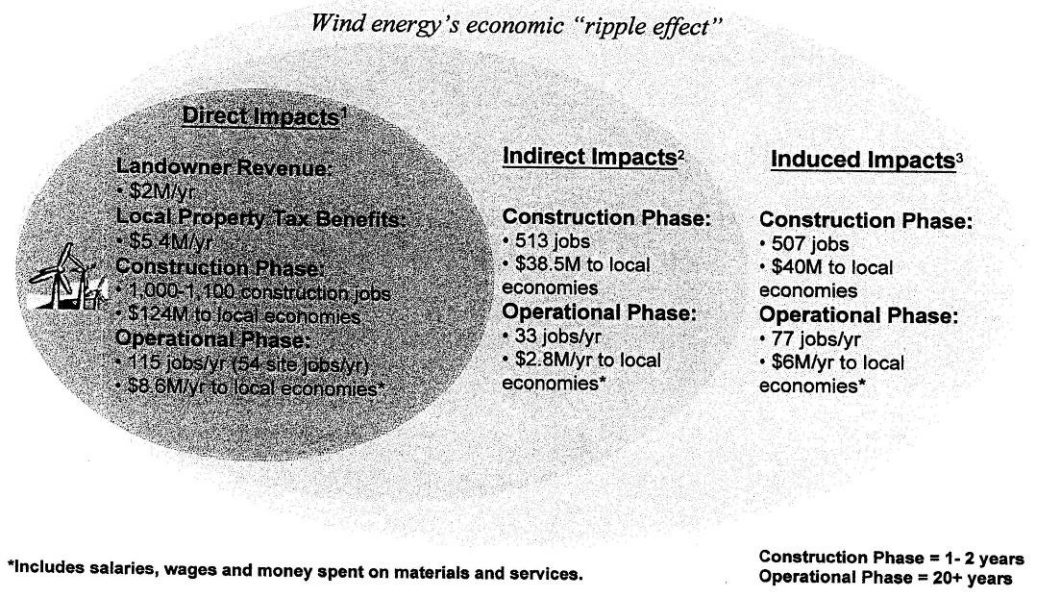
Response 73: Comment noted. The agencies appreciate the information provided.

Response 74: Comment noted. The agencies appreciate the information provided.

Montana - Economic impacts

600 MW (400 1.5-MW turbines) of new wind development

Source: WindPowering America, U.S. DOE



*Includes salaries, wages and money spent on materials and services.

Construction Phase = 1- 2 years
Operational Phase = 20+ years

Definitions

1. Examples of direct jobs include *construction workers* and others who work on construction, such as *cement truck operators and road crews.*

2. Examples of indirect jobs include *a banker financing the construction contractor or the manufacturers and suppliers who sell materials and equipment.*

3. Induced jobs and earnings result from the spending by people directly and indirectly supported by the wind project, such as *grocery store clerks, retail salespeople and child care providers*.

27 March 2007

Richard H. Opper
Director
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Opper: Comment 75

Your department recently released the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line.* This proposed line has significant impact on property owners who farm along the various alternative locations of the line. The document is complex and requires detailed review of the analysis undertaken by your staff.

Pursuant to ARM 17.4.620 the agency shall allow for a 30-day comment period which, for this project, currently closes on 9 April 2007. However, your agency may extend this period up to an additional 30 days upon application of any person for good cause.

The following landowners whose property lies either in the study area, or have land upon which the line may be physically located, seek such a 30-day extension for good cause on the following grounds:

– Farmers have just moved into "high gear" for the growing season. At the time of the release of the report most were already busy with hauling grain, preparing for spraying and seeding operations, etc. At the present time many are in fact spraying. Unless we are fortunate enough to have a week of snow or rain (we can always hope!), very few of us will have the luxury of time indoors to adequately study the report.

– The developers of this project have the statutory authority to exercise eminent domain over our property to build and operate this line. Such "taking" is an awesome power which should not be granted unless those affected have a meaningful chance to review the project at issue. Thirty days in the middle of our farming season is not sufficient to read and comment on a detailed 300-page report.

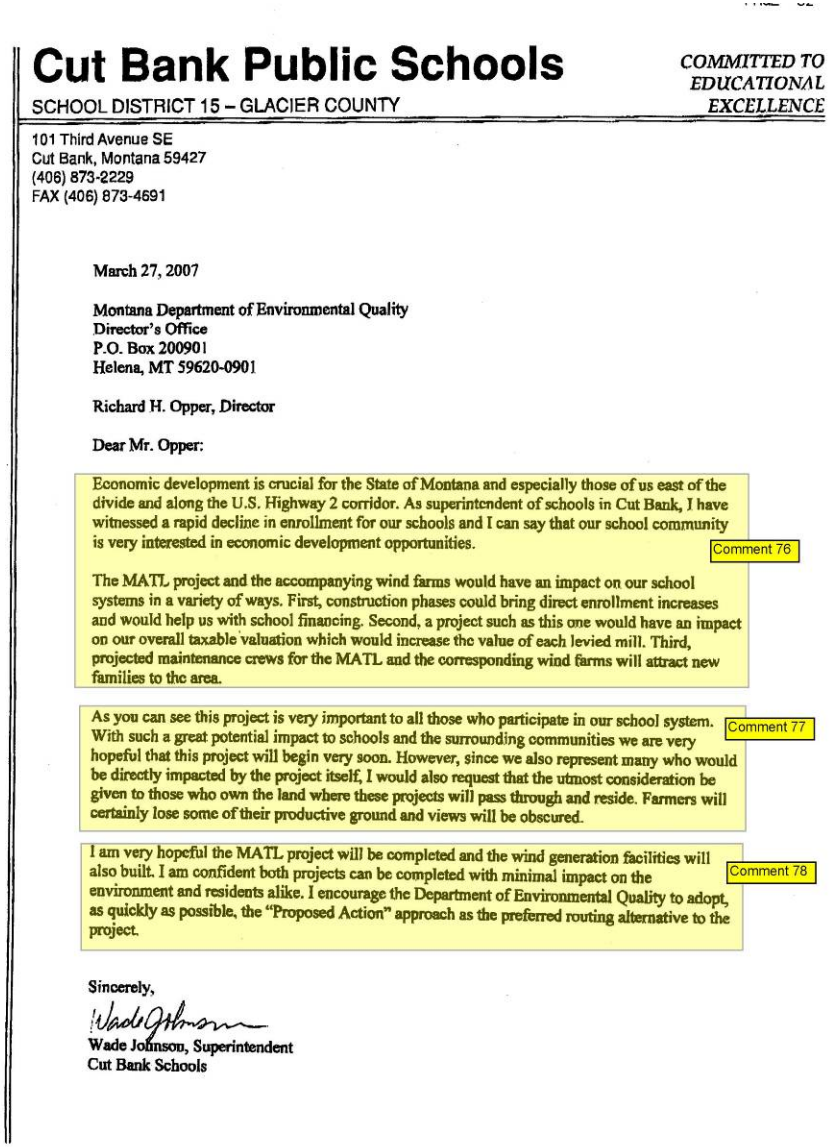
– The concept of a "merchant line" and our now deregulated electric utility world involve somewhat unique facts and issues. MATL's line is the first of its kind in the state, and those of us on the ground should be afforded adequate

Response 75: The comment period was extended an additional three weeks in response to this request.

time to really study the substance of your agency's report.

We think our request is reasonable under these circumstances. Please consider the importance of this review to those of us on the ground. We respectfully request you extend the comment period to 8 June 2007. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Signature	Name (please print)	Address
Jerry A. McRae	Jerry A. McRae	Dutton, Mt.
	Allen Denzer	Conrad, Mo.
	Chris Stephe-	Box 94 Dutton, Mt
John Blanchet	JOHN BLANCHET	2080 11TH LN NE DUTTON, MT.
Darlene Denzer	Darlene Denzer	Box 937 Conrad
Michael O'Keefe	Mike Koenig	Conrad
Donald M Koenig	Donald M Koenig	Conrad
Ray Habel	Ray J Habel	Dutton
Robert Kraney	Robert Kraney	Dutton
Lee Otness	Lee Otness	Brady
Robert E Stephens	Robert E. Stephens	Dutton, Mt
Katrina Kitken Martin	KATRINA MARTIN	Dutton, MT
John Sheffels	John Sheffels	GTF, MT
Valerie J Naylor	Valerie J. Naylor	Medora, ND Pondera Co. landowner
Clay Habel	Clay Habel	2381 20th Ln NE
Tim Johnson	Tim Johnson	2270 14TH RD NE DUTTON, MT
	Marc A Sturm	Flaxville, MT
James Sheffels	James Sheffels	2725 Clouser Dr 59404
Doug Crogan	Doug Crogan	PO Box 3661 Bozeman, MT



Cut Bank Public Schools
SCHOOL DISTRICT 15 – GLACIER COUNTY

COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

101 Third Avenue SE
Cut Bank, Montana 59427
(406) 873-2229
FAX (406) 873-4691

March 27, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Richard H. Opper, Director

Dear Mr. Opper:

Economic development is crucial for the State of Montana and especially those of us east of the divide and along the U.S. Highway 2 corridor. As superintendent of schools in Cut Bank, I have witnessed a rapid decline in enrollment for our schools and I can say that our school community is very interested in economic development opportunities. Comment 76

The MATL project and the accompanying wind farms would have an impact on our school systems in a variety of ways. First, construction phases could bring direct enrollment increases and would help us with school financing. Second, a project such as this one would have an impact on our overall taxable valuation which would increase the value of each levied mill. Third, projected maintenance crews for the MATL and the corresponding wind farms will attract new families to the area.

As you can see this project is very important to all those who participate in our school system. With such a great potential impact to schools and the surrounding communities we are very hopeful that this project will begin very soon. However, since we also represent many who would be directly impacted by the project itself, I would also request that the utmost consideration be given to those who own the land where these projects will pass through and reside. Farmers will certainly lose some of their productive ground and views will be obscured. Comment 77

I am very hopeful the MATL project will be completed and the wind generation facilities will also built. I am confident both projects can be completed with minimal impact on the environment and residents alike. I encourage the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt, as quickly as possible, the "Proposed Action" approach as the preferred routing alternative to the project. Comment 78

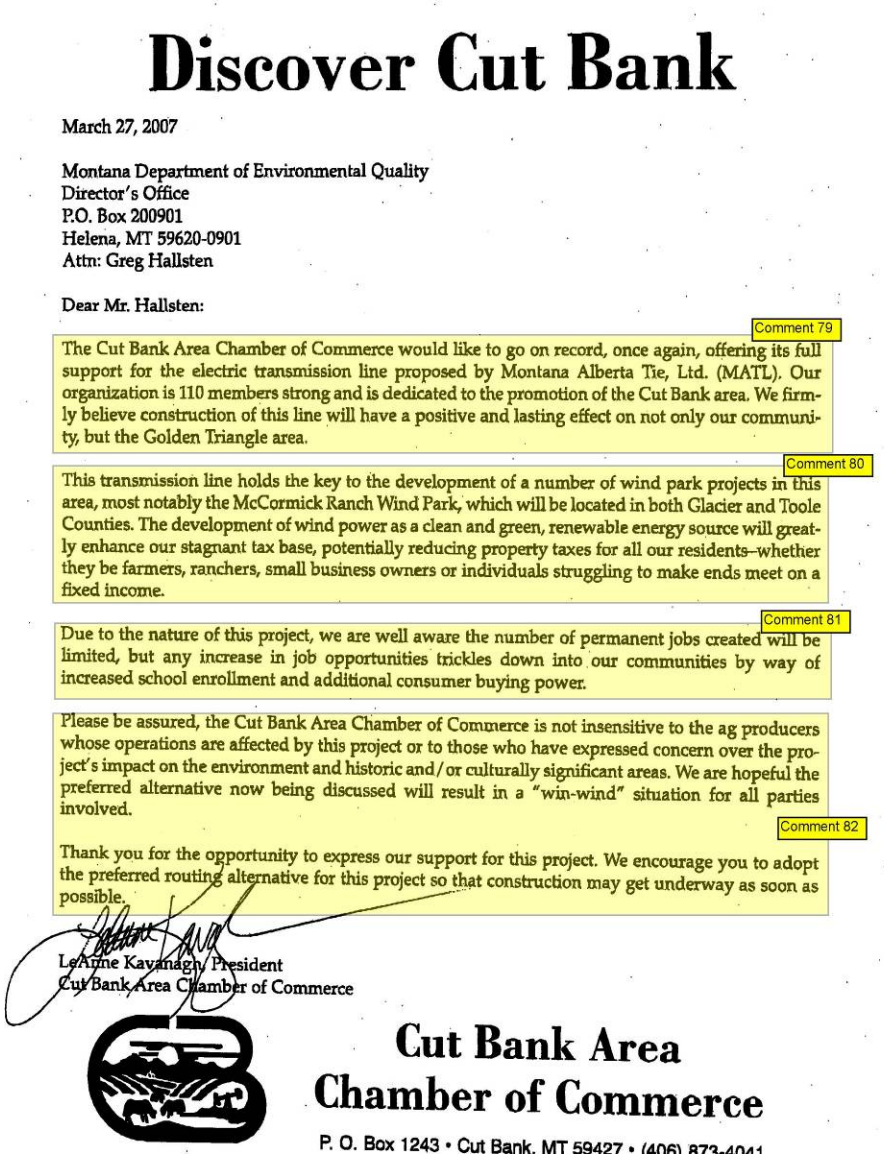
Sincerely,

Wade Johnson, Superintendent
Cut Bank Schools

Response 76: Comment noted.

Response 77: Comment noted. See updated discussions of impacts to farming in Section 3.13 and the updated discussion of cumulative visual impacts in Section 4.1.6.

Response 78: Comment noted.



Discover Cut Bank

March 27, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
Attn: Greg Hallsten

Dear Mr. Hallsten:

Comment 79

The Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce would like to go on record, once again, offering its full support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd. (MATL). Our organization is 110 members strong and is dedicated to the promotion of the Cut Bank area. We firmly believe construction of this line will have a positive and lasting effect on not only our community, but the Golden Triangle area.

Comment 80

This transmission line holds the key to the development of a number of wind park projects in this area, most notably the McCormick Ranch Wind Park, which will be located in both Glacier and Toole Counties. The development of wind power as a clean and green, renewable energy source will greatly enhance our stagnant tax base, potentially reducing property taxes for all our residents–whether they be farmers, ranchers, small business owners or individuals struggling to make ends meet on a fixed income.

Comment 81

Due to the nature of this project, we are well aware the number of permanent jobs created will be limited, but any increase in job opportunities trickles down into our communities by way of increased school enrollment and additional consumer buying power.

Please be assured, the Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce is not insensitive to the ag producers whose operations are affected by this project or to those who have expressed concern over the project's impact on the environment and historic and/or culturally significant areas. We are hopeful the preferred alternative now being discussed will result in a "win-wind" situation for all parties involved.

Comment 82

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this project. We encourage you to adopt the preferred routing alternative for this project so that construction may get underway as soon as possible.

LeAnne Kavanagh, President
Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce

Cut Bank Area
Chamber of Commerce

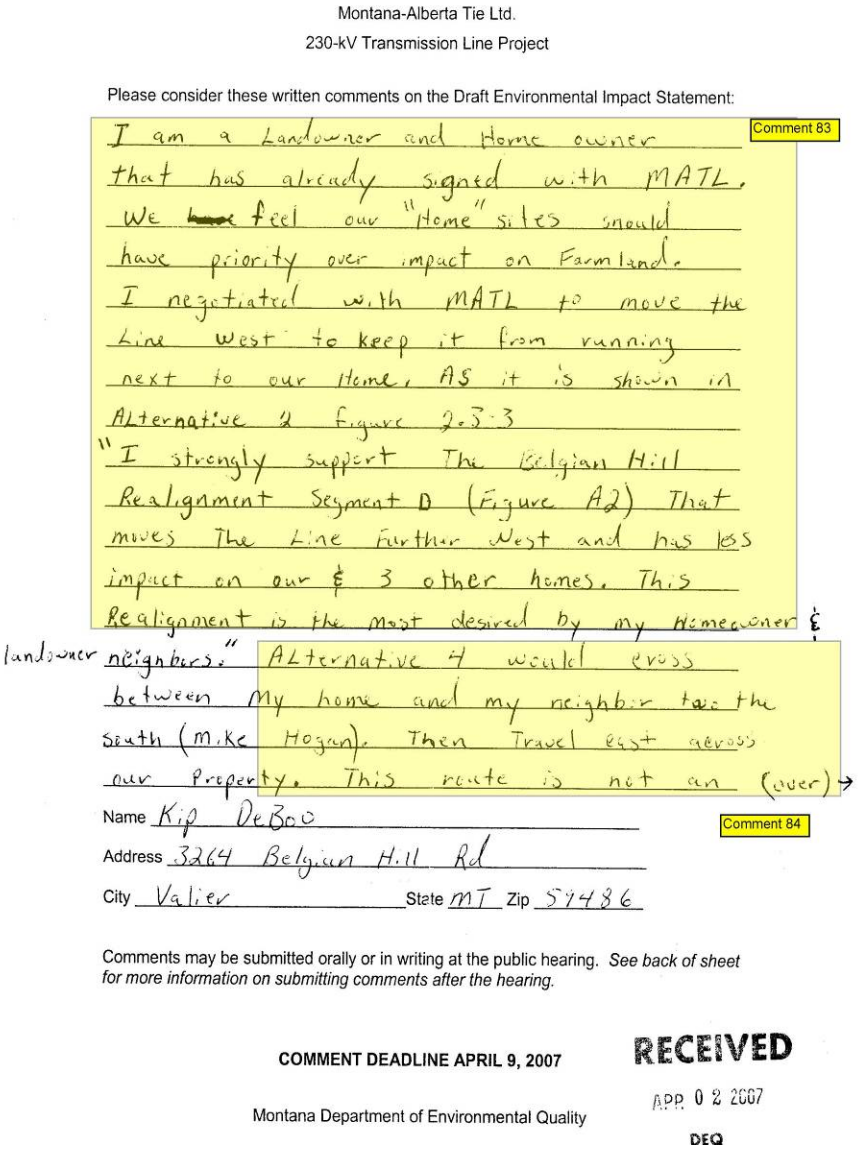
P. O. Box 1243 • Cut Bank, MT 59427 • (406) 873-4041

Response 79: Comment noted.

Response 80: Comment noted.

Response 81: Comment noted.

Response 82: Comment noted.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I am a Landowner and Home owner that has already signed with MATL. We ~~have~~ feel our "Home" sites should have priority over impact on Farmland. I negotiated with MATL to move the Line west to keep it from running next to our Home. AS it is shown in Alternative 2 Figure 2.5.3 "I strongly support The Belgian Hill Realignment Segment D (Figure A2) That moves The Line Further West and has less impact on our & 3 other homes. This Realignment is the most desired by my Homeowner & landowner neighbors." Alternative 4 would cross between My home and my neighbor to the South (Mike Hogan). Then Travel east across our Property. This route is not an (over) →

Comment 83

Comment 84

Name Kip DeBoo
Address 3264 Belgian Hill Rd
City Valier State MT Zip 59486

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

RECEIVED
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DEQ

Response 83: Comment noted. Already signed means the landowner has signed a right-of-way agreement or an option with MATL.

Response 84: Alternative 4 would be located within ¼ mile of your residence and within ½ mile of your neighbor to the south and would result in major visual impact (see Section 3.15). Overall, Alternative 4 does the best job of avoiding close proximity to residences, with 67 residences within ½ mile of the line. Alternative 2 would have 77 residences within ½ mile, and Alternative 3 would have 94 residences

Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Comment 84 (Continued)

option as far as I am concerned. I have worked with neighbors & MATL to move the line West away from our homes to have less impact on our quality of life. Alternative 4 Impacts our & our neighbors homes drametically. I will oppose Alternative 4 in anyway I possibly can. I hope you will consider these comments. My phone # is 406-278-3035 If you would like to discuss any of this. THANK you.

Kip

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE MEETING

VIEW THE DRAFT EIS ONLINE AT www.deq.mt.gov/MFS/MATL.asp

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

SUBMIT COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS VIA EMAIL TO MATL@mt.gov

PROJECT CONTACTS:

Greg Hallsten, MEPA Coordinator	406-444-3276
Tom Ring, MFSA Coordinator	406-444-6785
Ellen Russell, US Department of Energy	202-586-9624

Individuals needing an alternatively accessible form: of information should contact Mr. Hallsten at the address above.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Include as part of MATL public record

Gene & Linda Sentz

From: Gene & Linda Sentz [friends@3rivers.net]
Sent: Sunday, March 25, 2007 9:25 PM
To: Gene & Linda Sentz
Subject: LA Times: Debating wind energy

Los Angeles Times, March 25, 2007

http://www.latimes.com/news/science/environment/la-me-wind25mar25,1,2561926.story?coll=la-news-environment

Comment 85

Turbines fan debate over wind energy

A plan to erect 50 windmills near a national monument spurs an outcry in the Palm Springs area.

By Janet Wilson
Times Staff Writer

In a blustery stretch of desert two hours east of Los Angeles, where many of the world's first power-producing windmills were built, a plan for more turbines has triggered a backlash that echoes a national debate over the merits of wind energy.

A proposal to build about 50 windmills next to Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument has aroused passions in a region already dotted with 3,000 windmills, with opponents charging that the wind energy industry has neither delivered the promised power nor spared the environment.

The industry, which was born in California, now has projects in 40 states and $8 billion in investments over the last two years, according to the American Wind Energy Assn.

Supporters say wind power has come of age and will help slow global warming, while critics contend that it has delivered only a quarter of its promised energy, proved lethal to wildlife and, in the view of many residents, blighted the landscape.

Around the country, Internet blogs and anti-wind energy websites hum with angry postings about projects on picturesque ridgelines, seascapes and farmlands from New England to Texas.

Politicians and celebrities have weighed in. Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.) and his Nantucket Island neighbors have so far successfully fought installation of offshore turbines.

Their opposition, in turn, has prompted criticism that rich liberals are all for alternative power providing it doesn't mar their views.

In his San Gorgonio Pass community above the 10 Freeway, homeowner Les Starks has led the local opposition.

"They're going to take a national monument … and turn it into an industrial slum," Starks shouted, his voice nearly drowned by blustery gusts as he eyed the stark mountain front soaring above Palm Springs, then zeroed in on a bony ridge 4,000 feet up.

"They want to bulldoze that mesa, put in these enormous wind turbines … and make lots and lots of money."

Steve Christensen, owner of the mesa where the windmills would be erected, said all he wants to do is produce clean electricity in a region already dotted with windmills.

"We've got windmills to the north of us, windmills to the east and west of us, windmills everywhere but to the south," he said. "Why are they picking us out?"

Christensen, a civil engineer from Cypress, Texas, said his father bought the land half a century before Congress designated the surrounding slopes as a national monument. He said residential or commercial development on the squall-scoured mesa would be impossible.

"If you had a house or car or anything on there it would literally strip the paint off," he said.

San Gorgonio Pass is one of the windiest spots in North America, according to federal researchers.

The 3,000 existing turbines produce enough energy to power almost 25,000 homes for a year, said California Energy Commission spokeswoman Amy Morgan. But that is a fraction of their advertised capacity.

Although politicians and environmentalists concede that there are drawbacks to wind energy, most argue that the fallout from the turbines is minor compared with the global harm threatened by burning fossil fuels.

"Alternative energy is the policy of the U.S. government, the state of California and this county," said Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley, who is considering four new projects, including Christensen's.

"I sort of like my air-conditioner to keep running during the summer." And, he added, "These wind farms create a huge tax base."

Wind energy companies will pay $3.8 million in state and local business taxes this year, said Riverside County's chief deputy assessor, Michael Beaman, and more in property taxes.

According to public records, renewable energy companies — including wind, solar and geothermal — have received $93.8 million in subsidies from California ratepayers.

At the federal level, energy companies also receive generous tax write-offs, and production subsidies absorb start-up costs of windmills — new ones can cost $1.2 million apiece — and help reduce taxes on profits from traditional power sources.

Advocates say that wind companies receive a fraction of the billions given to coal and oil companies, and that they are vital to an industry with high infrastructure costs that emits no greenhouse gases and uses a free, readily available power source.

"The private sector does this stuff for money. This is America," said John White, a longtime environmentalist who heads a nonprofit consortium of environmental groups and renewable energy companies.

Critics, however, argue that wind projects subsidized with public funds deliver a fraction of the promised power.

For example, in 2003, San Gorgonio wind farms boasted of 413 megawatts of capacity, but actually produced a quarter of that electricity.

Advocates concede that turbines have produced full power just 10% of the time, but said newer machines provide some power 60% of the time. Today, wind energy provides less than 1% of the nation's power.

Converting 5% to wind "would require … almost 10 million acres, most of it rural and wild, turned over to 400-foot-high machines and their motion, noise and lights," wrote Lloyd Crawford of National Wind Watch, an online coalition of anti-wind power opponents. "That's not a green solution, but a huge disaster."

In California, turbines as big as minivans have caught fire in midair and crashed 200 feet to the earth. Broken propeller blades don't budge, no matter how brisk the breeze. Thousands of hawks, eagles and songbirds have been ground up by turbines.

Favorite picnic sites and scenic back roads were closed to the public after government land was leased for private windmills.

Near San Gorgonio Pass, residents complain of a ceaseless high-pitched whine from windmills and, at night, bright, revolving lights.

"It's like having a disco going … all night long," said Joyce Manley, a retired Los Angeles schoolteacher who lives within half a mile of hundreds of windmills.

Claude Kirby, a real estate agent for the Palm Springs office of the Bureau of Land Management, said the early days of wind power were problematic because of equipment failures and get-rich-quick schemes.

"You had a bunch of rogues … who were more interested in investment tax write-offs than actual wind energy," he said.

But he said that just as car engines evolved from the original slow-moving, smoke-belching Model Ts, the new, mammoth wind turbines have quieter blades that turn slowly to protect birds, can capture far more energy and do not break down as often.

Foes say Kirby is one of the main reasons the rogues arrived. "He's the one who leased them all the land," Manley said.

Kirby said he is proud of the leases he has for 1,224 turbines on 3,589 acres, netting the public annual rent of $640,610, adding, "I'd rather see wind turbines than black smoke from a coal plant."

John Geesman, a member of the California Energy Commission, conceded that wind projects have suffered growing pains from on-again, off-again tax credits and an imperfect technology. But he said the industry is overcoming its early problems.

"I think wind will be an extraordinary contributor to California's future energy mix," Geesman said.

Randall Swisher, head of the American Wind Energy Assn., said "the California experience is different than any other state in regard to being home to first-generation technology which didn't work all that well — some of the first-generation turbines didn't work at all."

Swisher said newer, larger turbines replacing flawed smaller ones are the solution. But they still don't produce 100% capacity because the wind doesn't always blow.

Still, he said, there is no stopping the fact that wind energy has come of age, with widespread public support.

"This is not a marginal, boutique industry any longer," he said. "It's a serious contributor to the nation's electric power needs."

Environmental groups are among the supporters.

"The most significant threat to the environment, which dwarfs everything else, is global warming, and the environmental community is united in supporting renewable solutions," said Julia Levin of Audubon California.

She said the specter of the loss of a fourth of the world's species from global warming in coming decades, predicted in numerous studies, trumps other concerns.

But even wind-power proponents say that some places should be off-limits to the production of green energy.

"These are great big turbines; you can't hide 'em. Not every community is going to be comfortable hosting a wind project," Swisher said. "That's the reality, and that's a conversation that has to go on between the wind industry and the local community."

One of the livelier conversations is taking place in the shadow of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto Mountains National Monument.

"You can build wind facilities in bad places," said Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope, a fan of wind energy who contends that a national monument is an inappropriate setting.

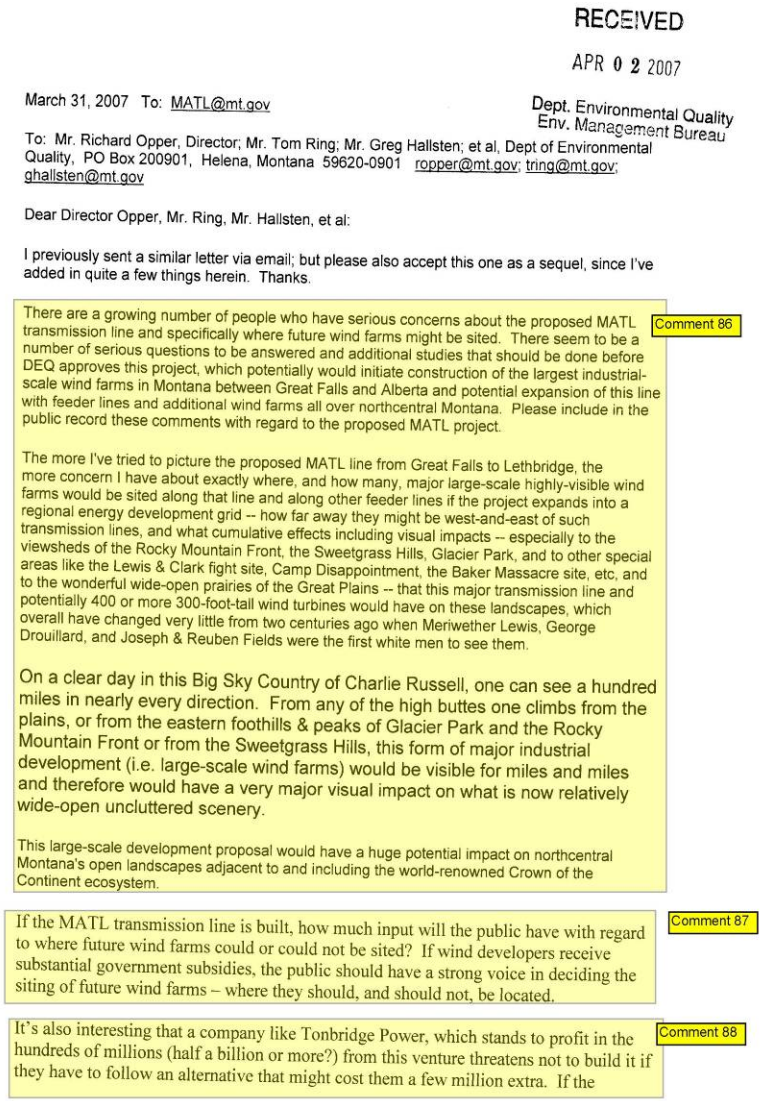
Christensen, the landowner who wants to build more windmills, said that when the monument was created in 2000, Congress included language saying development on adjoining properties should not be banned. But local officials are skeptical.

"I'm wary," said Ashley, the Riverside County supervisor.

He said a wind farm would mar a breathtaking, mountain-rimmed backdrop at the geographic gateway to Palm Springs that is an important tourism draw. "At a certain point," he said, "you have to draw the line."

*

Response 85: Thank you for the information. The articles have been added to the record.



RECEIVED

APR 0 2 2007

March 31, 2007 To: MATL@mt.gov

Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

To: Mr. Richard Opper, Director; Mr. Tom Ring; Mr. Greg Hallsten; et al, Dept of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901 ropper@mt.gov; tring@mt.gov; ghallsten@mt.gov

Dear Director Opper, Mr. Ring, Mr. Hallsten, et al:

I previously sent a similar letter via email; but please also accept this one as a sequel, since I've added in quite a few things herein. Thanks.

Comment 86

There are a growing number of people who have serious concerns about the proposed MATL transmission line and specifically where future wind farms might be sited. There seem to be a number of serious questions to be answered and additional studies that should be done before DEQ approves this project, which potentially would initiate construction of the largest industrial-scale wind farms in Montana between Great Falls and Alberta and potential expansion of this line with feeder lines and additional wind farms all over northcentral Montana. Please include in the public record these comments with regard to the proposed MATL project.

The more I've tried to picture the proposed MATL line from Great Falls to Lethbridge, the more concern I have about exactly where, and how many, major large-scale highly-visible wind farms would be sited along that line and along other feeder lines if the project expands into a regional energy development grid -- how far away they might be west-and-east of such transmission lines, and what cumulative effects including visual impacts -- especially to the viewsheds of the Rocky Mountain Front, the Sweetgrass Hills, Glacier Park, and to other special areas like the Lewis & Clark fight site, Camp Disappointment, the Baker Massacre site, etc, and to the wonderful wide-open prairies of the Great Plains -- that this major transmission line and potentially 400 or more 300-foot-tall wind turbines would have on these landscapes, which overall have changed very little from two centuries ago when Meriwether Lewis, George Drouillard, and Joseph & Reuben Fields were the first white men to see them.

On a clear day in this Big Sky Country of Charlie Russell, one can see a hundred miles in nearly every direction. From any of the high buttes one climbs from the plains, or from the eastern foothills & peaks of Glacier Park and the Rocky Mountain Front or from the Sweetgrass Hills, this form of major industrial development (i.e. large-scale wind farms) would be visible for miles and miles and therefore would have a very major visual impact on what is now relatively wide-open uncluttered scenery.

This large-scale development proposal would have a huge potential impact on northcentral Montana's open landscapes adjacent to and including the world-renowned Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

Comment 87

If the MATL transmission line is built, how much input will the public have with regard to where future wind farms could or could not be sited? If wind developers receive substantial government subsidies, the public should have a strong voice in deciding the siting of future wind farms – where they should, and should not, be located.

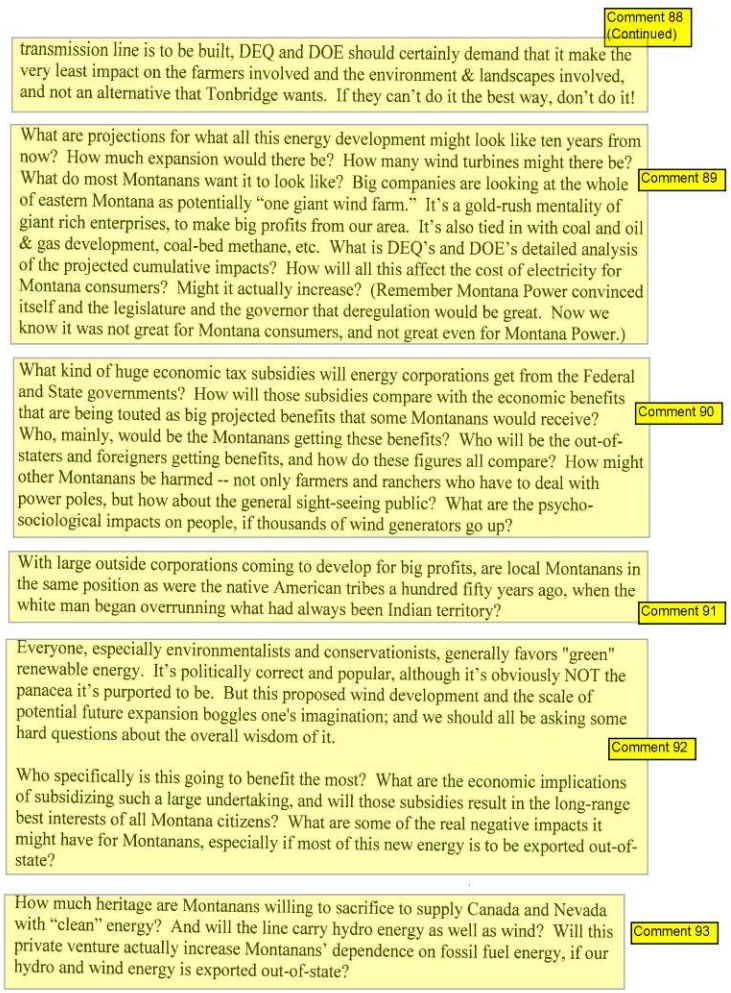
Comment 88

It's also interesting that a company like Tonbridge Power, which stands to profit in the hundreds of millions (half a billion or more?) from this venture threatens not to build it if they have to follow an alternative that might cost them a few million extra. If the

Response 86: See response to comments 20 and 29, and the revised discussion of impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 87: Refer to response to comment 23. Because the Montana legislature has removed DEQ's regulatory authority over the siting of wind farms, unless wind farm developers choose to provide a public involvement process in their site selection or unless the wind farms would be located on public land, members of the public are likely to have limited input in wind farm location.

Response 88: Comment noted.



Response 89: Comments noted. See the revised discussion of impacts in Chapter 4 for more discussion on wind farms. The agencies do not have regulatory authority over wind farm or oil, gas, or coalbed methane location nor can they predict what the effect of wind farms might be on Montana-consumed electricity prices. Westmoreland Resources, Inc., has applied to expand its coal mine near Hardin. This is the only coal-related proposal under DEQ's jurisdiction that is under consideration at this time. Most of the questions asked in this comment are beyond the scope of the EIS, and cannot be answered by the agencies.

Response 90: Beneficiaries would likely include project sponsors making profits on investments in wind farms, property owners receiving payments for hosting wind turbines, the state and counties collecting taxes, and people employed in the construction and operation of wind farms. See Chapter 4 for a revised discussion of potential impacts and Chapter 44 for impacts on socioeconomic resources. Electricity from wind generation on State lands is exempt from the wholesale energy transaction tax of $0.00015 per kWh transmitted. Electricity from any source, including renewables, generated on a reservation is exempt if it is for delivery out of state. Electricity generated by a US government agency for delivery outside the state and electricity from any source delivered to members of a cooperative or municipality is exempt from the WET tax (15-72-104, MCA).

Most of the questions asked in this comment are beyond the scope of the EIS, and cannot be answered by the agencies. The benefits and costs of MATL to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13. The agencies acknowledge that aesthetic impacts of wind farm development have a subjective component and can elicit

varying emotional responses from viewers based on individual values, experiences, and perceptions of derived benefits. See the discussion of visual impacts in Section 3.15 and the revised cumulative impacts in Section 4.16.

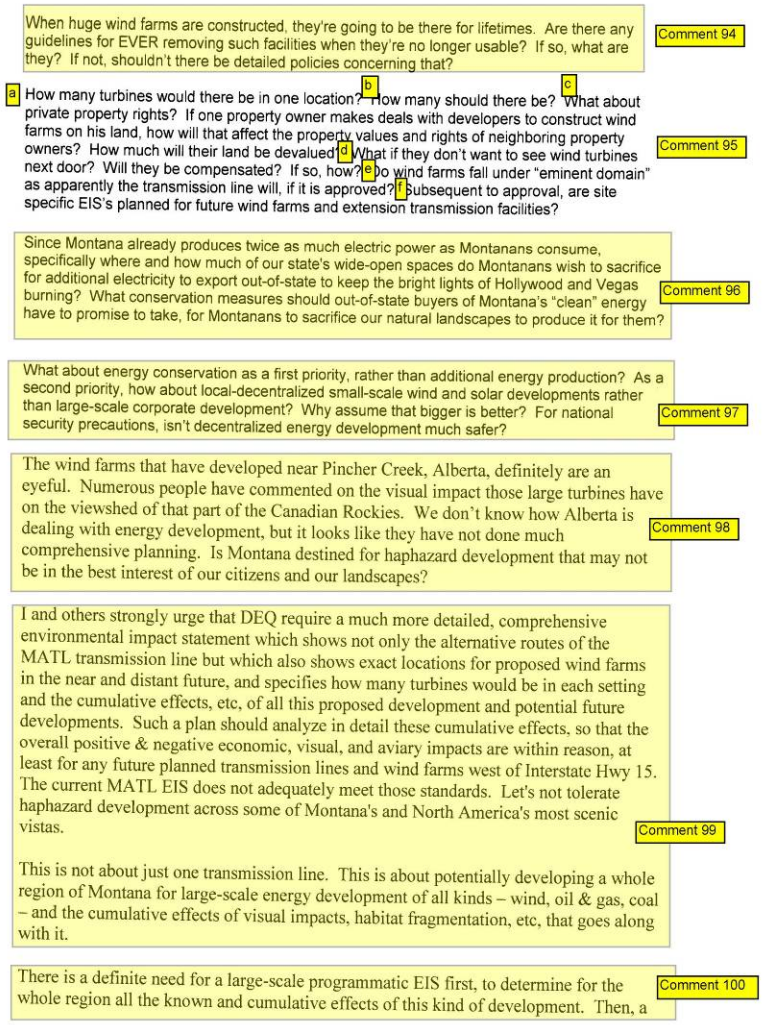
Response 91: The answer to this question is a matter of personal opinion beyond the scope of this EIS.

Response 92: Your questions are beyond the scope of this EIS. See the discussion of potential wind farm impacts in Chapter 4. The benefits and cost of MATL to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and in Section 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13.

Response 93a: A quantitative answer to this question is beyond the scope of this document.

Response 93b: The line will be available to market power from a variety of sources including hydro. Those holding firm contracts would have first priority for access to the proposed MATL transmission line. At this time, wind farms that have signed contracts for service from MATL would have first access to the line. However, wind farms do not generate at full capacity all of the time. When they are producing less power than the capacity indicated in their firm contracts, space would be available on the line for power from other sources on a short-term, non-firm basis. This could include power from coal, gas, hydro, and even nuclear power.

Response 93c: There is no reason why the line would increase Montana's dependence on fossil fuel energy. Montana's utilities must meet a certain amount of their supply portfolio using renewable energy, as required under Montana's Renewable Portfolio Standard enacted in April 2005 (69-8-1001 through 69-8-1008, MCA).



Response 94: Potential mitigating measures for decommissioning wind farms are indicated in Appendix O. However, these are simply potential measures and could not be made mandatory by the agencies without passage of authorizing legislation or a request by MATL.

Response 95a: See Chapter 4 for a discussion of the number of turbines that might be located in an area.

Response 95b: The optimum number of turbines is beyond the scope of this EIS.

Response 95c: If the property value of adjacent land is dependent upon the views from that property, property values could decrease if turbines obscure views. The degree of change in property values could depend upon the site specific situation, uses of the adjacent land in question (if the land is used for farming or grazing, the value might not change), and the availability of similar land in the area that is not adjacent to a wind farm.

Response 95d: If the neighbors do not want to look at nearby wind turbines, they could ask for compensation from a wind farm developer but the agencies are not aware of any requirements that compensation must be provided by the developer for off-site visual impacts.

Response 95e: 70-30-102, MCA, enumerates 44 public uses for which eminent domain can be exercised. Wind farms are not among the uses enumerated.

Response 95f: Because the agencies have no regulatory authorities for wind farms beyond those listed in Chapter 4, the agencies do not anticipate that it would perform any further site specific EIS for the wind farms. If a DEQ permit

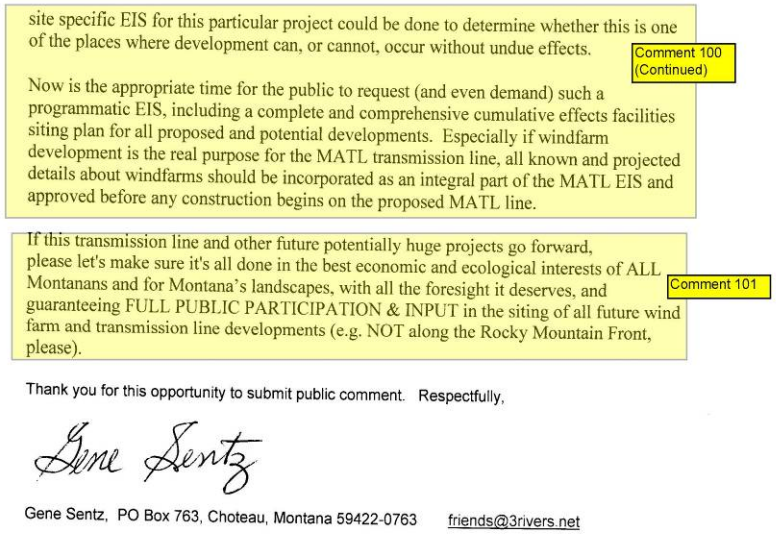
would be required, an environmental assessment would be required to determine whether there is a potential for significant impacts to occur. An EIS would not be required without a finding that there would be potential for significant environmental impacts. Likewise, extension of transmission lines not defined as "facilities" under the Major Facility Siting Act are unlikely to require further environmental review by DEQ if the project sponsor obtains easements or options from 75 percent of the landowners who collectively own 75 percent of the land that would be crossed by the interconnecting line. If extended transmission lines would require review by DEQ as a facility covered by the Major Facility Siting Act or under another permit, then the environmental review process would begin when an application is filed.

Response 96: The answers to these questions are beyond the scope of the EIS.

Response 97: The agencies encourage energy conservation; however, there is no way for the state to force people to conserve. Inducing decentralized wind and solar development is outside the agencies' jurisdiction and is beyond the scope of the EIS.

Response 98: Whether Montana is destined for haphazard development is beyond the scope of this EIS.

Response 99: The locations of the alternatives are mapped and described in Chapter 2 of the EIS. Also, see responses to comments 20, 22, and 89.



site specific EIS for this particular project could be done to determine whether this is one of the places where development can, or cannot, occur without undue effects.

Comment 100 (Continued)

Now is the appropriate time for the public to request (and even demand) such a programmatic EIS, including a complete and comprehensive cumulative effects facilities siting plan for all proposed and potential developments. Especially if windfarm development is the real purpose for the MATL transmission line, all known and projected details about windfarms should be incorporated as an integral part of the MATL EIS and approved before any construction begins on the proposed MATL line.

If this transmission line and other future potentially huge projects go forward, please let's make sure it's all done in the best economic and ecological interests of ALL Montanans and for Montana's landscapes, with all the foresight it deserves, and guaranteeing FULL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION & INPUT in the siting of all future wind farm and transmission line developments (e.g. NOT along the Rocky Mountain Front, please).

Comment 101

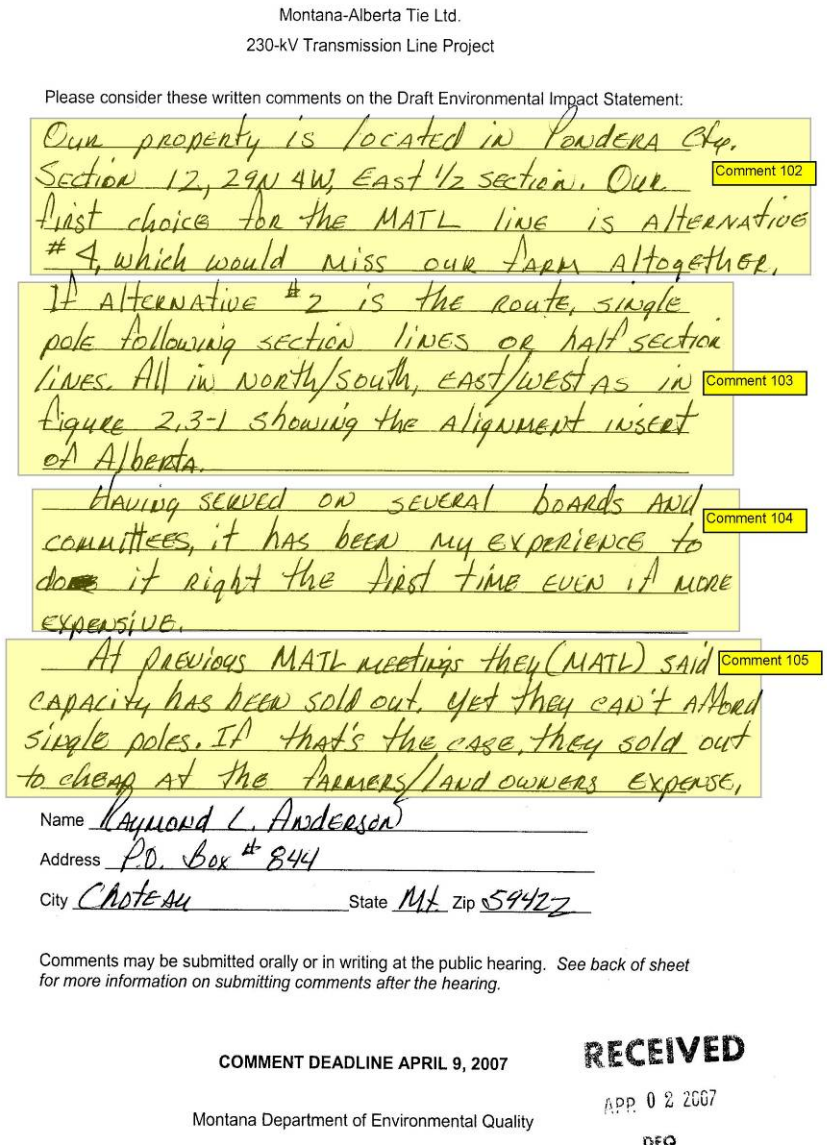
Thank you for this opportunity to submit public comment. Respectfully,

Gene Sentz

Gene Sentz, PO Box 763, Choteau, Montana 59422-0763 friends@3rivers.net

Response 100: See response to comment 24. MATL is proposed as a merchant transmission line for electricity producers to ship their product to market. Electricity from any source, including wind farms, could be transmitted over the line.

Response 101: Comment noted. See response to comment 23 relative to public participation in the siting of wind farms.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.

230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

Our property is located in Poindera Cty. Section 12, 29N 4W, East ½ section. Our first choice for the MATL line is Alternative #4, which would miss our farm Altogether. Comment 102

If Alternative #2 is the route, single pole following section lines or half section lines. All in North/South, East/West as in figure 2.3-1 showing the alignment insert of Alberta. Comment 103

Having served on several boards and committees, it has been my experience to do it right the first time even if more expensive. Comment 104

At previous MATL meetings they (MATL) said capacity has been sold out, yet they can't afford single poles. If that's the case, they sold out to cheap at the farmers/land owners expense, Comment 105

Name Raymond L. Anderson

Address P.O. Box # 844

City Choteau State Mt. Zip 59422

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

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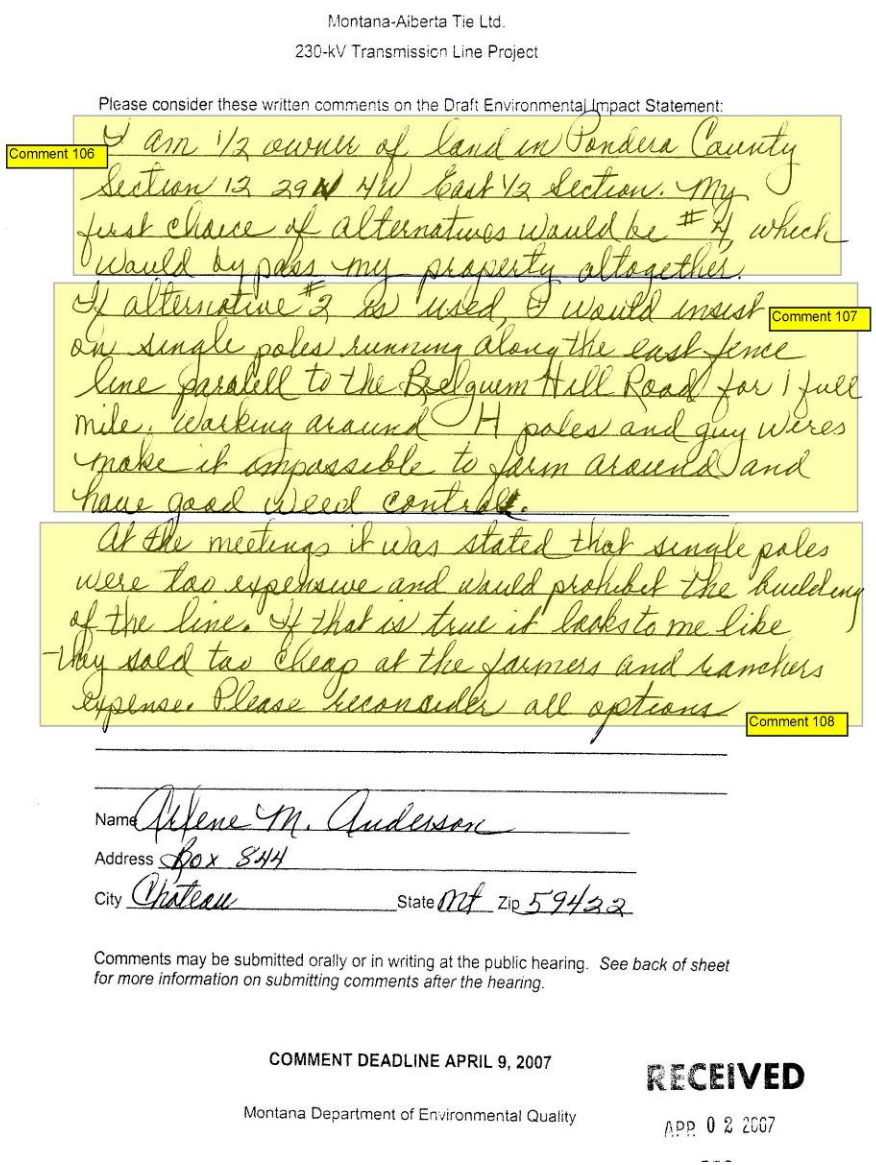
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Response 102: Comment noted.

Response 103: Comment noted.

Response 104: Comment noted.

Response 105: Comment noted.



Montana-Aiberta Tie Ltd.

230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

Comment 106

I am 1/2 owner of land in Pondera County Section 13 29N 4W East 1/2 Section. My first choice of alternatives would be #4 which would by pass my property altogether.

If alternative #2 is used, I would insist on single poles running along the east fence line parallel to the Belgium Hill Road for 1 full mile. Working around H poles and guy wires make it impossible to farm around and have good weed control.

Comment 107

At the meetings it was stated that single poles were too expensive and would prohibit the building of the line. If that is true it looks to me like they sold too cheap at the farmers and ranchers expense. Please reconsider all options

Comment 108

Name Arlene M. Andersson

Address Box 844

City Chateau State MT Zip 59422

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

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APR 0 2 2007

Response 106: Comment noted.

Response 107: Comment noted.

Response 108: Comment noted.

APR 04 07 02:15p Doug Banka 406-278-3580 p.1

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

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APR 0 5 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

April 3, 2007

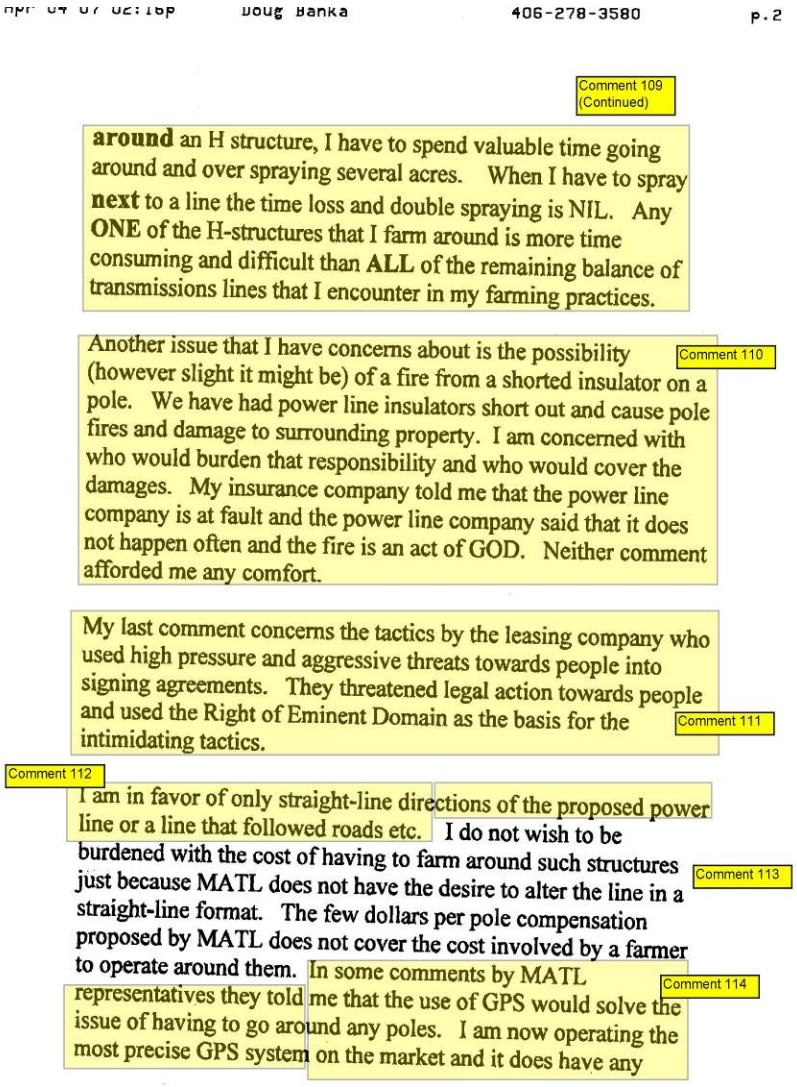
Mr. Hallsten,

Comment 109

I would like to share a couple of comments with you concerning the proposed power line connecting Lethbridge Alberta and Great Falls Montana. I am not concerned with the line itself but as to the proposed direction and installation of the line. As of the today I am encumbered with 8 power lines on my farm. I am also encumbered with BN Railroad, Interstate 15, an irrigation system, 4 underground oil and gas lines, 2 fiber optic lines, and several ballistic missile cables among other things.

Of the 8 power line systems that criss-cross my property I have 1 – 230 KV line (30 + single poles), 1 – 115 KV line (24 double poles H-structure), 2- 69 KV lines (single pole), and several small distribution lines. The total number of poles is in hundreds. I am **VERY** familiar with the farming techniques of having to farm around poles. Of the total poles that encompass my farm the H structure (115 KV) Northwestern Energy line has 24 poles that diagonal across my farm. Of those 24 poles (12 sets), only 5 sets are on farm ground. Those 5 particular sets are the most difficult to farm around and are the most problematic for weeds control and for pest control (i.e. gophers and grasshoppers etc). The problem lies in the diagonal direction of the NW Energy line. All of the other major transmission lines follow roads and boundary lines and cause little to no issues. They are easy and simple to farm NEXT to rather than trying farm AROUND them. When I have to spray

Response 109: Comment noted.



Apr 04 07 02:16p Doug Banka 406-278-3580 p.2

Comment 109 (Continued)

around an H structure, I have to spend valuable time going around and over spraying several acres. When I have to spray **next** to a line the time loss and double spraying is NIL. Any **ONE** of the H-structures that I farm around is more time consuming and difficult than **ALL** of the remaining balance of transmissions lines that I encounter in my farming practices.

Another issue that I have concerns about is the possibility (however slight it might be) of a fire from a shorted insulator on a pole. We have had power line insulators short out and cause pole fires and damage to surrounding property. I am concerned with who would burden that responsibility and who would cover the damages. My insurance company told me that the power line company is at fault and the power line company said that it does not happen often and the fire is an act of GOD. Neither comment afforded me any comfort.

Comment 110

My last comment concerns the tactics by the leasing company who used high pressure and aggressive threats towards people into signing agreements. They threatened legal action towards people and used the Right of Eminent Domain as the basis for the intimidating tactics.

Comment 111

Comment 112

I am in favor of only straight-line directions of the proposed power line or a line that followed roads etc. I do not wish to be burdened with the cost of having to farm around such structures just because MATL does not have the desire to alter the line in a straight-line format. The few dollars per pole compensation proposed by MATL does not cover the cost involved by a farmer to operate around them. In some comments by MATL representatives they told me that the use of GPS would solve the issue of having to go around any poles. I am now operating the most precise GPS system on the market and it does have any

Comment 113

Comment 114

Response 110: Faulty transmission lines occasionally are the cause of fires. The fault or liability in each instance would be determined based on the facts in that particular case. However, the agencies note your comment that potentially there are additional costs that should be considered, although they may be difficult to assess in advance.

Response 111: Comment noted. The land leasing company works directly for MATL and their methods and practices are not sanctioned or controlled by the agencies.

Response 112: Comment noted.

Response 113: The agencies worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers as indicated in Section 3.13.

Response 114: Comment noted. Even if a GPS system could guide equipment around a pole, there would be additional costs associated with time, fuel, seed, fertilizer, and herbicides to work around the poles.

allowances for power poles or trees in its computer-operating program.

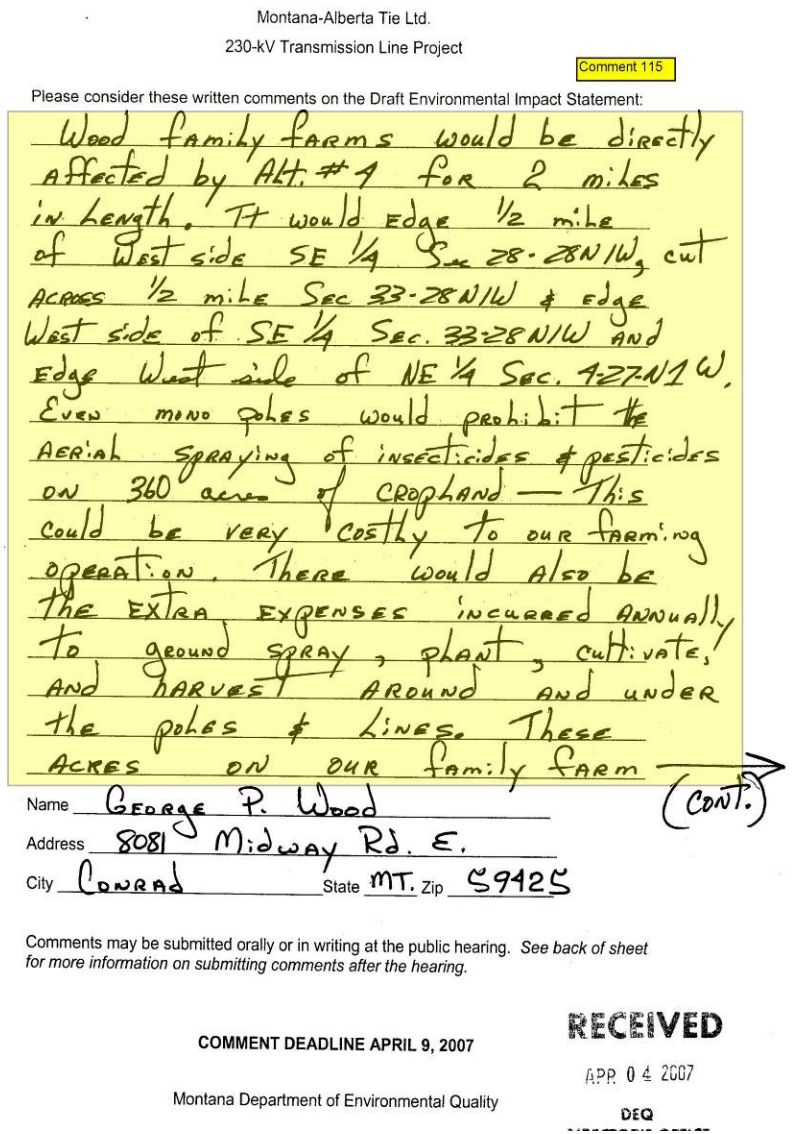
I would like to thank the Department of Environmental Quality for the time is listening to my concerns. If you have any questions for me please do not hesitate to call me at the numbers below.

Sincerely,

Douglas Banka

688 Business 15
Conrad, Montana 59425

Home phone 406-278-7829
Cell phone 406-576-7829
Fax number 406-278-3580



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.

230-kV Transmission Line Project

Comment 115

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

Wood family farms would be directly affected by Alt. #4 for 2 miles in length. It would edge ½ mile of West side SE ¼ Sec 28-28N1W, cut across ½ mile Sec 33-28N1W & edge West side of SE ¼ Sec. 33-28N1W and edge West side of NE ¼ Sec. 4-27N1W. Even mono poles would prohibit the aerial spraying of insecticides & pesticides on 360 acres of cropland — This could be very costly to our farming operation. There would also be the extra expenses incurred annually to ground spray, plant, cultivate, and harvest around and under the poles & Lines. These acres on our family farm (cont.)

Name George P. Wood

Address 8081 Midway Rd. E.

City Conrad State MT. Zip 59425

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

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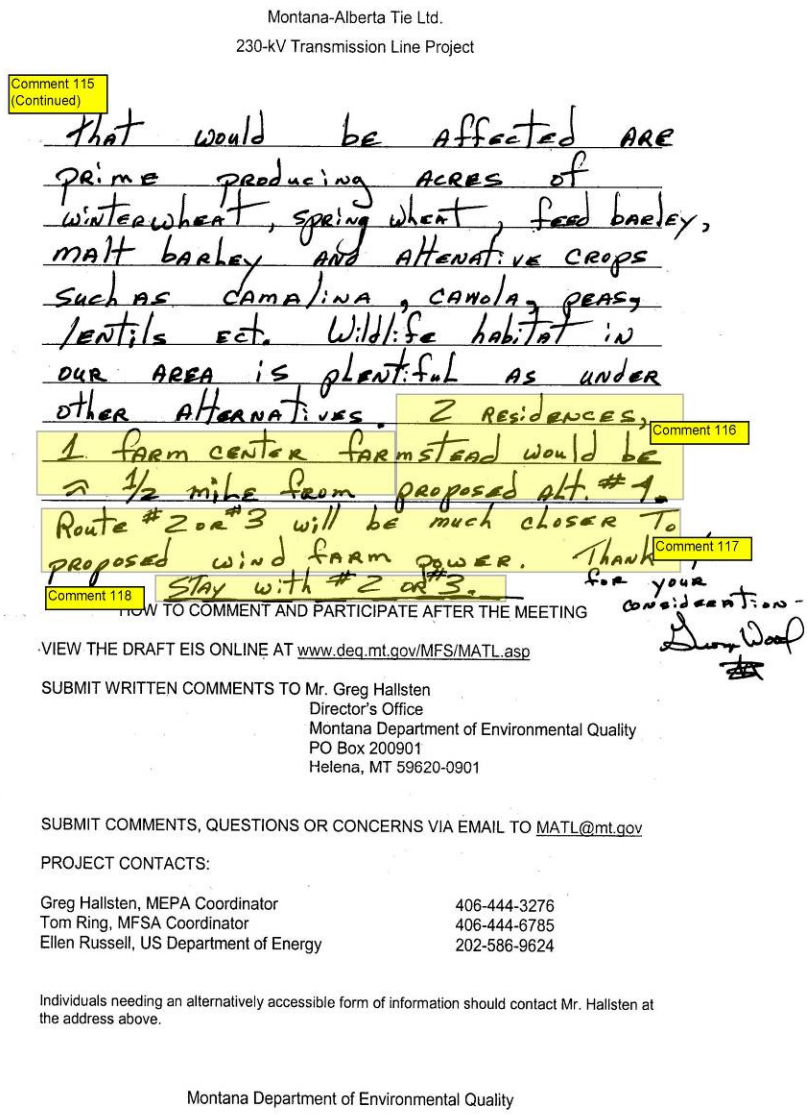
DEQ

Response 115: Aerial applicators have to consider a number of obstacles – existing power lines, trees, and towers. Aerial applicators do not charge more for spraying fields with obstructions, but they might leave small untreated areas to avoid the obstructions (HydroSolutions, July 2007, de Waal Malefyt, 1979). They would prefer the transmission line to be of single poles and the lowest conductor high enough to fly under. Applicators also mentioned a preference that the transmission line have cardinal headings of North-South/East-West (Campbell Aviation, July 2007).



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.

230-kV Transmission Line Project

Comment 115 (Continued)

that would be affected ARE prime producing ACRES of winterwheat, spring wheat, feed barley, malt barley AND ALTENATIVE CROPS such as camalina, canola, peas, lentils ect. Wildlife habitat in our AREA is plentiful as under other ALTERNATIVES. 2 RESIDENCES, 1 farm center farmstead would be ~ 1/2 mile from proposed alt. #1. Route #2 or #3 will be much closer To proposed wind farm power. Thank for your consideration -

Comment 116

Comment 117

Comment 118

STAY with #2 or #3.

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE MEETING

VIEW THE DRAFT EIS ONLINE AT www.deq.mt.gov/MFS/MATL.asp

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

SUBMIT COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS VIA EMAIL TO MATL@mt.gov

PROJECT CONTACTS:

Greg Hallsten, MEPA Coordinator	406-444-3276
Tom Ring, MFSA Coordinator	406-444-6785
Ellen Russell, US Department of Energy	202-586-9624

Individuals needing an alternatively accessible form of information should contact Mr. Hallsten at the address above.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Response 116: Comment noted.

Response 117: The agencies attempted to contact potential developers of wind farms that have contracts with MATL for information about their project locations. None of the developers that propose to connect to the MATL project has indicated a willingness to release detailed plans. USFWS provided the agencies with maps outlining the extent of the McCormick Ranch Wind Park between the Marias River and Highway 2 (Figure 4.1-2 in the Draft EIS). In this area, there is no substantial difference between alternative transmission line locations; all would be near the proposed wind farm. Based on the scanty information received from prospective wind farm developers, it would be speculative to assume that one alignment would be better than another relative to the ability to interconnect to the MATL line. See the description of wind farm impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 118: Comment noted.

FROM :DAHLMAN ACRES, INC. FAX NO. :1-406-463-2446 Apr. 05 2007 11:24AM P2

4-6-07

State of Montana
Department of Environmental Quality
Fax 444-1499
Helena, MT.

Dear Sir:

Comment 119

Re: MATL Transmission Line

As a property owner who will be effected by the construction of this line, I wish to express some thoughts and concerns.

I am certain this may be the beginning of a corridor in the future. Traveling through the State of Washington I took a number of pictures of four (4) large transmission lines running parallel to each other. With such a installation this would cause a great deal of expense for the farmer operating these acres. Most farmers and ranchers are not opposed to this line, however as you are well aware, how it is constructed will effect our next generations for decades. I would respectfully request that you require the following: Single pole placement on all farm ground and on CRP, land as well. We do not know what the future brings as those acres may be farmed once again.

Wherever the line travels on farmed ground, it will impact the operating cost to the farm operation.

Thank you for your consideration to the concerns of the farmers involved.

Adam F. Dahlman.

Adam F. Dahlman
Box 343
Dutton, MT. 59433
Telephone (406)463-2444

Response 119: Comments noted.

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION

BRIAN SCHWEITZER, GOVERNOR
1625 ELEVENTH AVENUE

STATE OF MONTANA

DIRECTOR'S OFFICE (406) 444-2074
FAX: (406) 444-2684
PO BOX201601
HELENA, MONTANA 59620-1601

April 5, 2007

RECEIVED
APR 09 2007
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Dept. of Environmental Quality
C/O Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-901

RE: DNRC Comments on MATL Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Ring:

DNRC has had an opportunity to review the proposed Montana Alberta Tie LTD (MATL) Draft EIS and the alternative routes. We have conducted a preliminary review of the state lands involved under all alternatives and do not anticipate problems with implementing any of the proposed action alternatives. Overall, Alternatives 2, 3, or 4 have only minor impacts to the management of state lands because they would affect primarily grazing lands and only minor amounts of crop or CRP land on state ownership would be impacted. If an action alternative is selected in the Record of Decision, DNRC will require MATL to submit Easement Applications for the affected state land, conduct a site specific review of each tract and require site specific mitigations for each easement application. We expect those site specific mitigations will be standard stipulations proven to be effective in minimizing potential local impacts to resources, for example, limiting operations to a specific time period to avoid conflicts with planned farming activities. The State Land Board has the ultimate authority for granting easements on state land. Below are our general comments.

- DNRC supports the use of "mono-pole" structures on CRP and cropland. And believes "mono –pole structures should be required on CRP and cropland under all alternatives. Comment 120
- DNRC supports routing the power line on field boarders, property boundaries and/or sections lines when feasible to minimize negative impacts on cropland, segmentation of land ownership and unusable corridors. Comment 121
- Construction should be timed in a manner to minimize damage to area soils, crops and/or rangelands. Comment 122
- Archeological sites on DNRC lands should be avoided when placing support structures when possible. Comment 123

Please keep us informed as to any new developments or decisions regarding this project. DNRC appreciates the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

MARY SEXTON
Director

Response 120: Comment noted.

Response 121: Comment noted. The mileage of state land crossed on a diagonal is indicated below.

Alternative 2 Diagonal Crossing of State Land		
LOCATION	LAND USE TYPE	MILES (approximate)
T37N R5W SEC. 36	CROP	0.5
T23N R2E SEC. 23	CROP	1.1
T25N R1E SEC. 16	CROP	0.3
T25N R1E SEC. 16	CROP	0.5
T26N R1W SEC. 36	CROP	1.1
T31N R5W SEC. 2	RANGE	0.5
T32N R5W SEC. 16	RANGE	1.08
T35N R5W SEC. 16	RANGE	0.9
T23N R2E SEC. 25	RANGE	0.5
T23N R2E SEC. 22	RANGE	0.6
T23N R2E SEC. 16	RANGE	0.8
T28N R3W SEC. 18	RANGE	0.3

Alternative 3 Diagonal Crossing of State Land		
LOCATION	LAND USE TYPE	MILES (approximate)
T23N R3E SEC. 15	CROP	0.15
T29N R3W SEC. 31	CROP	0.3
T29N R4W SEC. 36	CROP	0.5
T28N R3W SEC. 18	RANGE	0.2
T29N R4W SEC. 36	RANGE	0.1
T32N R5W SEC. 16	RANGE	1.1

Alternative 4 Diagonal Crossing of State Land		
LOCATION	LAND USE TYPE	MILES (approximate)
T25N R1E SEC. 16	CROP	0.3
T25N R1E SEC. 16	CROP	0.5
T25N R1W SEC. 3	CROP	1.3
T29N R2W SEC. 36	CROP	0.1
T37N R5W SEC. 36	CROP	0.5
T23N R2E SEC. 33	RANGE	0.5
T29N R2W SEC. 36	RANGE	0.09
T29N R3W SEC. 16	RANGE	0.55
T31N R5W SEC. 2	RANGE	0.5
T32N R5W SEC. 16	RANGE	1.08
T35N R5W SEC. 16	RANGE	0.9

Response 122: Comment noted.

Response 123: Known archeological features have been avoided on DNRC lands. On undisturbed areas where no ground survey has been conducted, the agencies would require that the areas be surveyed and that sensitive features be avoided where possible (see Appendix F, items 2.12.1 through 2.12.3 and Appendix A of Appendix F for items pertaining to cultural resources).

Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.

230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

I am writing this comment for my fathers view as well:

All you have done is gone from a H-frame structures, to a single pole structure recomendation in the problem area and I think you need to realize if this was your property would you want it crossing diagonally or would you want it following property lines or road right of ways. but we will [illegible] Alt. 2, if it continues the way it has but we do prefer [illegible] which makes more sense.

Comment 124

Comment 125

Name Mike Koenig & Don Koenig

Address

City Conrad State MT Zip 59425

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

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Montana Department of Environmental Quality

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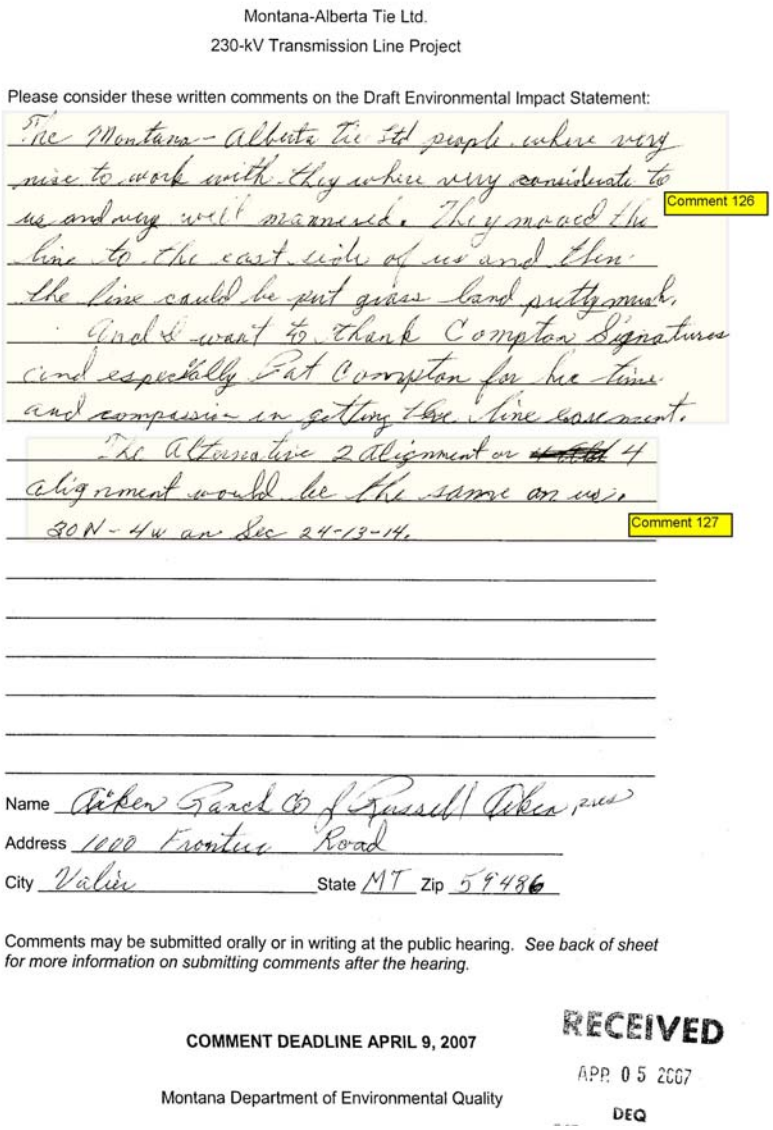
Response 124: Comment noted.

Response 125: Comment noted.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

The Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd people where very nice to work with. They where very considerate to us and very well mannered. They moved the line to the east side of us and then the line could be put grass land pretty much. And I want to thank Compton Signatures and especially Pat Compton for her time and compassion in getting the line easement. Comment 126

The Alternative 2 Alignment or ~~Alternate~~ 4 alignment would be the same on us. 30N-4W on Sec 24-13-14. Comment 127

Name Aiken Ranch Co / Russell Aiken, pres
Address 1000 Frontier Road
City Valier State MT Zip 59486

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

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Montana Department of Environmental Quality

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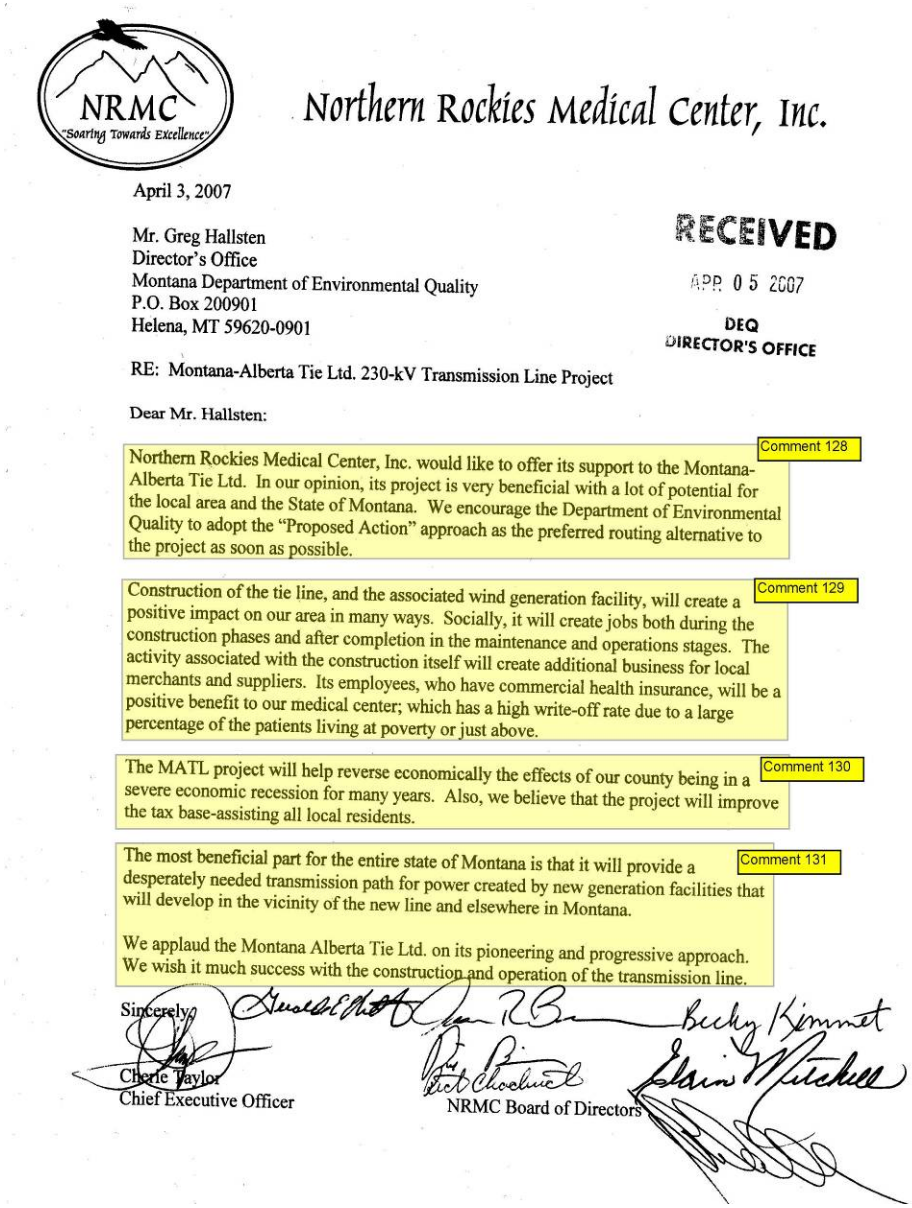
Response 126: Comment noted.

Response 127: Comment noted.



Northern Rockies Medical Center, Inc.

April 3, 2007

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DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV Transmission Line Project

Dear Mr. Hallsten:

Comment 128

Northern Rockies Medical Center, Inc. would like to offer its support to the Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. In our opinion, its project is very beneficial with a lot of potential for the local area and the State of Montana. We encourage the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt the "Proposed Action" approach as the preferred routing alternative to the project as soon as possible.

Comment 129

Construction of the tie line, and the associated wind generation facility, will create a positive impact on our area in many ways. Socially, it will create jobs both during the construction phases and after completion in the maintenance and operations stages. The activity associated with the construction itself will create additional business for local merchants and suppliers. Its employees, who have commercial health insurance, will be a positive benefit to our medical center; which has a high write-off rate due to a large percentage of the patients living at poverty or just above.

Comment 130

The MATL project will help reverse economically the effects of our county being in a severe economic recession for many years. Also, we believe that the project will improve the tax base-assisting all local residents.

Comment 131

The most beneficial part for the entire state of Montana is that it will provide a desperately needed transmission path for power created by new generation facilities that will develop in the vicinity of the new line and elsewhere in Montana.

We applaud the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. on its pioneering and progressive approach. We wish it much success with the construction and operation of the transmission line.

Sincerely,

Cherie Taylor
Chief Executive Officer

NRMC Board of Directors

Becky Kimmet

Elaine Mitchell

Response 128: Comment noted.

Response 129: Comment noted.

Response 130: Comment noted.

Response 131: Comment noted.

940 Wilder Ave.
Helena, MT 59601
April 4, 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
MT Dept. of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Greg Hallsten,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposal to build a major transmission line, the MT-Alberta Tie Line (MATL), between Great Falls and Lethbridge.

Comment 132

With the MATL comes the possibility of industrial scale wind developments. Both of these portend enormous impacts to the MT landscape. My main concern relates to the Rocky Mountain Front. There is no grander scenery in this state. The area where the plains meet the mountains is dramatic and awe-inspiring. Its beauty has a profound effect on many, including myself. This magnificence must be protected. Consequently, I'd like to ask that all future energy development such as transmission lines and wind farms be situated near or east of Interstate Hwy 15.

Comment 133

Please conduct a broad regional programmatic EIS that deals with transmission lines, wind farms and other energy development in north central Montana. Energy development would bring many cumulative impacts to the whole region and these impacts need to be addressed. DEQ needs to complete such an EIS to protect the interests of the state and the people in the area. Besides a programmatic EIS, full public participation must be guaranteed on all such siting issues.

Comment 134

This past weekend my husband and I camped and hiked in Sun Canyon on the Rocky Mountain Front. Driving there on Route 287 from Helena, there is breath-taking view of the whole Front when cresting a particular hill. I hope it stays breath taking.

Sincerely,

Sara Toubman

Sara Toubman

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Response 132: See response to comment 28, Section 3.15, and the revised discussion of impacts in Section4.16 for a description of potential visual impacts associated with wind farm development. In general, the Rocky Mountain Front west of Choteau is located more than 80 miles from the proposed MATL line. If wind farm development were located 30 miles from the MATL line, it would then be about 50 miles away from the Front and beyond the range of visibility.

Response 133: See response to comment 24.

Response 134: See the revised discussion of impacts in Chapter 4. See response to comment 23 for a discussion of public participation in siting of wind farm developments where the agencies have no regulatory authority.

PO Box 3
Dutton MT 59433
April 4, 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Mt. Dept. of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Hallsten:

The MATL transmission line is proposed to be built to make a financial gain for a private company at the expense of Montana and the Montana farmers. The line is to run to a substation on the north side of Great Falls.

Alberta has a 23% surplus in electricity and needs a market for it. Northwest Energy has a surplus and has no plans to build any new lines until the year 2012. If the MATL line is built, there is no place for the electricity to go. Comment 135

After reviewing the alternatives, it appears the only thing this has done is to turn neighbors against neighbors. Comment 136

The combination of these alternatives to form one line parallel (within 250 feet) to the existing line with single poles for everyone. This should be from east of Dutton to the south side of Conrad. This would stop the building of new corridors and make it possible for the poles to be next to each other. MATL said, "the could build it within 50 feet of the existing line." Comment 137

The first information, in writing, I received on this project wasn't from the Department of Energy or MATL, but from the lawyers office in Helena. Comment 138

MATL wishes to build this line with 3 ½% money, double poles, and receive a 75% tax write-off. Why don't they just ask for the State? Comment 139

It would be wrong to build this at the expense of the farmers and ranchers. Comment 140

MATL also wants to be able to increase the power 25% to 800mw at no additional income to the land owners. The same goes for the fiber optic line, where they are looking at selling off part of it to others. Comment 141

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Response 135: Alberta typically imports more energy than it exports—for more discussion about Alberta's electricity situation, see Section 3.17 and response to comment 33b-d. The Western grid is an interconnected whole and there is capacity at certain times of the year on all lines exiting both Montana and Alberta. At other times of the year, there is little or no excess capacity on existing lines. Thus, power from generation built as a result of MATL would, at certain times of the year, have several options in terms of how to leave the Montana service area to serve other markets. At other times of the year, that power could be constrained in terms of leaving the Montana control areas.

Response 136: Comment noted. The agencies have worked with several groups of landowners and most people have been willing to work with the agencies and each other to arrive at solutions for line location.

Response 137: While this option would keep lines in a single corridor, it would not be a location that would meet many of the preferred location criteria under rules implementing the Major Facility Siting Act (see Section 2.1).

Response 138: Comment noted.

Response 139: Comment noted.

Response 140: Comment noted.

It says in the DEQ impact study that MATL will put no poles in the 100 year flood plain. I don't know how they can accomplish this. The flood of 1964 had the Teton River a mile wide. Comment 142

The only mention of money from MATL was $275.00 for the easement. This is a price from prior to the 1940's. One would be foolish to accept this. Comment 143

It is wrong to expect Montana consumers to pay for mitigation in order for the MATL line to have a reliable connection to the electrical transmission system. Comment 144

It is not right to give some of the land owners single poles and not others. This is discrimination to the land owners, where one has irrigated land, another has dry land, and the third has pasture. Comment 145

Alternate (3) is the best for the Teton River area. If this is not possible, the line should cross the Teton River exactly in the northwest corner of the section of state land. There is a graded road on the State of Montana land on the south side of the river. This road is wide enough for a 24' combine to travel from the river bottom to the hill top. Comment 146

Again, the line should be east of the NW Energy line. This will have less impact on all the home owners from east of Dutton to south of Conrad. Comment 147

Avoid discrimination – single poles for all. Comment 148

Visual impact of Alternate (4) on the Teton River is devastating for view, recreation, and airplanes. Comment 149

Don't believe a private company qualifies for eminent domain. Comment 150

How did a 230kv line become an 800mw line? Comment 151

Sincerely,

Robert J. Carney

Response 141: Comment noted. MATL has indicated that although the current proposal is to build a line that could handle 300 MW flowing from north to south and south to north, the conductors proposed could be physically able to handle additional power in the future, though line losses may be unacceptably high (see the responses to comments 346). Easement payments are typically not dependent upon the amount of power that would flow through a line. Similarly, easement payments for a transmission line are typically not based on the number of fiber optic strands in a cable.

Response 142: Comment noted. However, the text does not say that no poles would be located in the 100 –year floodplains. Rather the text in Section 3.6 indicates that structures would not be located below the normal high-water mark and that high hazard areas of floodplains would be avoided.

Response 143: Comment noted. See Section 3.13 for further discussion of the costs associated with farming around structures.

Response 144: Costs of mitigating impacts would be borne by MATL because MATL is proposing to build the line. Only if NorthWestern Energy would buy power from the MATL line would any mitigation costs show up in the transmission portion of the bill for Montana customers.

Response 145: Comment noted. Single poles are seen as a way to reduce but not eliminate impacts to farming activities. Because single poles are more expensive than H-frames, in developing the alternatives the agencies tried to limit the use of single poles to situations where they would reduce impacts, principally on cultivated land. Presence of H-frame structures does not interfere substantially with livestock use on range and pasture land. Alternative 2, as proposed by MATL, would use 53 miles of single poles. Alternative 2 would not include single poles on the other 38.4 miles of cropland and CRP land crossed. Alternative 4 was developed by the agencies and would use single poles wherever cropland and CRP land are crossed. The agencies regret that some people feel they were treated unfairly. If Alternative 2 is finally chosen for permitting, the distribution could be altered in the certificate, or the requirement for monopoles could be rescinded by the agencies.

Response 146: Comment noted. The agencies examined the suggested alternative crossing of the Teton River (see Figure 2.6-3). This alignment would cross a low elevation bend along the Teton River and would be more prone to flood damage than the modified Alternative 2 which would be located a greater distance above the river. The suggested alternative also would cross a landslide feature where the river's location at the toe of the slope makes long-term stability of the slope questionable. Note that the length and location of the crossing indicated in the comment would necessitate a structure being located somewhere on this slope since the landslide is too long to span. Like Alternative 2 and modified Alternative 2, some road building would be necessary to access at least one structure on the suggested alternative.

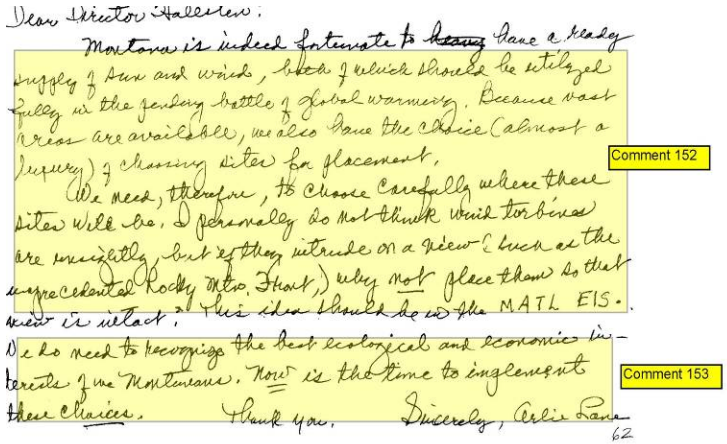
Response 147: Comment noted. However, such an alternative would be located close to a landing strip, would cross farm fields diagonally, and cause farm operators to work around two diagonal lines rather than one. See response to comment 37 as well.

Response 148: Comment noted. See response to comment 145.

Response 149: The draft EIS notes in Section 3.15 that major visual impact would result where the transmission line would cross an area of Class B (above average) scenic quality such as the alluvial corridor of the Teton River. This river crossing on state land would be marked to increase visibility to low flying airplanes.

Alternative 4 would be located about one mile west of Alternative 3 at the Teton River crossing. This portion of the river corridor is used for dispersed recreation and both crossings would be highly visible to people recreating along the river.

Response 150: See response to comment 8.


Dear Director Hallerew:

Montana is indeed fortunate to ~~have~~ have a ready supply of sun and wind, both of which should be utilized fully in the pending battle of global warming. Because vast areas are available, we also have the choice (almost a luxury) of choosing sites for placement.

Comment 152

We need, therefore, to choose carefully where these sites will be. I personally do not think wind turbines are unsightly, but if they intrude on a view (such as the unprecedented Rocky Mtn. Front,) why not place them so that view is intact? This idea should be in the MATL EIS.

We do need to recognize the best ecological and economic interests of the Montanans. Now is the time to implement these choices. Thank you. Sincerely, Arlis Lane

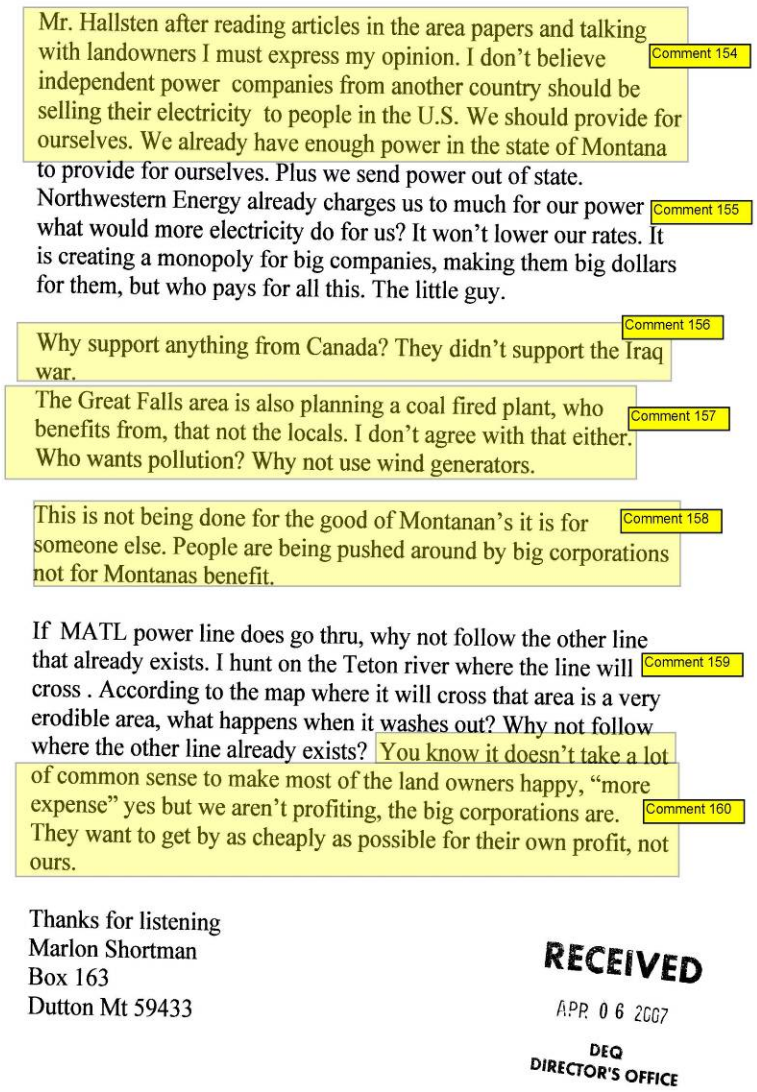
Comment 153

62

Response 151: The proposed line would be operated at 230 kilovolts. It is proposed to carry up to 300MW in each direction. MATL has indicated that the proposed conductor could handle up to 600MW in each direction while still being operated at 230 kV, but this would require upgrading of substation equipment and line losses would be roughly 20 percent or about 115MW (MATL 2007). The explanation for the mention of a 400MW potential loading is that if the MATL line would be loaded to 300MW, an extra contingency load of up to 100MW must be carried by the line to support existing power facilities in the area in case of outages on other transmission lines (HDR 2007). Also see comment 346.

Response 152: The idea of placing wind farms in a manner that would not intrude on views of the Rocky Mountain Front is noted. Note however, the agencies do not have regulatory authority over the location of wind farms and cannot dictate their placement. Also see the description of potential cumulative wind farm impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 153: Comment noted.



Mr. Hallsten after reading articles in the area papers and talking with landowners I must express my opinion. I don't believe independent power companies from another country should be selling their electricity to people in the U.S. We should provide for ourselves. We already have enough power in the state of Montana to provide for ourselves. Plus we send power out of state. Northwestern Energy already charges us to much for our power what would more electricity do for us? It won't lower our rates. It is creating a monopoly for big companies, making them big dollars for them, but who pays for all this. The little guy.

Comment 154

Comment 155

Why support anything from Canada? They didn't support the Iraq war.

Comment 156

The Great Falls area is also planning a coal fired plant, who benefits from, that not the locals. I don't agree with that either. Who wants pollution? Why not use wind generators.

Comment 157

This is not being done for the good of Montanan's it is for someone else. People are being pushed around by big corporations not for Montanas benefit.

Comment 158

If MATL power line does go thru, why not follow the other line that already exists. I hunt on the Teton river where the line will cross . According to the map where it will cross that area is a very erodible area, what happens when it washes out? Why not follow where the other line already exists? You know it doesn't take a lot of common sense to make most of the land owners happy, "more expense" yes but we aren't profiting, the big corporations are. They want to get by as cheaply as possible for their own profit, not ours.

Comment 159

Comment 160

Thanks for listening
Marlon Shortman
Box 163
Dutton Mt 59433

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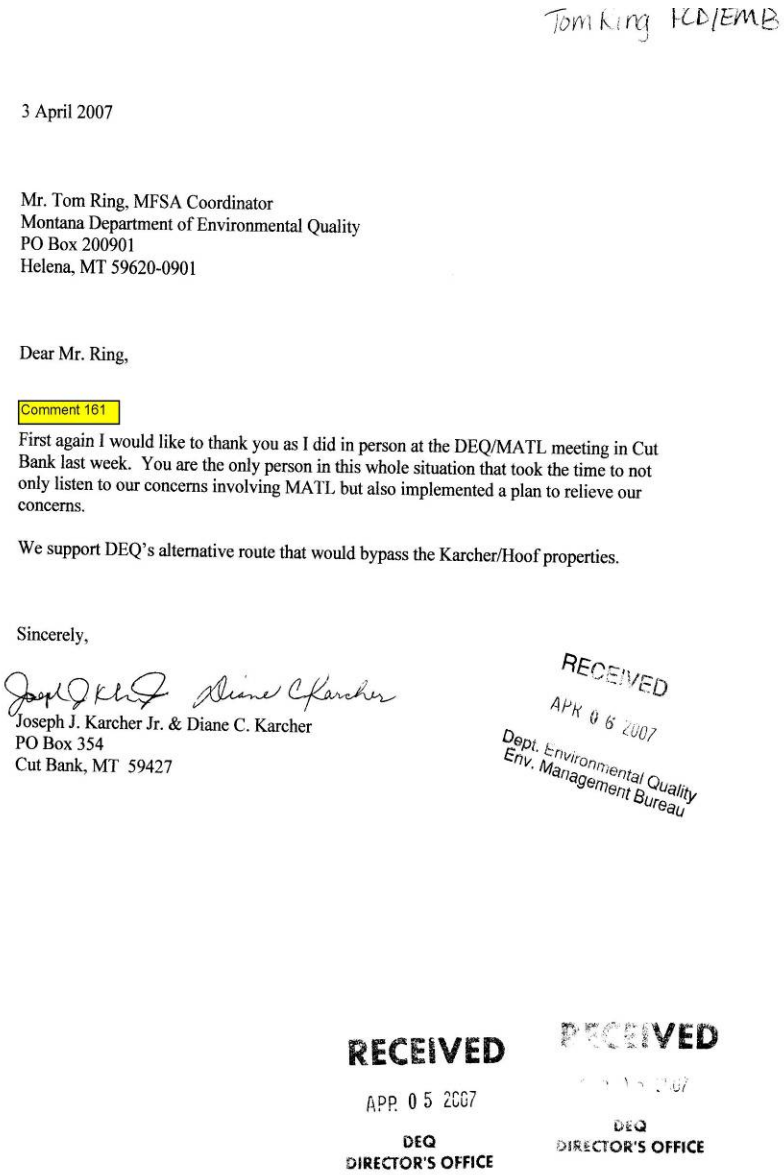
Response 154: Comment noted.

Response 155: Electricity generated as a result of MATL would be sold on the power market, and not necessarily to Montana customers. See response to comment 33 for further discussion of potential affects on prices. The factors that affect electricity prices in Montana are complex and numerous.

Response 156: Comment noted.

Response 157: The coal-fired plant proposed near Great Falls would benefit a group of electric cooperatives from south central Montana as well as the City of Great Falls. The opinion regarding pollution from this plant is noted. Wind generators do not provide firm baseload power similar to that which can be produced by a conventional coal-fired plant. However some developers are looking into the possibility of converting coal into diesel fuel and using this diesel fuel in conventional diesel powered generators as a way to firm wind generation.

Response 158: Comment noted.



Tom King MCD/EMB

3 April 2007

Mr. Tom Ring, MFSA Coordinator
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring,

Comment 161

First again I would like to thank you as I did in person at the DEQ/MATL meeting in Cut Bank last week. You are the only person in this whole situation that took the time to not only listen to our concerns involving MATL but also implemented a plan to relieve our concerns.

We support DEQ's alternative route that would bypass the Karcher/Hoof properties.

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Karcher Jr. & Diane C. Karcher
PO Box 354
Cut Bank, MT 59427

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Env. Management Bureau

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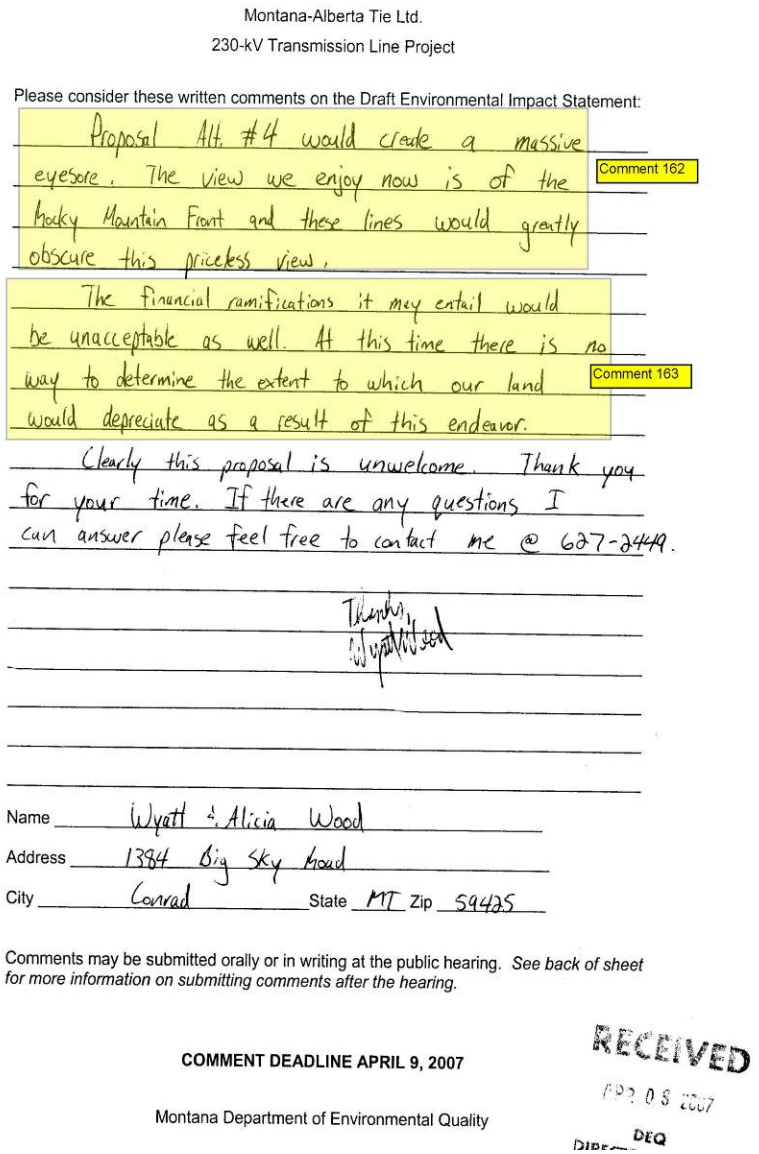
Response 159: Should a line structure be lost due to erosion, the line would be out of service until the structure is replaced or repaired. The existing NorthWestern Energy line was not paralleled due to concerns with having to farm around two sets of structures on either side of the Teton River crossing, not the Teton crossing itself. Lastly, the Major Facility Siting Act contains a requirement in 75-20-301(1)(h) "that the use of public lands for location of the facility was evaluated and public lands were selected whenever their use is as economically practicable as the use of private lands." The proposed crossing would be located on a state section while the crossing of the Teton River parallel to NorthWestern Energy's existing transmission line would be located on private land on each side of the river. Comment noted.

Response 160: Comment noted.

Response 161: Comment noted.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

Proposal Alt. #4 would create a massive eyesore. The view we enjoy now is of the Rocky Mountain Front and these lines would greatly obscure this priceless view.

Comment 162

The financial ramifications it may entail would be unacceptable as well. At this time there is no way to determine the extent to which our land would depreciate as a result of this endeavor.

Comment 163

Clearly this proposal is unwelcome. Thank you for your time. If there are any questions I can answer please feel free to contact me @ 627-2449.

Thanks,
Wyatt Wood

Name Wyatt & Alicia Wood
Address 1384 Big Sky Road
City Conrad State MT Zip 59425

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

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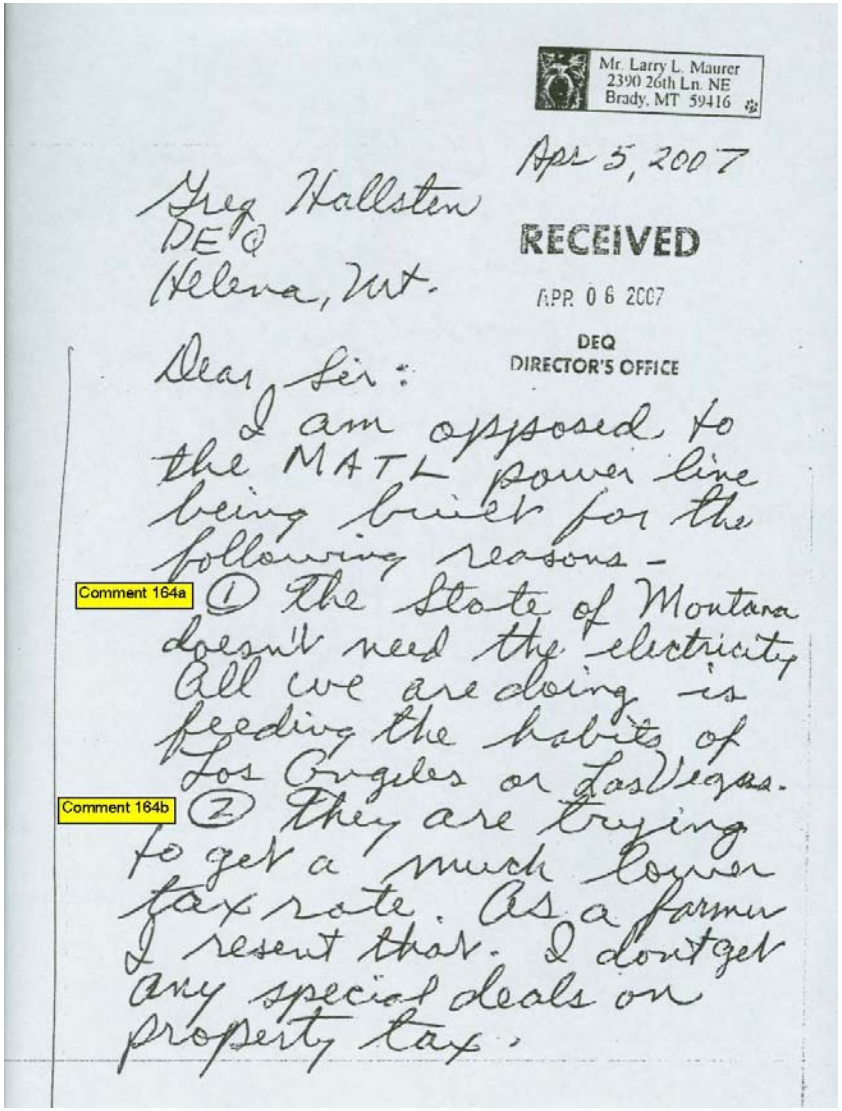
Response 162: Comment noted. Although some area residents would have the transmission line present in their views of the Rocky Mountain Front, Alternative 4 does the best job overall of avoiding proximity to residences, with 67 residences within ½ mile of the line. Alternative 2 would have 77 residences within ½ mile, and Alternative 3 would have 94 residences. While both the transmission line and wind turbines would introduce strong linear elements into viewed landscapes, the structures are typically not clustered sufficiently to conceal or hide surrounding mountain ranges (see the pictures of the Judith Gap wind farm in the revised discussion of impacts in Sections 4.16).

Response 163: Comment noted. Transmission lines could adversely affect land values, and that would be a cost to Montanans. Existing evidence suggests that land values are not significantly affected by transmission lines. See the revised discussion on land values in Section 3.13.



Mr. Larry L. Maurer
2390 26th Ln. NE
Brady, MT 59416

Apr 5, 2007

Greg Hallsten
DEQ
Helena, Mt.

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DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Dear Sir:

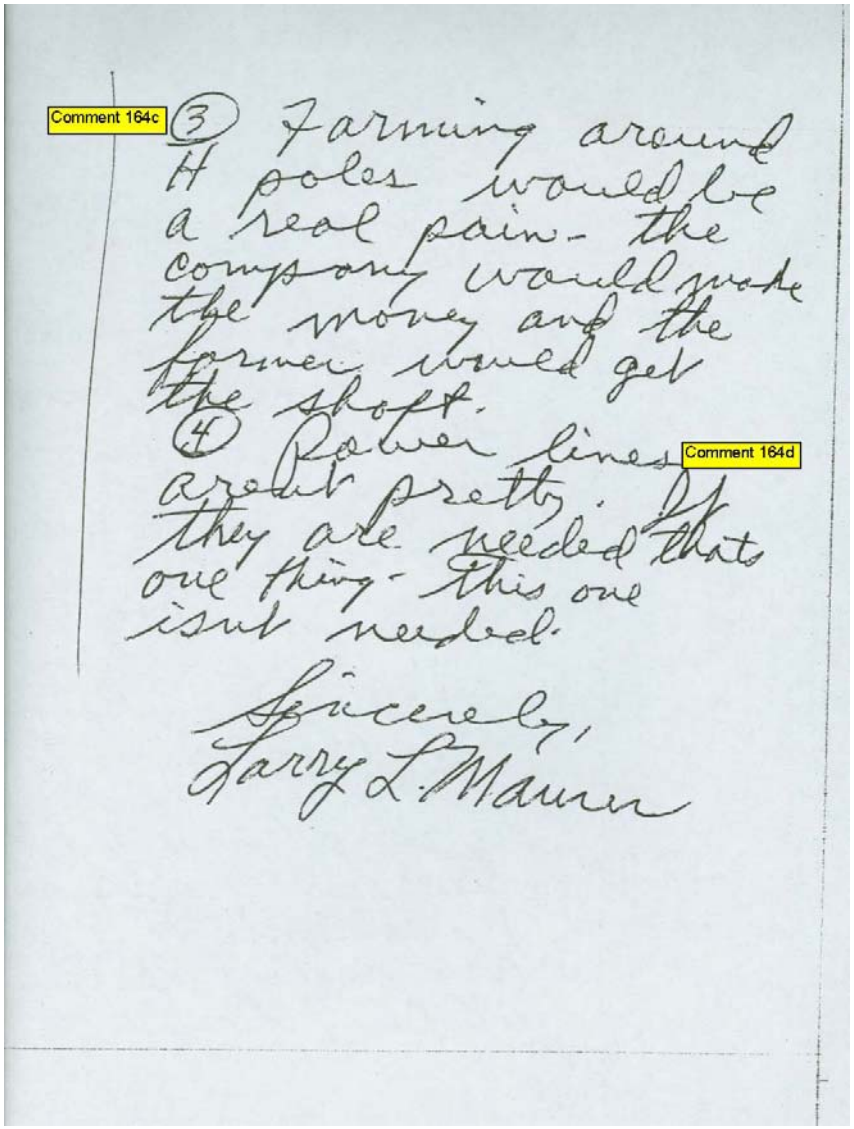
I am opposed to the MATL power line being built for the following reasons -

Comment 164a (1) The State of Montana doesn't need the electricity. All we are doing is feeding the habits of Los Angeles or Las Vegas.

Comment 164b (2) They are trying to get a much lower tax rate. As a farmer I resent that. I don't get any special deals on property tax.

Response 164a: Comment noted. The benefits and costs of MATL to Montana are discussed in Sections 1.2 and 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13. The energy generated as a result of this line would be sold on the open energy market.

Response 164b: Recent passage of legislation will likely result in lower tax rates for MATL. This legislation also included tax reductions for landowners whose land is crossed by new transmission lines.



Response 164c: Comment noted.

Response 164d: Comment noted. The agencies note that transmission lines could adversely affect land and visual values, and that would be a cost to Montanans. See the discussion on visual impacts in Section 3.15. See the revised discussion on land values in Section 3.13.

04/06/2007

To: Mr. Richard Opper, Director
Mr. Tom Ring
Mr. Greg Hallsten
Dept. of Environmental Quality
P. O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RECEIVED
APR 09 2007
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Dear Sirs:

I would like to address the wind farm issue from several angles:

1) As a concerned resident of Glacier County.
2) As a hiker.
3) As a concerned parent.
4) As a Realtor.
5) As a student of Montana history.

Having grown up on a farm in Teton County, Montana, just north of Great Falls, I find myself being more and more concerned about the MATL line which will run from Great Falls to the Canadian border. I have called Glacier County my home for over 30 years so I am very familiar with both areas that will be impacted by these proposed wind farms.

Comment 165

Initially, I found myself excited that someone was going to finally utilize the wind power in Montana. But the more and more I looked into it, I found that these 400' towers have downsides and that most, if not all of the energy would be leaving the Big Sky Country to help light Las Vegas. Plus these huge towers would be also at the Eastern gateway to Glacier National Park. I hike in Glacier National Park and do not want to climb up to a vista of wind farm towers.

As a Realtor, I also question what this will do to adjoining and area land values. Would you want one next to you? I would not. I suspect that wind farms DO NOT increase the land around them. Has anyone looked at what values are now in the Judith Gap area? That should be something else that is checked BEFORE charging ahead with the MATL line or the wind farms.

Comment 166

I had the privilege of taking Montana History from K. Ross Toole at the U of M in Missoula. He said over and over again that Montanans repeatedly made the mistake of being used by outside interests. I understand that the power from these wind farms may not even stay in the state and may even go to light up Las Vegas. Are we again repeating history and doing something that we will regret and that will diminish Montana for the benefit of someone else's pocketbook? Once these wind farms are in place, they will be here forever so I believe we Montanans should be absolutely sure that this is what we want and know ALL of the impacts it will have on this area.

Comment 167

Comment 168

So, I believe a lot of thought and research needs to be put into this decision BEFORE my children and grandchildren wish we had.

Regards,

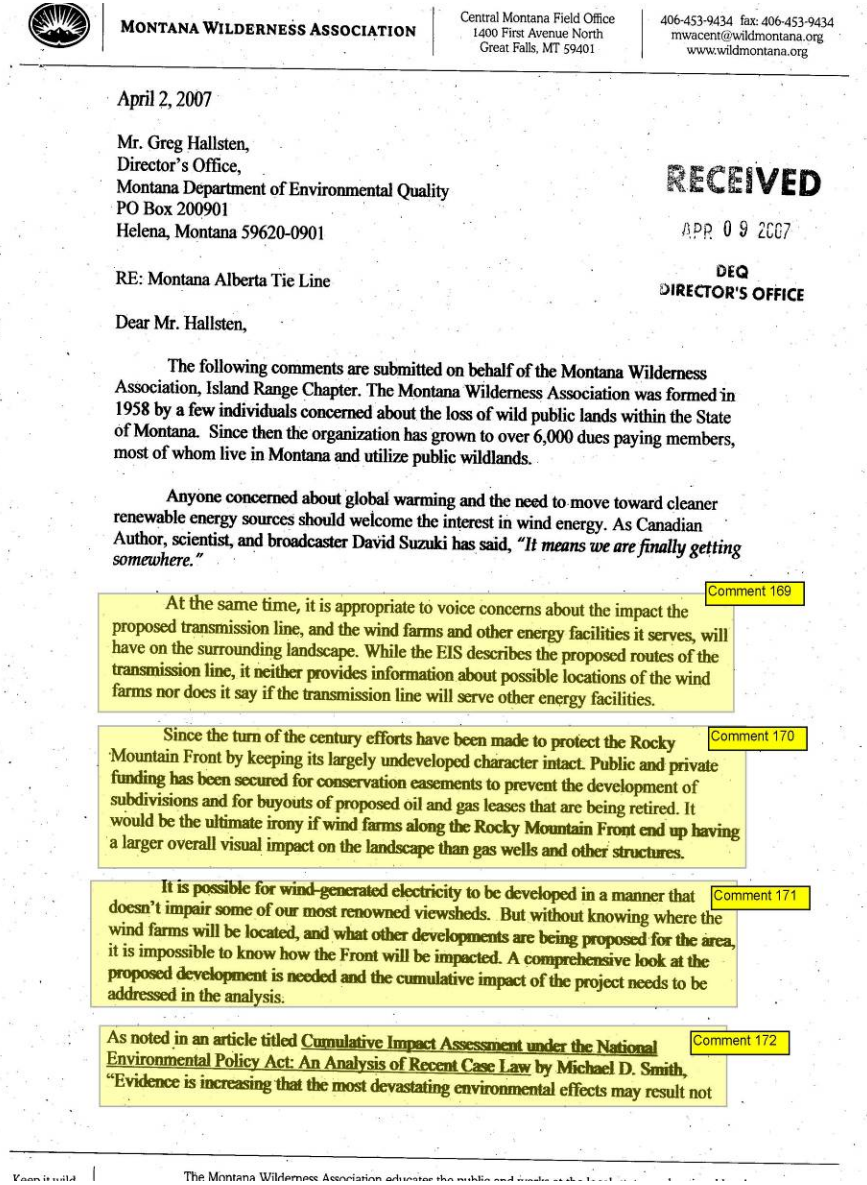
Colleen Erickson
P. O. Box 55
East Glacier Park, MT 59434
406-226-5555

Response 165: See response to comments 28 and 29and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4. The eastern edge of Glacier National Park lies more than 50 miles west of the MATL transmission line. If wind farms were located 30 miles from the MATL line, they would be at the limit of visibility for viewpoints within Glacier National Park.

Response 166: See the revised cumulative socioeconomic impacts portion of Chapter 4 for a discussion of property values in relation to wind farms.

Response 167: See response to comment 168.

Response 168: It is unclear how long wind farms would be operated. See the discussion of impacts in Chapter 4.



MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION | Central Montana Field Office, 1400 First Avenue North, Great Falls, MT 59401 | 406-453-9434 fax: 406-453-9434, mwacent@wildmontana.org, www.wildmontana.org

April 2, 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten,
Director's Office,
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901

RECEIVED
APR 09 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

RE: Montana Alberta Tie Line

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

The following comments are submitted on behalf of the Montana Wilderness Association, Island Range Chapter. The Montana Wilderness Association was formed in 1958 by a few individuals concerned about the loss of wild public lands within the State of Montana. Since then the organization has grown to over 6,000 dues paying members, most of whom live in Montana and utilize public wildlands.

Anyone concerned about global warming and the need to move toward cleaner renewable energy sources should welcome the interest in wind energy. As Canadian Author, scientist, and broadcaster David Suzuki has said, *"It means we are finally getting somewhere."*

Comment 169

At the same time, it is appropriate to voice concerns about the impact the proposed transmission line, and the wind farms and other energy facilities it serves, will have on the surrounding landscape. While the EIS describes the proposed routes of the transmission line, it neither provides information about possible locations of the wind farms nor does it say if the transmission line will serve other energy facilities.

Comment 170

Since the turn of the century efforts have been made to protect the Rocky Mountain Front by keeping its largely undeveloped character intact. Public and private funding has been secured for conservation easements to prevent the development of subdivisions and for buyouts of proposed oil and gas leases that are being retired. It would be the ultimate irony if wind farms along the Rocky Mountain Front end up having a larger overall visual impact on the landscape than gas wells and other structures.

Comment 171

It is possible for wind-generated electricity to be developed in a manner that doesn't impair some of our most renowned viewsheds. But without knowing where the wind farms will be located, and what other developments are being proposed for the area, it is impossible to know how the Front will be impacted. A comprehensive look at the proposed development is needed and the cumulative impact of the project needs to be addressed in the analysis.

Comment 172

As noted in an article titled Cumulative Impact Assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act: An Analysis of Recent Case Law by Michael D. Smith, "Evidence is increasing that the most devastating environmental effects may result not

Keep it wild | The Montana Wilderness Association educates the public and works at the local...

Response 169: Comment noted. See the responses to comments 20, 22, and 29 and revisions to the discussion of impacts in Chapter 4. Short-term, non-firm capacity would likely be available to other electricity producers.

Response 170: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of impacts in Section 4.16.

Response 171: See the responses to comments 20, 22, and revisions to the discussion of impacts in Chapter 4. The agencies are not aware of any other developments in the area that would come under the agency's permitting authority.

Response 172: Comment noted.

"Evidence is increasing that the most devastating environmental effects may result not from the direct effects of a particular action, but from the combination of individually minor effects of multiple actions over time (Council on Environmental Quality, 1997,p.1).

Comment 172 (Continued)

A backlash toward wind generated electricity is developing in parts of the country where wind farms and transmission lines are sprouting up on some of the nation's last undeveloped landscapes. It is important that Montana develops wind energy in a manner that preserves our increasingly rare and valuable natural landscapes.

Comment 173

We appreciate the opportunity to comment and anticipate learning more about your agency's intentions.

Sincerely,

Joanne Bernard
Chairperson
Montana Wilderness Association
Island Range Chapter

Response 173: Comment noted.

02/16/2006 17:43 406-727-2693 PAGE 01/02

J.C. O'Brien & Sons, Inc
421 Deer Drive
Great Falls, Montana 59404
Ph 406 452-9471
FAX 406 452-4069

FACSIMILE MESSAGE

DATE: April 9, 2007

TO: Department of Environmental Quality
MATL@mt.gov
Att: Mr. Greg Hallsten

PHONE/FAX: 406-444-4386

SUBJECT: Comments on the Draft EIS for the MATL transmission line

NUMBER OF PAGES INCLUDING COVER: 2

Here are some written comments and questions regarding the proposed transmission line. By way of qualifications, I am a land owner and have farm land immediately South of Conrad which is scattered about in various sections. While it seems from the maps that this line will not cross our property, we are in a position where every thing else, which goes by, crosses our land. We have had some very sad experiences over the years with public utilities, pipelines, fiber optic cables and various other well-intentioned utilities impacting our land.

I am all for this country developing sources of non-polluting energy, and I assume we all are. This project, however, raises some questions, which should be answered before it is allowed to proceed. Here are a few of my concerns, in no particular order of importance.

Comment 174

1. If the permits being requested are granted, then does that convey the right of eminent domain to a private Canadian Corporation? If so, would they then use that right to follow their preferred alternative and go diagonally across farmland wherever they wanted to?

Comment 175

2. Since the tax incentives that Governor Schweitzer had wanted to give to alternative energy developments and transmission lines were not granted by the Montana Legislature, will Tonbridge Power continue with the project? They have stated that they would not. Also, somewhere in the Draft EIS it stated that if they were forced to go with Alternative 4, the line would probably not be built. They stated in their progress report, fall of 2006, that they were advancing procurement of long lead-time

Response 174: See response to comment 8.

Response 175: In the special legislative session the "Clean and Green Energy" tax incentives package was passed. See the revised discussion of socioeconomic impacts in Section 3.13.

02/16/2006 17:43 406-727-2693 PAGE 02/02

Comment 175 (Continued)

components and had awarded contracts for the construction of sub stations at Lethbridge and Cut Bank. There seems to be some discrepancy here. Could it be possible that they will build the line anyway, even if it is not subsidized by the taxpayers of Montana?

Comment 176

3. Alternative 4 has 27.0 miles of the alignment crossing non-irrigated cropland at a diagonal versus almost twice that amount at 52.8 miles in Alternative 2. Either is too much. If the project can't afford to go on section lines because of the economics, then it should not be built. Of course this doesn't even begin to address the esthetic and visual impacts of the line. Those of us who will have the line in our front yard but not on our land will have to live with the impacts forever. We, of course, will not be compensated for the impacts on the land values caused by the line. This is a major concern to all landowners in the vicinity of the line. Figure 3.15-5 is a dramatic example of the visual impact of the line.

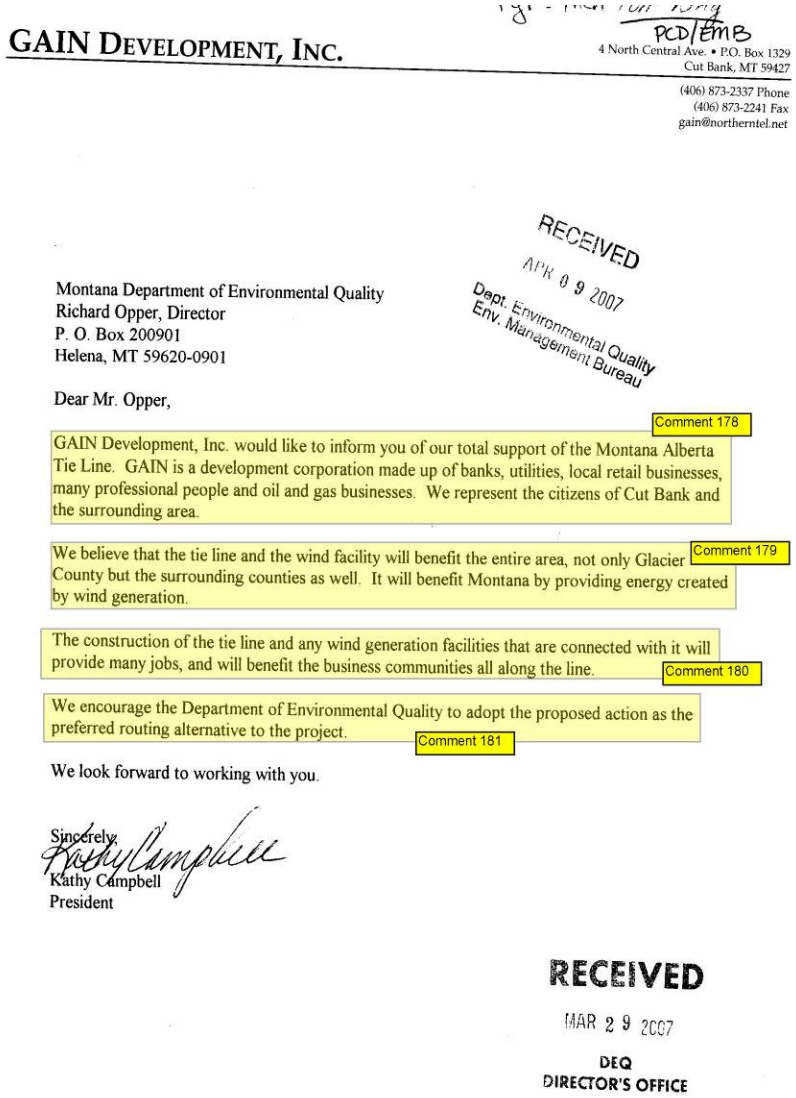
Comment 177

Page 4-9 discusses the long term impacts to land. I think that a significant impact, not mentioned, would be a decrease in land values just by having the line in the vicinity.

MESSAGE is intended only for the use of the addressee and may contain information that is privileged and confidential. If you are not the intended recipient, you are hereby notified that any dissemination of this communication is strictly prohibited. If you have received this communication in error, please notify us immediately.

Response 176: Comment noted.

Response 177: See response to comment 163. To the extent that the MATL line would lower land values, that would be a cost to landowners. See the revised discussion on land values in Section 3.13. Section 3.15 notes that most visual impacts are direct and long term and that transmission line structures within the immediate foreground of residences would result in a major impact. Homeowners would not be compensated for these effects when the line is not on their land.



GAIN DEVELOPMENT, INC.

PCD/EMB

4 North Central Ave. • P.O. Box 1329
Cut Bank, MT 59427

(406) 873-2337 Phone
(406) 873-2241 Fax
gain@northerntel.net

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APR 09 2007
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Richard Opper, Director
P. O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Opper,

Comment 178

GAIN Development, Inc. would like to inform you of our total support of the Montana Alberta Tie Line. GAIN is a development corporation made up of banks, utilities, local retail businesses, many professional people and oil and gas businesses. We represent the citizens of Cut Bank and the surrounding area.

Comment 179

We believe that the tie line and the wind facility will benefit the entire area, not only Glacier County but the surrounding counties as well. It will benefit Montana by providing energy created by wind generation.

The construction of the tie line and any wind generation facilities that are connected with it will provide many jobs, and will benefit the business communities all along the line.

Comment 180

We encourage the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt the proposed action as the preferred routing alternative to the project.

Comment 181

We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Kathy Campbell
President

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MAR 29 2007
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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Response 178: Comment noted.

Response 179: Comment noted.

Response 180: Comment noted.

Response 181: Comment noted.

Hallsten, Greg

From: rjfishermt [rjfishermt@bresnan.net]
Posted At: Monday, April 09, 2007 1:33 PM
Conversation: Montana Alberta Tie line
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Montana Alberta Tie line

Richard Fisher
3015 Acacia Way
Great Falls, Montana 59404-3692
rjfishermt@bresnan.net

Comment 182

My comment is very simple and brief.

If at all feasible, I would prefer the line be placed east of Interstate 15.

I do imagine the reasons for the developer wanting the line to be placed as close to the towns that could be served and where the wind farms may be located as users of the line. However, in the best of all alternatives, placing the line to the east keeps it on the opposite side from the landscape view of the Rocky Mountain Front for tourists and residents alike. We are blessed to have this majestic inspiration of this one-of-a-kind landscape. Whenever possible, that view scape should be preserved.

This is of further merit since Montana exports as much as 50% of the electrical power generated in the state. Thus, we should not sacrifice our greatest assets, our last best place, to assuage the avarice of non-Montana cities and industries. Exporting is important, but not to the sacrifice of and harm to our irreplaceable natural resources. The tourist business is of far more benefit and return on investment than the electrical generating business.

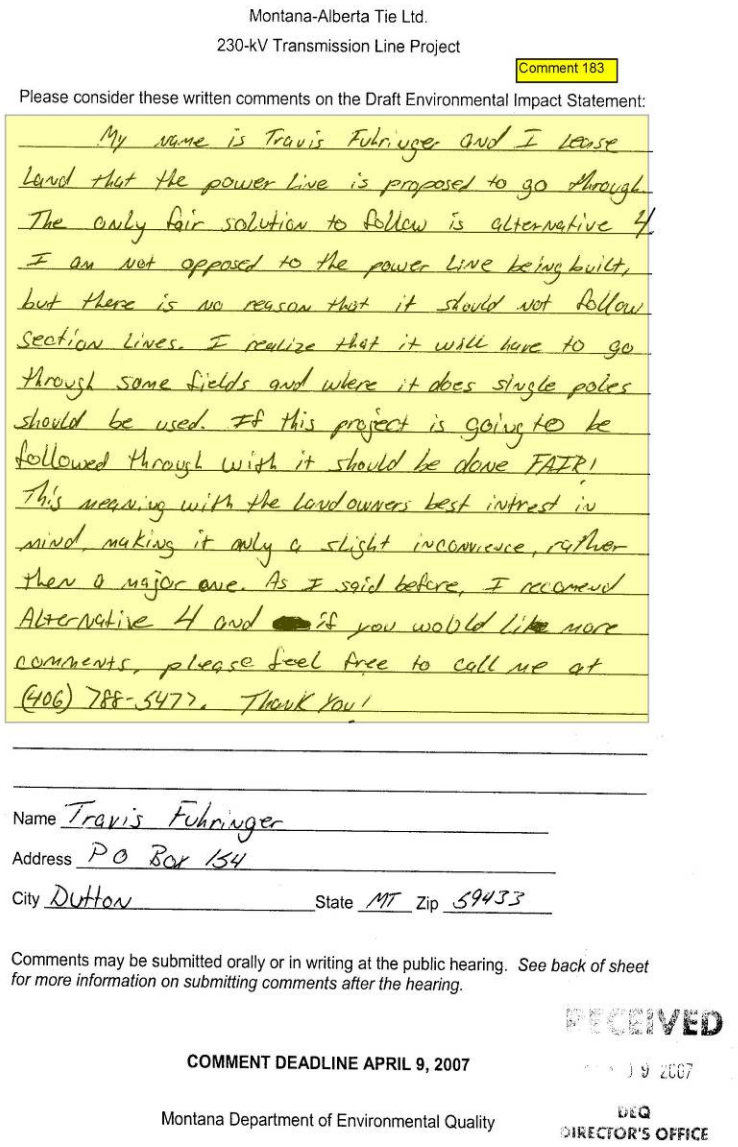
Instead of the line following the wind farms, let the line placement attract the wind farms out of the view scape.

Thank you.

Richard Fisher

1

Response 182: Comment noted. The three action alternatives would be located east of Interstate 15 on the southern portion of the project and remains almost 50 miles east of Glacier National Park in the north. The line would tend to attract wind farms in the Conrad and Cut Bank areas but not as far west as the Rocky Mountain Front. A rule of thumb is that an individual 150MW wind farm can typically afford to build only about 30 to 40 miles of interconnecting 230-kV transmission lines before the project becomes economically infeasible. With adequate wind resources close to the proposed line, it is most likely that wind farms would be close to the line rather than being built at a great distance from it. There are several other proposed interconnections with existing transmission lines between Great Falls and the border with Canada, as indicated in Chapter 4. All three action alternatives have been sited in a general southeast to northwest direction between Great Falls and Cut Bank and would be located east of Interstate 15 for part of their length (see mileage information below). All would cross Interstate 15 with the proposed line present in foreground views, including views toward the Rocky Mountain Front approximately 40 miles to the west. With panoramic landscape views common throughout the study area, including views toward the Rocky Mountain Front, residences located east of Interstate 15 as well as tourists driving other highways and roads throughout the study area would have the transmission line present in many views.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.

230-kV Transmission Line Project

Comment 183

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

My name is Travis Fuhringer and I lease land that the power line is proposed to go through. The only fair solution to follow is alternative 4. I am not opposed to the power line being built, but there is no reason that it should not follow section lines. I realize that it will have to go through some fields and where it does single poles should be used. If this project is going to be followed through with it should be done FAIR! This meaning with the landowners best intrest in mind, making it only a slight inconvience, rather then a major one. As I said before, I recomend Alternative 4 and [redacted] If you would like more comments, please feel free to call me at (406) 788-5477. Thank You!

Name Travis Fuhringer

Address PO Box 154

City Dutton State MT Zip 59433

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

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APR 09 2007

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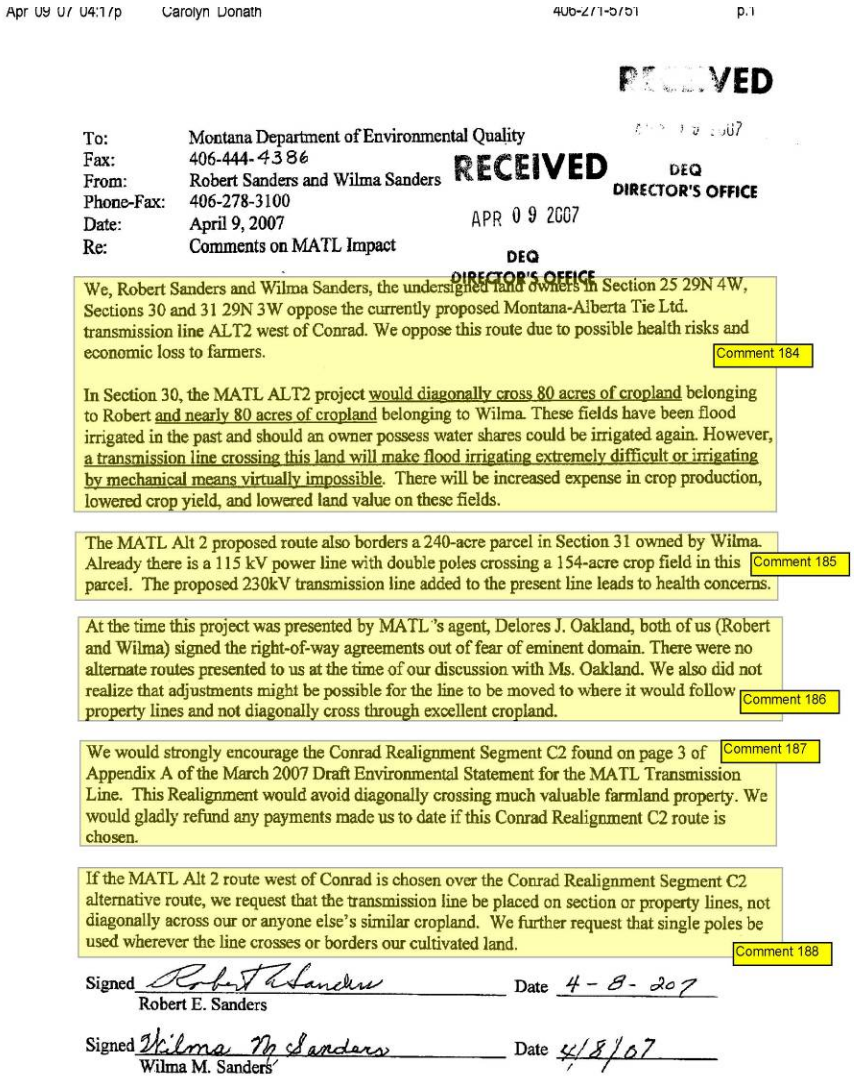
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Mileage information: Alternative 2 would have approximately 53 miles of its total 130-mile length east of Interstate 15 and would cross the interstate between Brady and Conrad. Alternative 3 would have approximately 50 miles of its total 122-mile length east of Interstate 15, crossing the interstate between Brady and Conrad. Alternative 4 would have approximately 73 miles of its total 140-mile length east of Interstate 15, crossing the interstate north of Conrad.

Response 183: Comment noted.



Apr 09 07 04:17p Carolyn Donath 406-271-5751 p.1

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To: Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Fax: 406-444-4386
From: Robert Sanders and Wilma Sanders
Phone-Fax: 406-278-3100
Date: April 9, 2007
Re: Comments on MATL Impact

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We, Robert Sanders and Wilma Sanders, the undersigned land owners in Section 25 29N 4W, Sections 30 and 31 29N 3W oppose the currently proposed Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. transmission line ALT2 west of Conrad. We oppose this route due to possible health risks and economic loss to farmers. Comment 184

In Section 30, the MATL ALT2 project would diagonally cross 80 acres of cropland belonging to Robert and nearly 80 acres of cropland belonging to Wilma. These fields have been flood irrigated in the past and should an owner possess water shares could be irrigated again. However, a transmission line crossing this land will make flood irrigating extremely difficult or irrigating by mechanical means virtually impossible. There will be increased expense in crop production, lowered crop yield, and lowered land value on these fields.

The MATL Alt 2 proposed route also borders a 240-acre parcel in Section 31 owned by Wilma. Already there is a 115 kV power line with double poles crossing a 154-acre crop field in this parcel. The proposed 230kV transmission line added to the present line leads to health concerns. Comment 185

At the time this project was presented by MATL's agent, Delores J. Oakland, both of us (Robert and Wilma) signed the right-of-way agreements out of fear of eminent domain. There were no alternate routes presented to us at the time of our discussion with Ms. Oakland. We also did not realize that adjustments might be possible for the line to be moved to where it would follow property lines and not diagonally cross through excellent cropland. Comment 186

We would strongly encourage the Conrad Realignment Segment C2 found on page 3 of Appendix A of the March 2007 Draft Environmental Statement for the MATL Transmission Line. This Realignment would avoid diagonally crossing much valuable farmland property. We would gladly refund any payments made us to date if this Conrad Realignment C2 route is chosen. Comment 187

If the MATL Alt 2 route west of Conrad is chosen over the Conrad Realignment Segment C2 alternative route, we request that the transmission line be placed on section or property lines, not diagonally across our or anyone else's similar cropland. We further request that single poles be used wherever the line crosses or borders our cultivated land. Comment 188

Signed Robert E. Sanders Date 4-8-07
Robert E. Sanders

Signed Wilma M. Sanders Date 4/8/07
Wilma M. Sanders

Response 184: Comments noted. In response to this comment the agencies' staff worked with the Sanders and developed a small realignment that would locate structures on range and pasturelands and along field boundaries.

Response 185: Health concerns are addressed in Section 3.4 and 4.5.

Response 186: Comment noted.

Response 187: Comment noted. See response to comment 184.

Response 188: See response to comment 184.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Briggs, Joe [jbriggs@co.cascade.mt.us]
Posted At: Monday, April 09, 2007 12:40 PM
Conversation: Comments on the proposed MATL power line from Great Falls to Lethbridge
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Comments on the proposed MATL power line from Great Falls to Lethbridge

Mr. Greg Hallsten,

Sir, on behalf of the Cascade County Commission, I would like to offer the following comments regarding the MATL power line.

Comment 189

We remain convinced that the development of this line is a critical element in the development of wind energy resources throughout North Central Montana and are very supportive of both the process which has been utilized and of the construction of the line itself.

As we have reviewed the proposed routing, we do have one concern which we would like to bring to your attention. In addition to the development of wind energy, we have also been working to attract value added agricultural to the area North of Great Falls. Currently, the malting plant is the only plant in operation, but a second valued added plant is in the permitting and zoning process phase. This new plant would occupy three parcels of land currently owned by Duane L Vick which lie directly North of the rail spur.

As proposed, alternative #4 cuts across the North East corner of the Eastern most of these three lots. If alternative # 4 is ultimately deemed the best route, it is critical to the success of this new venture that the impact on their three lots be minimized. We would ask that the line be kept as far East on their property as is possible so as to not disrupt their operations. As currently shown on the maps provided, the MATL line would be located North and East of the existing transmission lines. This configuration does not represent an issue to the new plant, but relocating the line to the South and West of the existing transmission lines would likely destroy the viability of the project.

Thank you for your work on this project and your attention to this concern.

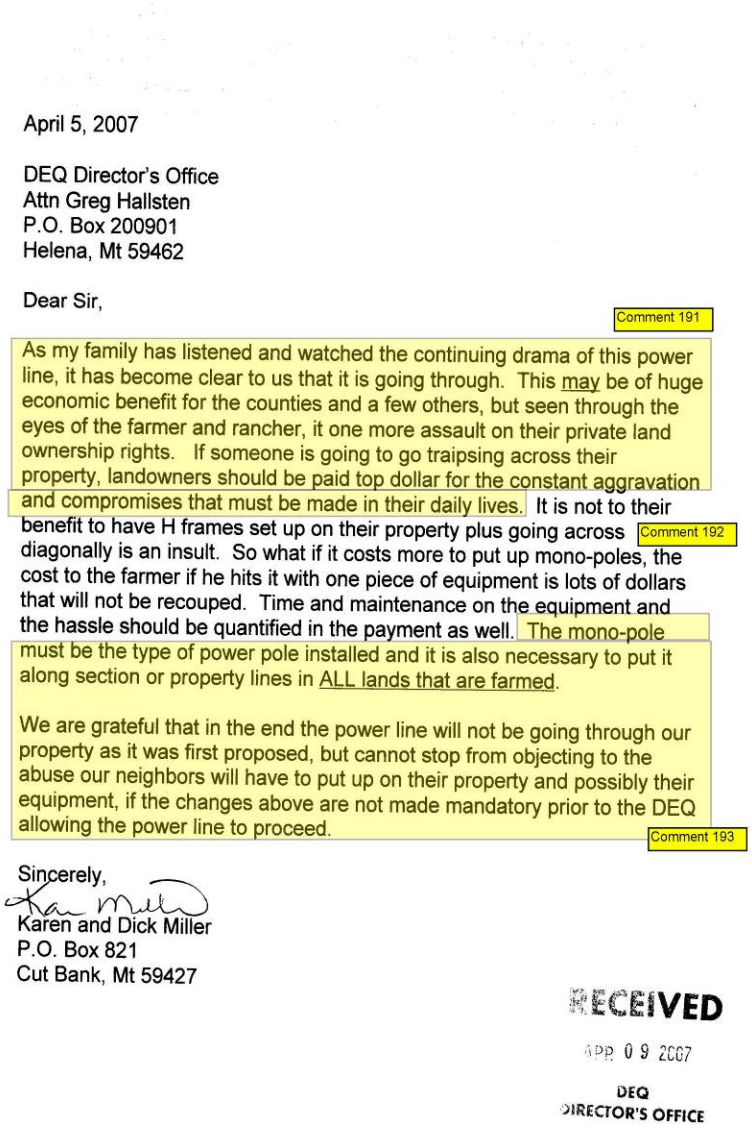
Comment 190

Joe Briggs

Cascade County Commissioner

Response 189: Comment noted.

Response 190: Comment noted. Alternative 4 remains on the north side of WAPA's Great Falls to Conrad 230-kV transmission line in this area and as a consequence crosses subdivided land. See responses to comments 37, 64, and 66.



April 5, 2007

DEQ Director's Office
Attn Greg Hallsten
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Mt 59462

Dear Sir,

Comment 191

As my family has listened and watched the continuing drama of this power line, it has become clear to us that it is going through. This may be of huge economic benefit for the counties and a few others, but seen through the eyes of the farmer and rancher, it one more assault on their private land ownership rights. If someone is going to go traipsing across their property, landowners should be paid top dollar for the constant aggravation and compromises that must be made in their daily lives. It is not to their benefit to have H frames set up on their property plus going across diagonally is an insult. So what if it costs more to put up mono-poles, the cost to the farmer if he hits it with one piece of equipment is lots of dollars that will not be recouped. Time and maintenance on the equipment and the hassle should be quantified in the payment as well. The mono-pole must be the type of power pole installed and it is also necessary to put it along section or property lines in ALL lands that are farmed.

Comment 192

Comment 193

We are grateful that in the end the power line will not be going through our property as it was first proposed, but cannot stop from objecting to the abuse our neighbors will have to put up on their property and possibly their equipment, if the changes above are not made mandatory prior to the DEQ allowing the power line to proceed.

Sincerely,

Karen and Dick Miller
P.O. Box 821
Cut Bank, Mt 59427

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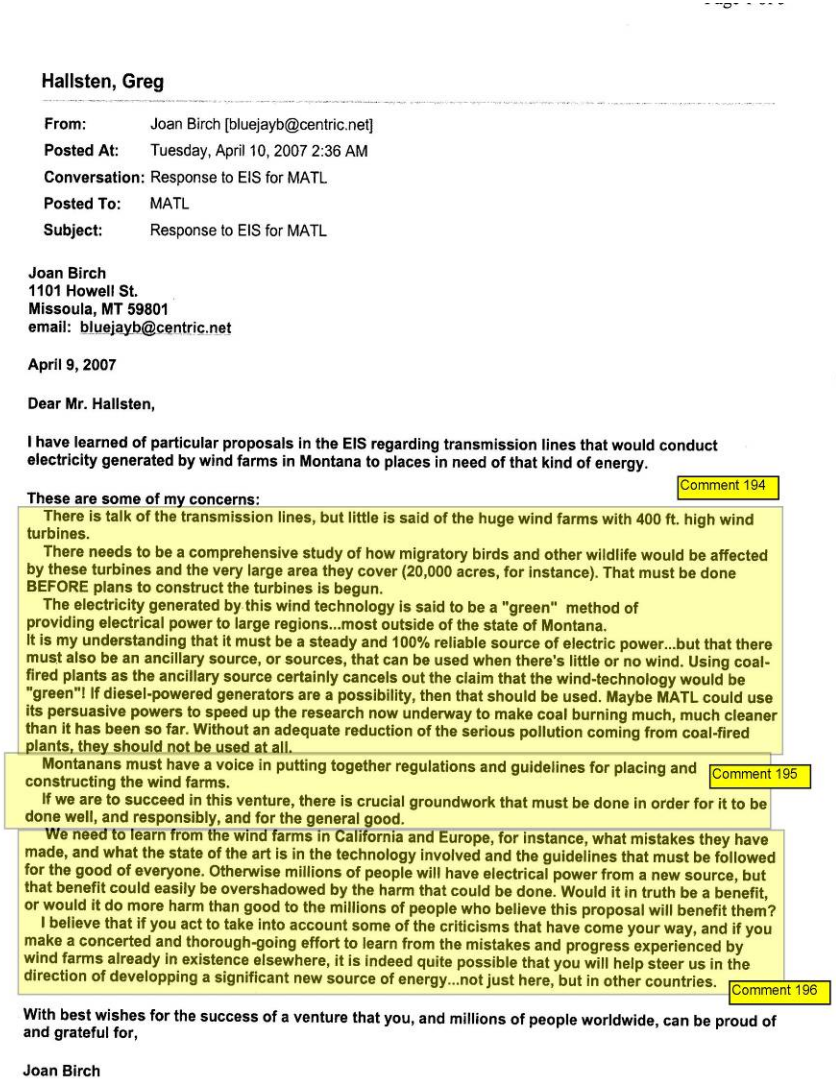
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Response 191: Comment noted.

Response 192: Section 3.13 has been revised in response to comments and describes ranges of costs to farm around single pole and H-frame structures. The additional costs of maintaining equipment that collides with a structure has not been included because no information is available on the frequency or extent of damage to equipment. However, the agencies recognize that damage does occur.

Response 193: Comment noted. Locating the line along section lines and property lines would add substantially to the cost of the line due to the extra angle structures and added length. In addition locating along section lines would increase the chances that the line would be located close to residences since many of the rural residences are located near county roads which in many cases run along section lines. In farmland, extra angles in the line would increase the difficulty of aerial spraying near the corners of the line.



Hallsten, Greg

From: Joan Birch [bluejayb@centric.net]
Posted At: Tuesday, April 10, 2007 2:36 AM
Conversation: Response to EIS for MATL
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Response to EIS for MATL

Joan Birch
1101 Howell St.
Missoula, MT 59801
email: bluejayb@centric.net

April 9, 2007

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

I have learned of particular proposals in the EIS regarding transmission lines that would conduct electricity generated by wind farms in Montana to places in need of that kind of energy.

Comment 194

These are some of my concerns:

There is talk of the transmission lines, but little is said of the huge wind farms with 400 ft. high wind turbines.

There needs to be a comprehensive study of how migratory birds and other wildlife would be affected by these turbines and the very large area they cover (20,000 acres, for instance). That must be done BEFORE plans to construct the turbines is begun.

The electricity generated by this wind technology is said to be a "green" method of providing electrical power to large regions...most outside of the state of Montana.
It is my understanding that it must be a steady and 100% reliable source of electric power...but that there must also be an ancillary source, or sources, that can be used when there's little or no wind. Using coal-fired plants as the ancillary source certainly cancels out the claim that the wind-technology would be "green"! If diesel-powered generators are a possibility, then that should be used. Maybe MATL could use its persuasive powers to speed up the research now underway to make coal burning much, much cleaner than it has been so far. Without an adequate reduction of the serious pollution coming from coal-fired plants, they should not be used at all.

Montanans must have a voice in putting together regulations and guidelines for placing and constructing the wind farms.

Comment 195

If we are to succeed in this venture, there is crucial groundwork that must be done in order for it to be done well, and responsibly, and for the general good.

We need to learn from the wind farms in California and Europe, for instance, what mistakes they have made, and what the state of the art is in the technology involved and the guidelines that must be followed for the good of everyone. Otherwise millions of people will have electrical power from a new source, but that benefit could easily be overshadowed by the harm that could be done. Would it in truth be a benefit, or would it do more harm than good to the millions of people who believe this proposal will benefit them?

I believe that if you act to take into account some of the criticisms that have come your way, and if you make a concerted and thorough-going effort to learn from the mistakes and progress experienced by wind farms already in existence elsewhere, it is indeed quite possible that you will help steer us in the direction of developping a significant new source of energy...not just here, but in other countries.

Comment 196

With best wishes for the success of a venture that you, and millions of people worldwide, can be proud of and grateful for,

Joan Birch

Response 194a: Responsibility for enforcing the Migratory Bird Treaty Act relative to bird mortality caused by wind turbines falls to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The agencies would encourage that preplanning studies of avian use be conducted prior to designing a wind farm to the extent that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recommends that such studies be conducted.

Response 194b: The market for transmission of power in Montana is designed around an hour to hour bidding process. If a wind farm operator contracts with a transmission service provider to transmit electricity to consumers, the wind farm operator will contractually arrange for a specified amount of power to be transmitted over a line for a one-hour period. The consumers will purchase and use this amount of power. In order to meet reliability standards the transmission system operator must balance the amount of power being generated and added to the transmission system with the amount of power that is being consumed and removed from the system. If the wind should suddenly drop and the wind farm cannot fulfill its contract obligation to deliver a specified amount of power within an hour, then the transmission system operator either has to add more power from other sources to the transmission system on short notice or risk upsetting the balance of power production and consumption. If the transmission system gets too far out of balance, then brownouts or blackouts are a possibility. The transmission system operator can also face monetary penalties from the Western Electricity Coordinating Council for not maintaining the proper balance. Therefore the system relies on standby generation (regulating reserves) to quickly make up or fill in for these shortfalls. Typically hydropower and gas-fired generation can ramp up quickly to fill in. Traditionally, coal-fired generation plants can be used but only to a limited

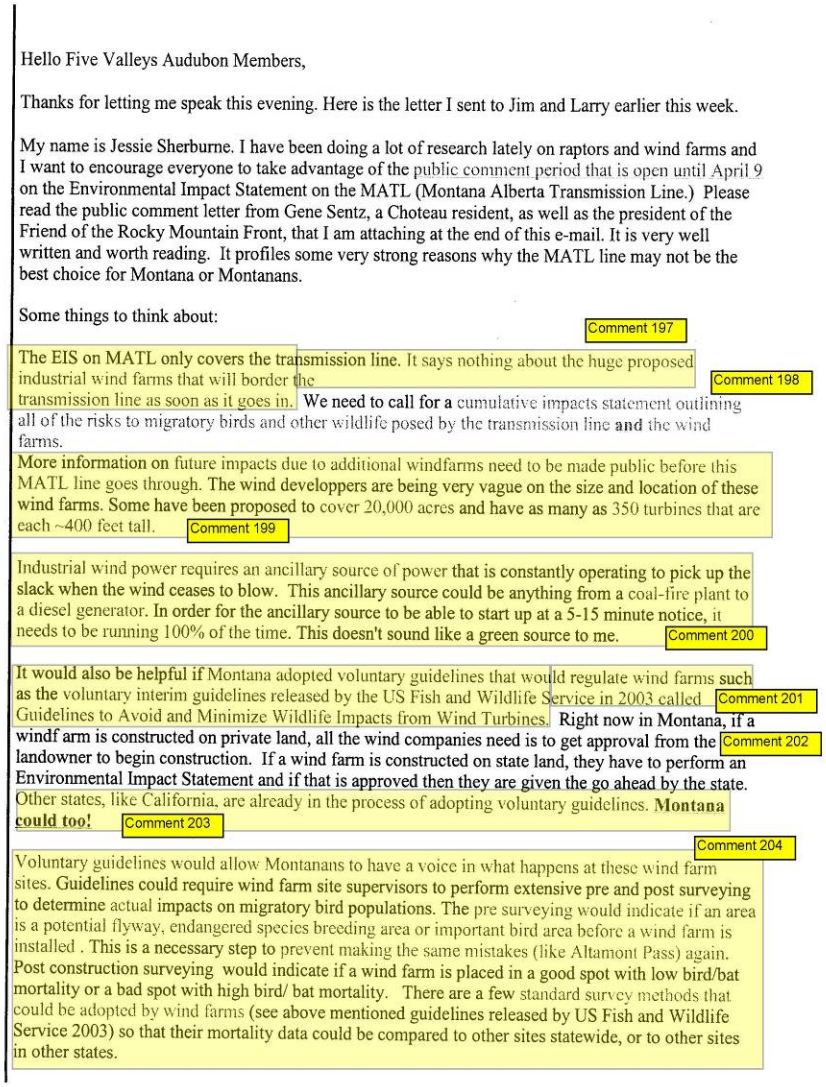
degree because it takes them longer to increase generation. Coal-fired plants are more often used to provide a solid, steady, longer term base of generation rather than responding very quickly to short term shortfalls. However the agencies understand that some developers are investigating the possibility of converting coal to a synthetic diesel fuel and using this fuel in conventional diesel generators to increase generation when the wind drops. The hydropower and gas-fired generation that are typically used for regulating reserves are 'greener' than coal generation.

The agencies understand that before MATL would interconnect with NorthWestern Energy's transmission system at Great Falls, MATL would have completed contractual arrangements with each of the wind farms the MATL line would serve, requiring the shippers (wind farms) to guarantee that they have access to and would provide the additional standby-generation needed for their individual wind farms. The sources of these regulating reserves would be up to the shippers.

See responses to comments 20 and 22. Electricity generated by other means than wind turbines could be transmitted on the MATL line, especially when there is a need to stabilize the flow of electricity in the system. The agencies cannot specify what sources of electricity can use the line. Comprehensive studies of the type suggested by the commenter are outside the scope of the EIS.

Response 195: Comment noted. The agencies do not have regulatory oversight for the siting of wind farms, therefore the agencies would not be involved in putting together regulations and guidelines for placing or constructing wind farms.

Response 196: Comment noted. While generation plants greater than 50 MW in size were once regulated under the Major Facility Siting Act, the legislature removed requirements for siting approval for most types of generation facilities, including wind farms. Thus the legislative direction given DEQ is not to be involved with regulating the siting of such generation installations.



Hello Five Valleys Audubon Members,

Thanks for letting me speak this evening. Here is the letter I sent to Jim and Larry earlier this week.

My name is Jessie Sherburne. I have been doing a lot of research lately on raptors and wind farms and I want to encourage everyone to take advantage of the public comment period that is open until April 9 on the Environmental Impact Statement on the MATL (Montana Alberta Transmission Line.) Please read the public comment letter from Gene Sentz, a Choteau resident, as well as the president of the Friend of the Rocky Mountain Front, that I am attaching at the end of this e-mail. It is very well written and worth reading. It profiles some very strong reasons why the MATL line may not be the best choice for Montana or Montanans.

Some things to think about:

Comment 197

The EIS on MATL only covers the transmission line. It says nothing about the huge proposed industrial wind farms that will border the transmission line as soon as it goes in. We need to call for a cumulative impacts statement outlining all of the risks to migratory birds and other wildlife posed by the transmission line and the wind farms.

Comment 198

More information on future impacts due to additional windfarms need to be made public before this MATL line goes through. The wind developpers are being very vague on the size and location of these wind farms. Some have been proposed to cover 20,000 acres and have as many as 350 turbines that are each ~400 feet tall.

Comment 199

Industrial wind power requires an ancillary source of power that is constantly operating to pick up the slack when the wind ceases to blow. This ancillary source could be anything from a coal-fire plant to a diesel generator. In order for the ancillary source to be able to start up at a 5-15 minute notice, it needs to be running 100% of the time. This doesn't sound like a green source to me.

Comment 200

It would also be helpful if Montana adopted voluntary guidelines that would regulate wind farms such as the voluntary interim guidelines released by the US Fish and Wildlife Service in 2003 called Guidelines to Avoid and Minimize Wildlife Impacts from Wind Turbines.

Comment 201

Right now in Montana, if a windf arm is constructed on private land, all the wind companies need is to get approval from the landowner to begin construction. If a wind farm is constructed on state land, they have to perform an Environmental Impact Statement and if that is approved then they are given the go ahead by the state.

Comment 202

Other states, like California, are already in the process of adopting voluntary guidelines. **Montana could too!**

Comment 203

Comment 204

Voluntary guidelines would allow Montanans to have a voice in what happens at these wind farm sites. Guidelines could require wind farm site supervisors to perform extensive pre and post surveying to determine actual impacts on migratory bird populations. The pre surveying would indicate if an area is a potential flyway, endangered species breeding area or important bird area before a wind farm is installed . This is a necessary step to prevent making the same mistakes (like Altamont Pass) again. Post construction surveying would indicate if a wind farm is placed in a good spot with low bird/bat mortality or a bad spot with high bird/ bat mortality. There are a few standard survey methods that could be adopted by wind farms (see above mentioned guidelines released by US Fish and Wildlife Service 2003) so that their mortality data could be compared to other sites statewide, or to other sites in other states.

Response 197: See the responses to comments 20 and 29 and Chapter 4.

Response 198: See the responses to comments 20 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 199: See responses to comments 20, 22, 29 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

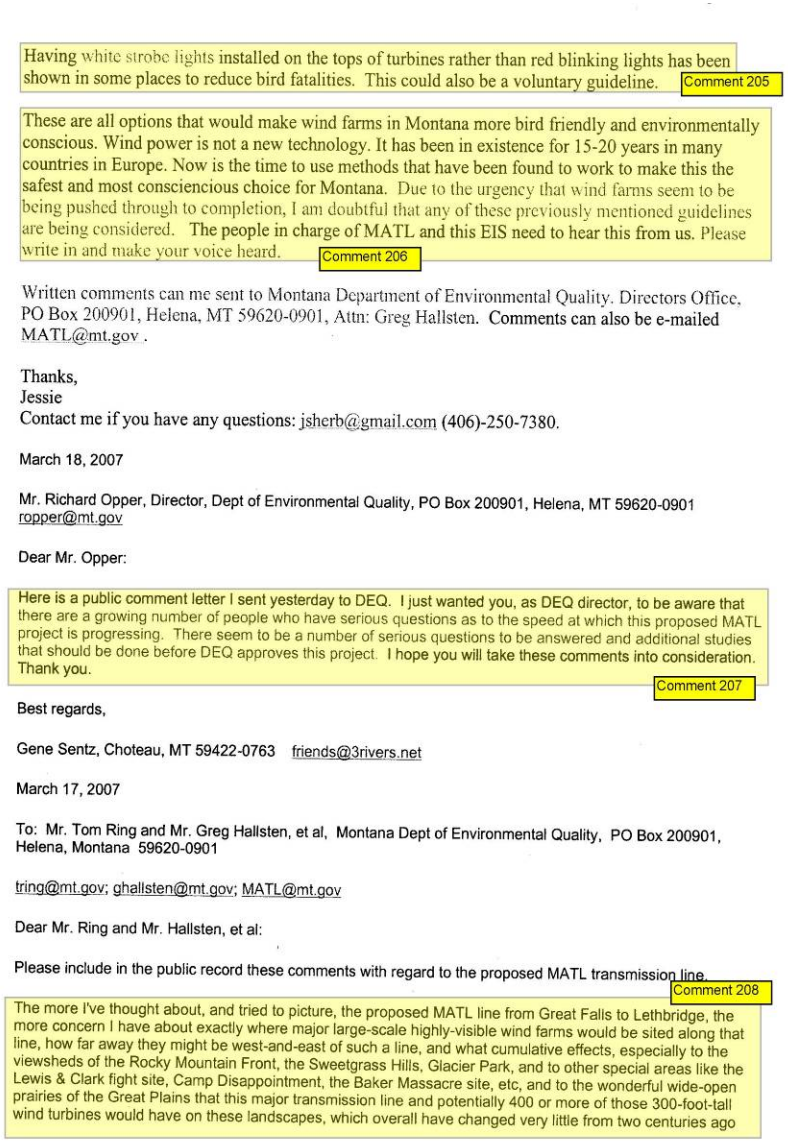
Response 200: See response to comment 194.

Response 201: With other voluntary guidelines such as those developed by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in place and no legislative direction to be involved with regulating siting and design of wind farms, the agencies have no role in developing guidelines for wind farms. See response to comment 196 for a discussion of legislative direction and related comment 240. The desire for development of guidelines for development of wind farms has been referred to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Montana's wildlife management agency.

Response 202: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 for a list of potential permits and regulatory approvals. If a state permit or approval is required, then the permitting agency has the responsibility to review the project under the Montana Environmental Policy Act. This review may take the form of an environmental assessment if there is no potential for significant adverse impacts or an environmental impact statement if the agency finds there are potentially significant adverse impacts. If no permits are required, then there would be no environmental review.

Response 203: Comment noted. Refer to the response to comment 201 as well.

Response 204: By their very nature guidelines are recommendations that others can voluntarily adopt. Guidelines cannot require anybody to do anything. The comments correctly indicate that guidelines have been developed relative to pre-planning studies of bird populations and their movements in the vicinity of wind farms. Voluntary guidelines could be developed by agencies with some mission or authority on a topic, for example wildlife guidelines by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks or siting on state land by the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. DEQ does not have this responsibility, so probably would not be involved with guideline development unless directed by the Governor's office. Another set of voluntary guidelines would not guarantee that the public has any role.



Having white strobe lights installed on the tops of turbines rather than red blinking lights has been shown in some places to reduce bird fatalities. This could also be a voluntary guideline. Comment 205

These are all options that would make wind farms in Montana more bird friendly and environmentally conscious. Wind power is not a new technology. It has been in existence for 15-20 years in many countries in Europe. Now is the time to use methods that have been found to work to make this the safest and most consciencious choice for Montana. Due to the urgency that wind farms seem to be being pushed through to completion, I am doubtful that any of these previously mentioned guidelines are being considered. The people in charge of MATL and this EIS need to hear this from us. Please write in and make your voice heard. Comment 206

Written comments can me sent to Montana Department of Environmental Quality. Directors Office, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901, Attn: Greg Hallsten. Comments can also be e-mailed MATL@mt.gov .

Thanks,
Jessie
Contact me if you have any questions: jsherb@gmail.com (406)-250-7380.

March 18, 2007

Mr. Richard Opper, Director, Dept of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901
ropper@mt.gov

Dear Mr. Opper:

Here is a public comment letter I sent yesterday to DEQ. I just wanted you, as DEQ director, to be aware that there are a growing number of people who have serious questions as to the speed at which this proposed MATL project is progressing. There seem to be a number of serious questions to be answered and additional studies that should be done before DEQ approves this project. I hope you will take these comments into consideration. Thank you. Comment 207

Best regards,

Gene Sentz, Choteau, MT 59422-0763 friends@3rivers.net

March 17, 2007

To: Mr. Tom Ring and Mr. Greg Hallsten, et al, Montana Dept of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901

tring@mt.gov; ghallsten@mt.gov; MATL@mt.gov

Dear Mr. Ring and Mr. Hallsten, et al:

Please include in the public record these comments with regard to the proposed MATL transmission line. Comment 208

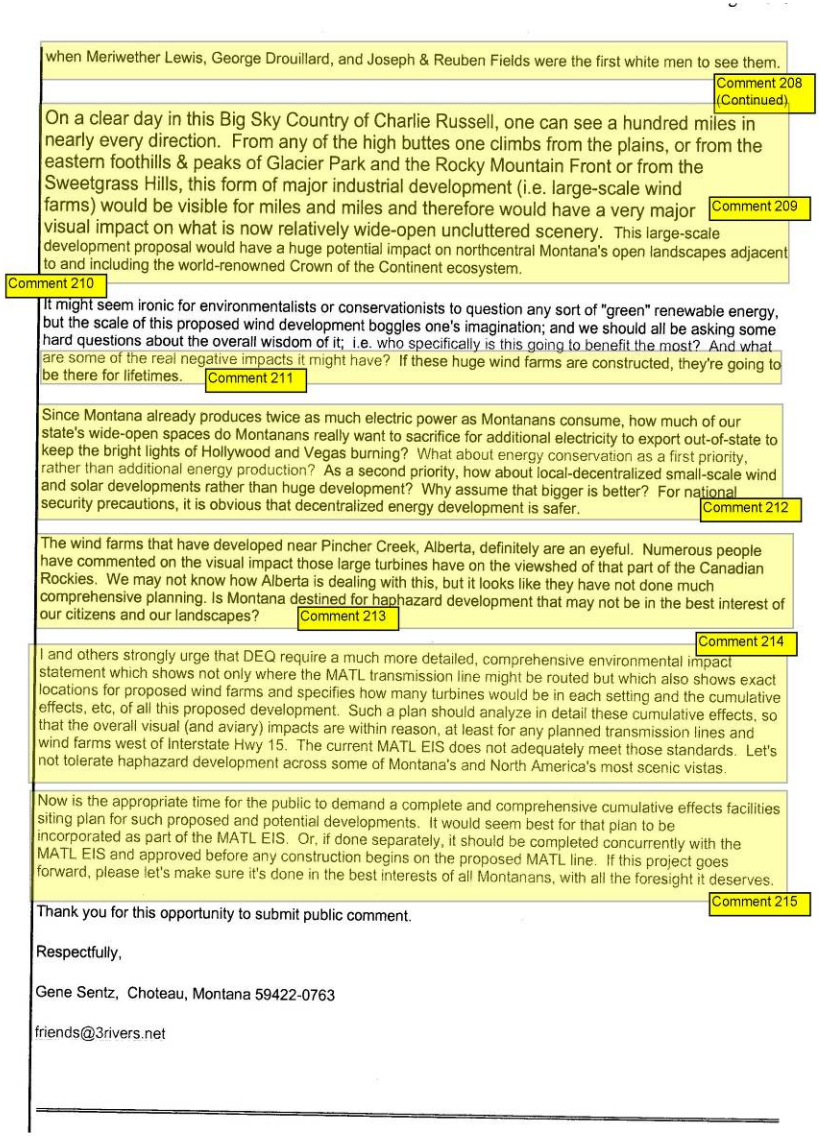
The more I've thought about, and tried to picture, the proposed MATL line from Great Falls to Lethbridge, the more concern I have about exactly where major large-scale highly-visible wind farms would be sited along that line, how far away they might be west-and-east of such a line, and what cumulative effects, especially to the viewsheds of the Rocky Mountain Front, the Sweetgrass Hills, Glacier Park, and to other special areas like the Lewis & Clark fight site, Camp Disappointment, the Baker Massacre site, etc, and to the wonderful wide-open prairies of the Great Plains that this major transmission line and potentially 400 or more of those 300-foot-tall wind turbines would have on these landscapes, which overall have changed very little from two centuries ago

Response 205: Comment noted.

Response 206: Comment noted. Naturener USA (formerly Great Plains Wind and Energy), one of the firms with interconnection agreements with MATL, has indicated to the agencies that some pre-construction avian studies have been completed where it is planning to build a wind farm. Invenergy plans to complete necessary avian studies when its projects are further along. Wind Hunter's intentions are unknown.

Response 207: Comment noted.

Response 208: See responses to comments 28 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.



when Meriwether Lewis, George Drouillard, and Joseph & Reuben Fields were the first white men to see them.

Comment 208 (Continued)

On a clear day in this Big Sky Country of Charlie Russell, one can see a hundred miles in nearly every direction. From any of the high buttes one climbs from the plains, or from the eastern foothills & peaks of Glacier Park and the Rocky Mountain Front or from the Sweetgrass Hills, this form of major industrial development (i.e. large-scale wind farms) would be visible for miles and miles and therefore would have a very major visual impact on what is now relatively wide-open uncluttered scenery. This large-scale development proposal would have a huge potential impact on northcentral Montana's open landscapes adjacent to and including the world-renowned Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

Comment 209

Comment 210

It might seem ironic for environmentalists or conservationists to question any sort of "green" renewable energy, but the scale of this proposed wind development boggles one's imagination; and we should all be asking some hard questions about the overall wisdom of it; i.e. who specifically is this going to benefit the most? And what are some of the real negative impacts it might have? If these huge wind farms are constructed, they're going to be there for lifetimes.

Comment 211

Since Montana already produces twice as much electric power as Montanans consume, how much of our state's wide-open spaces do Montanans really want to sacrifice for additional electricity to export out-of-state to keep the bright lights of Hollywood and Vegas burning? What about energy conservation as a first priority, rather than additional energy production? As a second priority, how about local-decentralized small-scale wind and solar developments rather than huge development? Why assume that bigger is better? For national security precautions, it is obvious that decentralized energy development is safer.

Comment 212

The wind farms that have developed near Pincher Creek, Alberta, definitely are an eyeful. Numerous people have commented on the visual impact those large turbines have on the viewshed of that part of the Canadian Rockies. We may not know how Alberta is dealing with this, but it looks like they have not done much comprehensive planning. Is Montana destined for haphazard development that may not be in the best interest of our citizens and our landscapes?

Comment 213

Comment 214

I and others strongly urge that DEQ require a much more detailed, comprehensive environmental impact statement which shows not only where the MATL transmission line might be routed but which also shows exact locations for proposed wind farms and specifies how many turbines would be in each setting and the cumulative effects, etc, of all this proposed development. Such a plan should analyze in detail these cumulative effects, so that the overall visual (and aviary) impacts are within reason, at least for any planned transmission lines and wind farms west of Interstate Hwy 15. The current MATL EIS does not adequately meet those standards. Let's not tolerate haphazard development across some of Montana's and North America's most scenic vistas.

Now is the appropriate time for the public to demand a complete and comprehensive cumulative effects facilities siting plan for such proposed and potential developments. It would seem best for that plan to be incorporated as part of the MATL EIS. Or, if done separately, it should be completed concurrently with the MATL EIS and approved before any construction begins on the proposed MATL line. If this project goes forward, please let's make sure it's done in the best interests of all Montanans, with all the foresight it deserves.

Comment 215

Thank you for this opportunity to submit public comment.

Respectfully,

Gene Sentz, Choteau, Montana 59422-0763

friends@3rivers.net

Response 209: Comment noted. See responses to comments 20, 28, and 29 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 for more information.

Response 210: Electricity generated and/or transmitted as a result of MATL's proposed line would be sold on the open power market, and not necessarily sold to Montana customers. The benefits and costs of MATL to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13.

Response 211: The opinion on the lifespan of wind turbines is noted. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 and responses to comments 20 and 28.

Response 212: Under the Major Facility Siting Act, DEQ must respond to proposals that come under its regulatory authority including major transmission lines and pipelines. If DEQ finds and determines that a proposed facility as proposed or as modified, or an alternative, meets the requirements of the Act, it must be approved. Permitting authority over most electricity generation facilities, including wind farms, is no longer covered by the Act, at the direction of the legislature. The electricity generation capacity of present or future energy developments is outside DEQ's legal jurisdiction or control. Also see response to comment 97.

Response 213: The agencies have no regulatory oversight over wind farm siting. It is possible that few if any state permits would be necessary if a project were proposed on private land with no stream or wetland crossings or encroachments. Persons interested in preventing haphazard development of wind farms would need to make their concerns known to developers as wind farms are sited and planned.

Response 214: See responses to comments 20, 22, and 213.

Response 215: See the revised discussion cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance
P.O. Box 181
East Glacier Park, MT 59434
April 2, 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Hallsten:

Please include the following comments in the official comment record for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.'s 230-kV Transmission Line Project.

Our organization represents people who are concerned with environmental issues on public and private lands that adjoin Glacier National Park and the Rocky Mountain Front part of the Lewis and Clark National Forest. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this matter. In general, we support the use of innovative renewable energy sources such as wind-power. However, we have concerns about the proposed transmission line in question.

We are concerned about this project for the following reasons:

1. The Environmental Impact Statement doesn't go far enough to address the far-ranging future effects of this transmission line. It is a given that future wind power and coal-fired power plants will be developed as a result of this powerline. Considering the environmental effects solely for the transmission line is analogous to considering the effects of a logging access road without considering the effects of the timber it will lead to harvesting. We feel that the transmission line and its associated power development should be considered together in this document.

Comment 216

2. Montana's Rocky Mountain Front and associated foothills offer world-class scenery and serve as the basis for a healthy tourist industry. Uncontrolled development of wind farms, powerlines and coal-fired generating plants would degrade this priceless resource.

Comment 217

3. It is known that the Rocky Mountain Front and associated foothills serve as a migratory corridor for raptors migrating in the spring and fall. It also serves to funnel waterfowl such as snow geese and tundra swans and songbirds migrating along the Front. Great improvement has been made in the design of wind turbines to make them less hazardous for birds of all kinds. However, they still account for bird mortality. This danger should also be assessed in the EIS.

Comment 218

Response 216: It is likely that wind farms would be developed as a result of the proposed transmission line since three wind energy companies currently hold capacity agreements with MATL. Because of these contracts for transmission line capacity with MATL, the agencies believe that some wind farms are likely to be built over the next two years, though few details are available. Wind farms do not come under the agencies' regulatory authority. These proposed wind farms would account for all of the firm capacity on the proposed line. Consequently, it is speculative to say that new coal-fired plants would be developed that would be dependent on a line where they do not have firm contractual rights to move the power from the plants to markets. There is one coal plant proposed in the MATL area, but it was not proposed because of the MATL project. There is no indication that other electricity generation will be stimulated by the MATL project. See the revised discussions of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 and responses to comments 20, 22, and 212.

Response 217: Comment noted. See response to comment 216 above relative to the development of coal-fired generation plants.

Response 218: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

4. The siting of towers and powerpoles should be done in a way that has the least impact on farming activities. It appears, judging from the opinion of many of the landowners at the Great Falls meeting that this could be done better.

Comment 219

5. Since it is acknowledged that Montana is already is already producing enough power for its inhabitants, it is questionable as to whether this project is for the public good or solely for the profit of private industry.

Comment 220

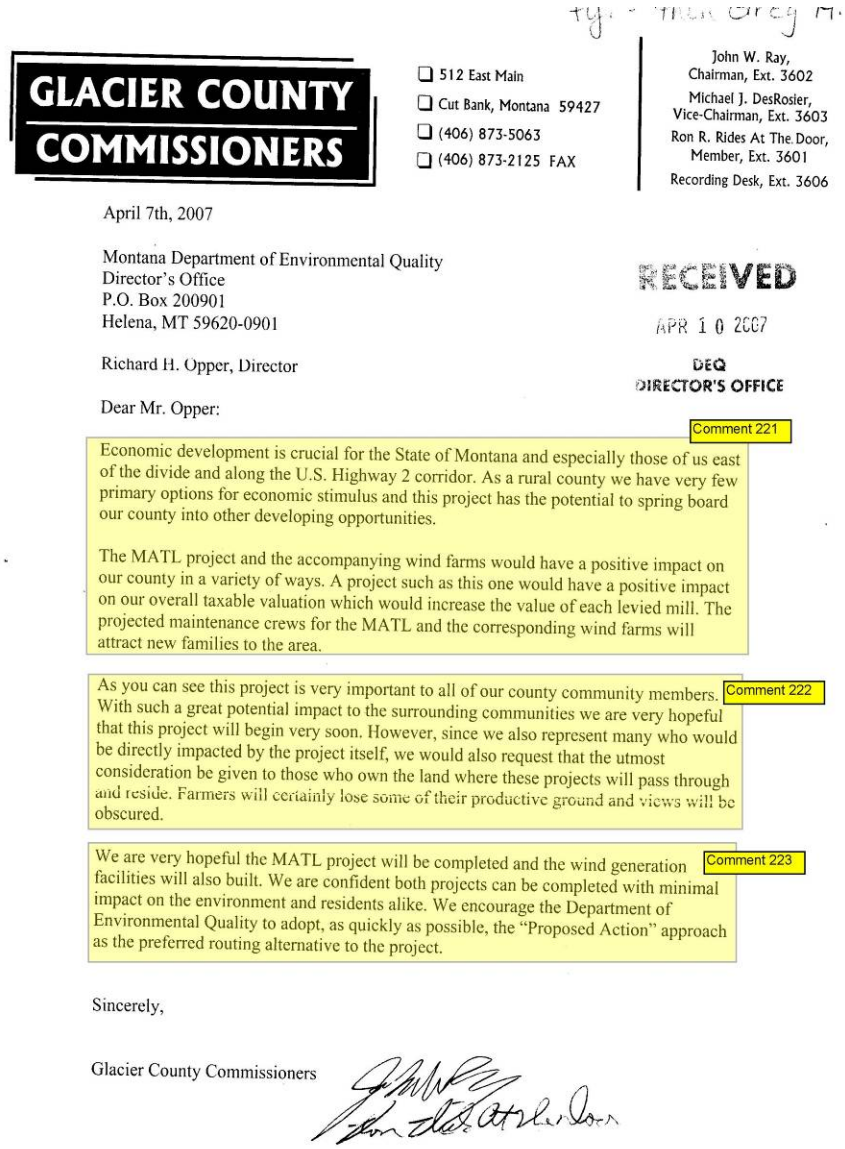
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this matter.

Sincerely,

Louis Bruno, President
Glacier-Two Medicine Alliance

Response 219: Comment noted.

Response 220: The benefits and cost of MATL to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13.



GLACIER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

512 East Main
Cut Bank, Montana 59427
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(406) 873-2125 FAX

John W. Ray, Chairman, Ext. 3602
Michael J. DesRosier, Vice-Chairman, Ext. 3603
Ron R. Rides At The Door, Member, Ext. 3601
Recording Desk, Ext. 3606

April 7th, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

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DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Richard H. Opper, Director

Dear Mr. Opper:

Comment 221

Economic development is crucial for the State of Montana and especially those of us east of the divide and along the U.S. Highway 2 corridor. As a rural county we have very few primary options for economic stimulus and this project has the potential to spring board our county into other developing opportunities.

The MATL project and the accompanying wind farms would have a positive impact on our county in a variety of ways. A project such as this one would have a positive impact on our overall taxable valuation which would increase the value of each levied mill. The projected maintenance crews for the MATL and the corresponding wind farms will attract new families to the area.

Comment 222

As you can see this project is very important to all of our county community members. With such a great potential impact to the surrounding communities we are very hopeful that this project will begin very soon. However, since we also represent many who would be directly impacted by the project itself, we would also request that the utmost consideration be given to those who own the land where these projects will pass through and reside. Farmers will certainly lose some of their productive ground and views will be obscured.

Comment 223

We are very hopeful the MATL project will be completed and the wind generation facilities will also built. We are confident both projects can be completed with minimal impact on the environment and residents alike. We encourage the Department of Environmental Quality to adopt, as quickly as possible, the "Proposed Action" approach as the preferred routing alternative to the project.

Sincerely,

Glacier County Commissioners

Response 221: Comment noted.

Response 222: Comment noted.

Response 223: Comment noted.

April 8, 2007
3015 Acacia Way
Great Falls, MT

Greg Hallsten
Dept of Environmental Quality
Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

Comment 224

The Great Falls Tribune had a map of the proposed Alberta power line. I think the line should be on the east side of Interstate 15. The motto of the state is "Big Sky." We will have to change it to "little sky," if we have an obstructed view of the Rocky Mountains.

Sincerely,

J Fisher

Joanne Fisher

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APR 10 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Response 224: Comment noted. All of the alternatives carried forward for detailed consideration remain on the east side of Interstate 15 from Great Falls to just north of Brady. Alternative 4 would cross to the west side of the interstate about 11 miles north of alternatives 2 and 3. All the alternatives have to cross to the west side of the interstate to reach the proposed border crossing. With respect to visual impacts, see response to comment 182. Although both the transmission line and wind turbines would introduce strong linear elements into viewed landscapes, is unlikely these structures would conceal or hide surrounding mountain ranges.

Hallsten, Greg

From: drexler@ntsg.umt.edu
Posted At: Tuesday, April 10, 2007 11:38 AM
Conversation: wind farms & transmission line MATL EIS.
Posted To: MATL

Subject: wind farms & transmission line MATL EIS.

Mr. Greg Hallsten, Director's Office, Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Please accept these comments on the proposed wind farms & transmission line MATL [redacted] Comment 225

One of my main concerns is that Montana's rural landscapes are not transformed into industrial-style energy production lands for wind, oil & gas and coal. The cumulative impacts that development would bring to rural Montana would be forever changind to the rural values of Montana. I see rural lifestyles being sacrificed and attacked all over our country, and I don't support this! The rural areas don't have the large population, and shouldn't have to pay the price to support overconsumptive populaces elsewhere.

I ask that before the MATL line is approved, DEQ and DOE should complete a broad regional programmatic EIS that addresses all aspects of wind farm & transmission and other energy development in northcentral Montana, including general areas that should or shouldn't be developed; long-term projections of overall cumulative impacts such as habitat fragmentation; economic disadvantages for Montanans compared to benefits to heavily subsidized wealthy corporations; private property rights & eminent domain & devaluation of neighboring property; guidelines & stipulations for the long-term & regulatory oversight; etc. Comment 226

DEQ should guarantee full public participation in siting decisions for locating all future wind farms and transmission lines. For example, let's keep proposed industrial-scale wind farms and transmission lines near Interstate Hwy 15, well east of the Rocky Mountain Front, to protect the viewshed of some of the most spectacular undeveloped scenery in North America. Comment 227

Once built, these structures are going to be there for lifetimes. Comment 228
As one local farmer commented at the public hearings, "Get it right the first time, or don't build it at all."

David Mildrexler
PO Box 7634
Missoula, MT 59807

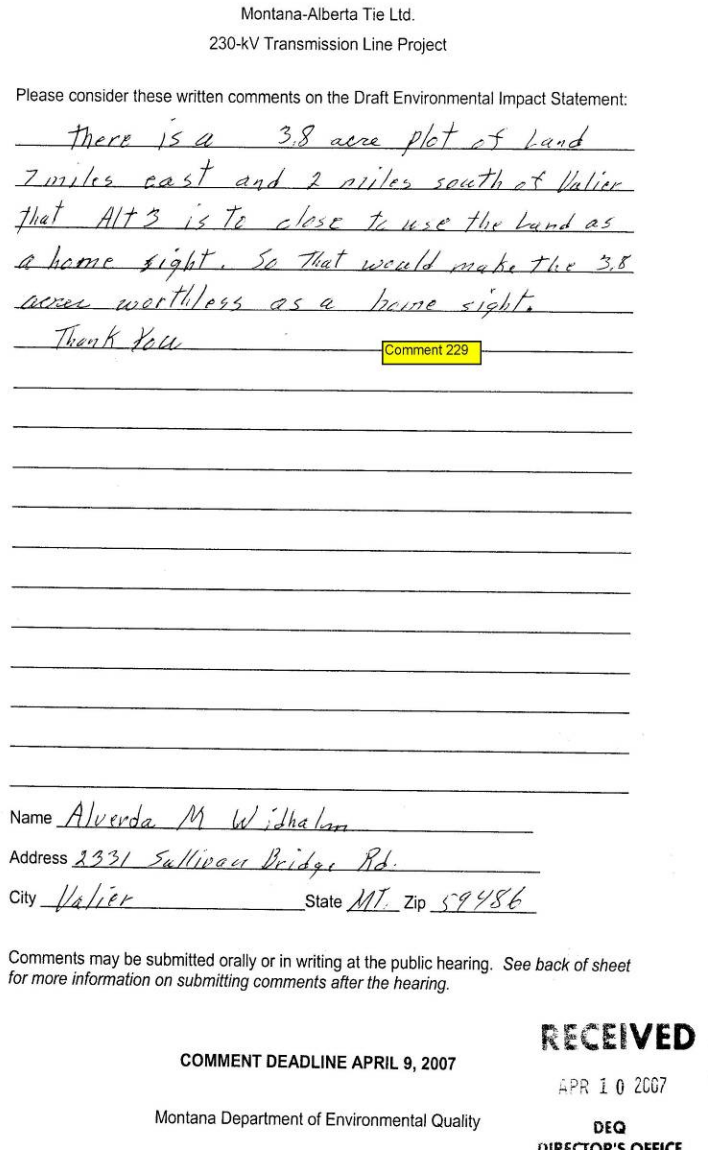
1

Response 225: Thank you for your opinion. See the revised discussions of cumulative impacts in Section4.1.

Response 226: See the revised discussions of cumulative impacts in response to comment 24 and in Chapter 4.

Response 227: Because the Montana legislature has removed DEQ's regulatory authority over the siting of most types of generation facilities, including wind farms, unless wind farm developers provide a public involvement process in their site selection or unless the wind farms would be located on public land, members of the public are not likely to have much input in wind farm location. See response to comment 23. Your comment on the location of wind farms is noted.

Response 228: Comment noted.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

there is a 3.8 acre plot of land 2 miles east and 2 miles south of Valier that Alt 3 is to close to use the land as a home sight. So that would make the 3.8 acres worthless as a home sight.
Thank You

Comment 229

Name Alverda M Widhalm
Address 2331 Sullivan Bridge Rd.
City Valier State MT. Zip 59486

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 9, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

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DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Response 229: Where Alternative 3 passes next to this parcel, it would parallel the existing NorthWestern Energy Great Falls to Cut Bank 115-kV line. Neither the existing line nor the proposed line would preclude use of the 3.8 acres for a future home site. If a residence were present on this parcel, it would have Alternative 3 visible in the immediate foreground (within ¼ mile), similar to 34 existing residences along Alternative 3.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Gene & Linda Sentz [friends@3rivers.net]

Posted At: Wednesday, April 11, 2007 4:46 PM

Conversation: Please include this article as part of the official public comment for the proposed MATL transmission line

Posted To: MATL

Subject: Please include this article as part of the official public comment for the proposed MATL transmission line

Mr. Ring, Mr. Hallsten, et al: Comment 230

Thank you for extending the public comment period for MATL until April 30.

The article below about many Californians' dismay over power line construction through wildlife preserves and national forest is directly related to many Montanans' concerns about the proposed MATL transmission line and the potential large-scale windfarms it would spawn in the future, possibly along Montana's incomparably scenic Rocky Mountain Front and Glacier Park, the Crown of the Continent.

Please include this article as part of the official public comment for the MATL line.

Please address the issue of how maximum public involvement can occur in the siting of all future proposed windfarm locations.

Thank you,

Gene Sentz
Choteau, MT 59422-0763

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http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-lapower9apr09,0,5023301.story?coll=la-home-headlines

California 'Green' project makes critics see red

The DWP's proposed energy corridor, to bring nonpolluting power to L.A., would traverse a national forest and wildlife preserves.
By Janet Wilson
Los Angeles Times Staff Writer

April 9, 2007

Highlighting the environmental pitfalls of harnessing "green" energy, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa's push to import nonpolluting power to Los Angeles could require building power lines and transmission towers through a national forest, two desert wildlife preserves and a rustic hamlet used in countless westerns.

According to the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the 85-mile-long "Green Path" energy corridor designed to bring solar, geothermal and nuclear power from southeastern California and Arizona would slice across the Big Morongo Wildlife Preserve north of Palm Springs, Pioneertown near Yucca Valley, Pipes Canyon Wilderness Preserve and a corner of the San Bernardino National Forest before crossing over the Cajon Pass and connecting with existing power lines in Hesperia.

More than a dozen preservation and community groups have condemned the mayor and DWP for a plan that they say would destroy priceless vistas, natural areas and wildlife corridors.

"Not only is such energy consumption not 'green,' it is unacceptable under any name.... The ends cannot justify the means," Justin Augustine of the Center for Biological Diversity said in a letter to Villaraigosa last week.

City officials are up against tough new state laws and self-imposed deadlines to replace highly polluting coal-fired power with renewable energy produced by geothermal, wind and solar generators in the Imperial Valley, the Tehachapi Mountains in Kern County and elsewhere.

Villaraigosa did not return calls for comment. DWP commission President David Nahai insisted that no final decisions on a route had been made.

"This project is very much environmentally at its beginning stages," Nahai said.

The anger over the proposed route underscores challenges nationwide over how to ship wind, sun and steam power from remote rural reaches to booming urban centers.

"People do not like the way power lines look," said George Douglas, spokesman for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the research arm of the U.S. Department of Energy.

He said vast amounts of renewable resources exist across the country. Enough wind turbines could be built in North Dakota to power Chicago. One hundred square miles of desert solar panels in California, Nevada or New Mexico could power most of the United States.

But, Douglas said, "the chances it's going to happen are zero, because nobody's going to build the transmission lines. They're great big things that cost a lot of money, and people don't like them. They are unsightly — there's no two ways about it — and when you build them, they definitely disturb the land."

In Los Angeles, Villaraigosa said last year that he wanted to make the sprawling metropolis "the greenest city and cleanest city in America" and was pushing aggressively for 20% of the city's power to be renewable by 2010. Officials also chose not to renew a contract with a Utah coal plant that provides more than 40% of the city's power. That pact will expire in 2023.

The proposed Green Path is a key piece of the mayor's strategy. High-voltage lines in the transmission corridor would ship 800 megawatts of geothermal and solar power from near the Salton Sea and 400 megawatts of nuclear power from Arizona — enough to meet 10% of the city's current energy needs.

DWP officials said they decided on a "preferred alternative" in December after studying possible routes for more than a year. They said the route they chose would be the least intrusive to existing homes, tribal lands, national parks and wilderness areas.

Environmentalists scoffed at that claim. "We were just shocked," preservationist David Myers said of his reaction after looking at a map of the route.

Myers is head of The Wildlands Conservancy, a nonprofit group that has spent $50 million assembling private wildlife corridors and preserves close to Joshua Tree National Park, the San Bernardino National Forest and elsewhere, including Pipes Canyon.

Myers accused city officials of secretly planning the route, saying that conservationists learned about it two weeks ago from a staff member of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management.

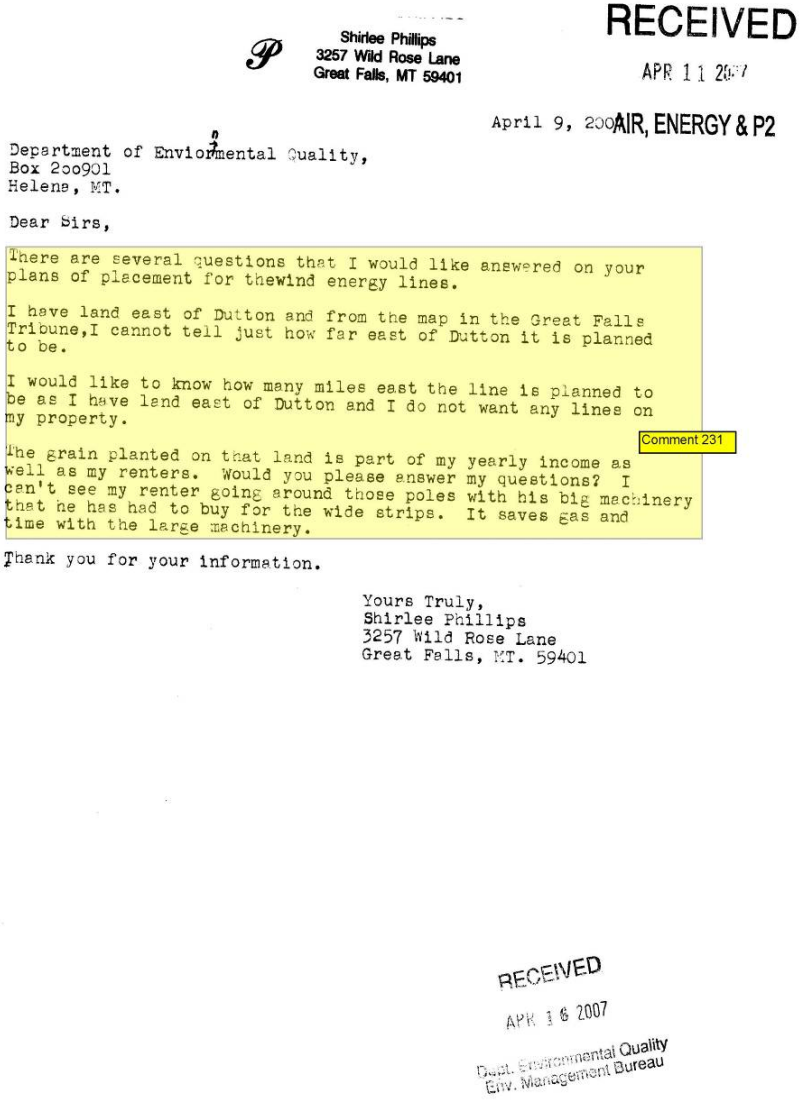
Nahai said there was no attempt at secrecy but acknowledged that Myers had a point. "I think we need to do a better job of outreach and a better job of communication," he said. "This is a new, environmentally committed administration. What we're trying to do is to diversify away from filthy coal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and do it in a way that is environmentally protective."

The DWP staff members said that there would be extensive public hearings before a final decision was made, and that they might "tweak" the map to try to move it away from the Pipes Canyon preserve, Pioneertown and the surrounding Sawtooth Mountains, which provided the backdrop for "The Cisco Kid" and many other western television shows and movies.

But Nahai added that no matter what route was chosen, there would be some environmental damage caused by the project. He said the priority was obtaining clean, renewable energy on a citywide basis to reduce greenhouse gases and other air pollution, as well as meeting power needs.

"Failure is not an option," he said. "What I can commit is that the department will do its utmost to minimize

Response 230: Thank you for the information. The articles have been added to the record. Also see response to comment 22.



Shirlee Phillips
3257 Wild Rose Lane
Great Falls, MT 59401

RECEIVED
APR 11 2007
AIR, ENERGY & P2

April 9, 2007

Department of Enviornmental Quality,
Box 200901
Helena, MT.

Dear Sirs,

There are several questions that I would like answered on your plans of placement for thewind energy lines.

I have land east of Dutton and from the map in the Great Falls Tribune,I cannot tell just how far east of Dutton it is planned to be.

I would like to know how many miles east the line is planned to be as I have land east of Dutton and I do not want any lines on my property.

Comment 231

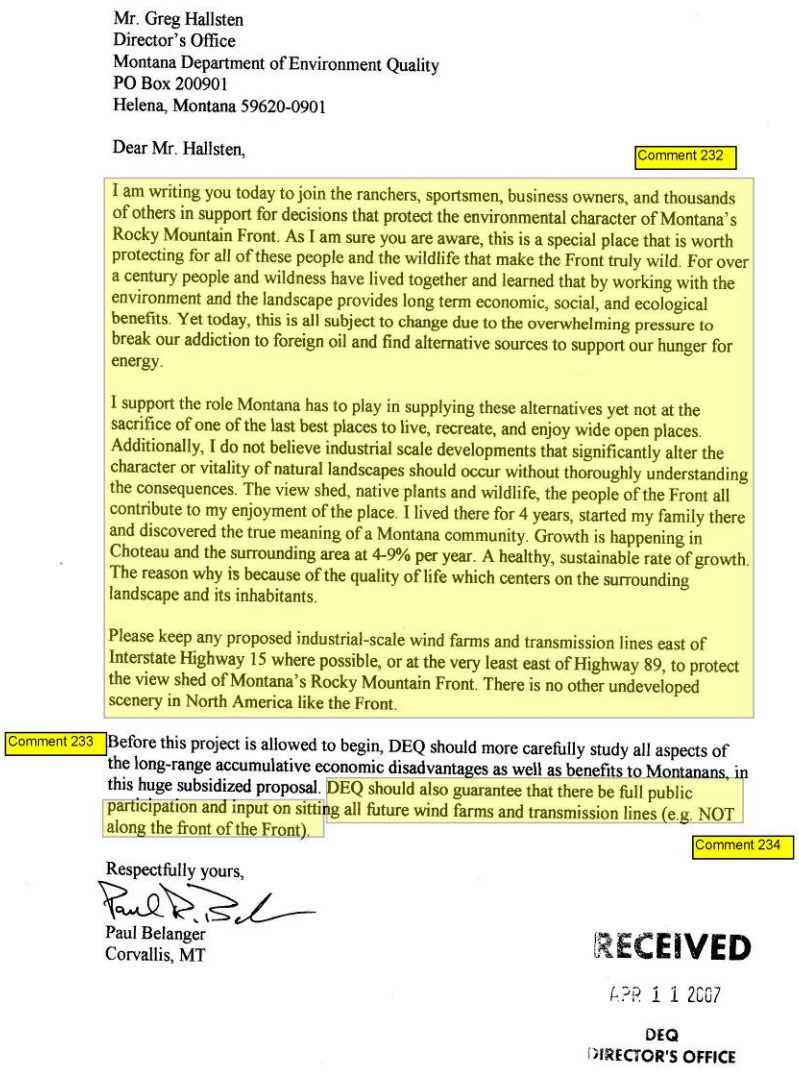
The grain planted on that land is part of my yearly income as well as my renters. Would you please answer my questions? I can't see my renter going around those poles with his big machinery that he has had to buy for the wide strips. It saves gas and time with the large machinery.

Thank you for your information.

Yours Truly,
Shirlee Phillips
3257 Wild Rose Lane
Great Falls, MT. 59401

RECEIVED
APR 16 2007
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Response 231: The commenter was provided a map by DEQ on May 7, 2007. Alternatives 2 and 4 are approximately nine miles directly east of Dutton. Alternative 3 is approximately 12 miles directly east of Dutton.



Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environment Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

Comment 232

I am writing you today to join the ranchers, sportsmen, business owners, and thousands of others in support for decisions that protect the environmental character of Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. As I am sure you are aware, this is a special place that is worth protecting for all of these people and the wildlife that make the Front truly wild. For over a century people and wildness have lived together and learned that by working with the environment and the landscape provides long term economic, social, and ecological benefits. Yet today, this is all subject to change due to the overwhelming pressure to break our addiction to foreign oil and find alternative sources to support our hunger for energy.

I support the role Montana has to play in supplying these alternatives yet not at the sacrifice of one of the last best places to live, recreate, and enjoy wide open places. Additionally, I do not believe industrial scale developments that significantly alter the character or vitality of natural landscapes should occur without thoroughly understanding the consequences. The view shed, native plants and wildlife, the people of the Front all contribute to my enjoyment of the place. I lived there for 4 years, started my family there and discovered the true meaning of a Montana community. Growth is happening in Choteau and the surrounding area at 4-9% per year. A healthy, sustainable rate of growth. The reason why is because of the quality of life which centers on the surrounding landscape and its inhabitants.

Please keep any proposed industrial-scale wind farms and transmission lines east of Interstate Highway 15 where possible, or at the very least east of Highway 89, to protect the view shed of Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. There is no other undeveloped scenery in North America like the Front.

Comment 233

Before this project is allowed to begin, DEQ should more carefully study all aspects of the long-range accumulative economic disadvantages as well as benefits to Montanans, in this huge subsidized proposal. DEQ should also guarantee that there be full public participation and input on sitting all future wind farms and transmission lines (e.g. NOT along the front of the Front).

Comment 234

Respectfully yours,

Paul Belanger
Corvallis, MT

RECEIVED
APR 11 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Response 232: Thank you for your comments. The agencies do not have legal authority to prohibit construction of wind farms in any areas. However, the agencies are not aware of any planned wind farms that would connect directly with the MATL project that would be built west of Highway 89. The wind farms that we have heard of that may interconnect with MATL's line and locations where anemometers have been seen, possibly indicating an interest in wind farms, are generally located between Highway 89 and Interstate 15 outside the Blackfeet Indian Reservation from the Conrad area northward. See Chapter 4 for more information.

In the Cut Bank area, the proposed line and McCormick Ranch wind farm, although located west of Interstate 15, would still be more than 50 miles from the eastern edge of Glacier National Park. This is beyond the range of visibility for wind farms from viewpoints in the park, as indicated in the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Section 4.16.

Response 233: Impacts from wind farm development are described in the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4. Benefits and costs of the line are described in Sections 3.13 and 3.17.

Response 234: See response to comment 227.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Gene & Linda Sentz [friends@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Thursday, April 12, 2007 10:05 PM
Conversation: Comment on MATL - article from Montana Wildlife newsletter
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Comment on MATL - article from Montana Wildlife newsletter

Dear Tom & DEQ,
Please make this article and my comments about it a part of the public record for the proposed MATL line.
Thank you,
Gene Sentz, Choteau

To Craig Sharpe, author of the article below...
Craig,
Thanks for this excellent article. I'm glad you mentioned large industrial-scale windfarms --"great giant windmills"-- and "high power transmission lines," along with fossil fuel development, and thanks for remembering the Rocky Mountain Front.
Before a gold-rush-style of energy development occurs in Montana, a broad programmatic EIS should address the long-term cumulative impacts of industrializing the various large regions of our great state. The nation has to develop energy, but it should be done right, with the greatest of foresight, on a regional scale, and the best of our open spaces should be preserved for their beauty and for wildlife habitat.
Gene Sentz, Choteau

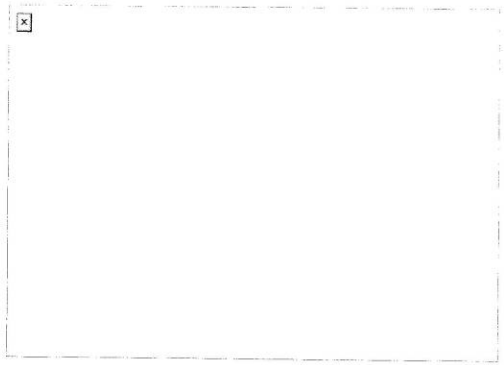
http://www.montanawildlife.com/Lead.html

MONTANA WILDLIFE
Newsletter of the Montana Wildlife Federation
Volume 31, Number 3
Cover article by Craig Sharpe, Executive Director

Comment 235

The Energy Race A Lot to Gain - A Lot to Lose

Response 235: Thank you for the information. The article has been added to the record. See the response to comment 24 for more discussion of programmatic reviews.



Energy development proposed on an unprecedented scale is creating new challenges to the future of wild lands, public lands, fish, wildlife, hunting and fishing throughout the Rocky Mountain West, in some of the most wild places – with some of the best hunting and fishing – in the United States. How is Montana planning for this energy race – for the increasing interest in our minerals and cheap leases? Will hunters and anglers consider energy development issues as beyond our control or outside our purview as '*environmental issues*'?

High power transmission lines, large coal fired generators, coal bed methane gas extraction fields, manufactured alternative fuels, oil and gas wells, great giant windmills, pipelines, carbon sequestration and gasification plants – the options and challenges for Montana are mind boggling.

A pace quickened by changes in the law under the 2005 Energy Act increasing demand for domestic sources for gas and oil for heating, electricity and fuel is triggering the sales of subsurface mineral rights the likes that Montana has never seen. The market – leases and purchases - is based primarily in speculation and they are being grabbed up with little fanfare or little attention by hunters and anglers. Montana could soon experience a new battalion of energy explorers. In the past 6-months alone, according to Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, more than 200,000 acres of minerals have been leased.

"***Some of these leases are along the bluffs of the Missouri River, others are directly under critical, historically significant sage grouse leks,***" said Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Planning Coordinator, T.O. Smith. "***There are leases being purchased in the Lima peaks, prime, world class elk country, leases located just outside Helena under conservation easements that were purchased in part with public funds and others dot their way from here to Great Falls to the Front,"*** he added. "***Currently Hunting District 300 has almost been leased out entirely."***

To the north of Montana, Alberta has undergone intense development over the past five years and shallow gas wells are now perched along the border with the U.S. near Havre, Malta and west toward Glasgow. To the south along the Rocky Mountain Front the state of Montana is continuing to sell leases. Further south, Wyoming is not only developing coal bed methane at an unnerving pace but also oil and deep gas. In their Johan Gas and Oil Field, wells have been approved every five acres effectively eliminating any unbroken ground for wildlife.

At the Annual Meeting of the Montana Chapter of the Wildlife Society, February 6-9, the theme of "Developing Energy and Sustaining Natural Systems-How Do We Do It?" fellow Wyoming wildlife biologists warned Montana biologists about how they believe their state is under siege — the Wyoming horror show. The BLM has already leased more than 90 percent of the public lands in the Upper Green River Valley. Ranchers, wildlife enthusiasts, sporting and conservation organizations are organizing mass protests against new BLM and industry efforts asking for leasing and drilling slowdowns.

4/12/2007

These are all frightening scenarios that can have severe, significant ecological effects, and socioeconomic impacts. Some may be short-term stop gap fire-fly concepts to help us deal with energy demands that will flicker-out with a new dawn - but they will all take their toll and leave their 'footprints'.

Individual '*footprints*' of a well, pad, pipeline, road, waste pit or water purification storage, or power generating wind farm may in some cases appear insignificant, relatively small. Nevertheless, combined with production and processing plants, sweetening plants, storage facilities, power lines and distribution systems – they all require networks of infrastructure that degrade or incrementally increase wildlife habitat losses. Development that will fragment habitat and corridors, pollute water, cause the loss of mating and nesting grounds, strip vegetative cover on calving and fawning grounds, degrade fish habitats and critical riparian vegetation, and increase big game vulnerability must be controlled.

Development - in this race - does not need to sacrifice our public lands, wildlife, and quality hunting and fishing opportunities. Hunters and anglers, just as we have influenced the outcomes of many elections, have a huge stake in this race. The national interest in becoming self-sufficient and the significant increase in the amount of leasing in Montana seems to indicate that many companies are now looking to the Big Sky State minerals for the future. Although no one can predict what reserves may prove out, or whether Montana can become a leader of clean, alternative fuels or whether we will have cleaner, more efficient, noxious emission sequestration facilities or gasification plants —what we do know about Montana and our wildlife rich lands, to paraphrase Will Rogers – nobody's making any more!

Access Lost

Casper, WY - The Star-Tribune (03-28-07) - *"To Drill or Hunt?"* Washington bureau reporter Noelle Straub was reported on a March 27 Congressional, House Natural Resources Committee hearing titled " *Access Denied: The growing conflict between fishing, hunting and energy development on federal lands."*

What committee members heard was that hunters and anglers face growing restrictions' on access to public lands and waters because escalating energy development has taken priority over fish and wildlife and habitat protection. Many areas in our public lands historically open to the public are now restricted or the habitat has been so compromised by mazes or webs of roads– little game thrives.

"***Energy development is not being done right on the public lands in the West,***" said Rollin Sparrowe, a Wyoming resident and former supervisor of U.S Fish and Wildlife Service research programs on Rocky Mountain Wildlife.

"***Throughout the country, working men and women are having a harder time finding public access to hunting and fishing areas, and those that are still available are often experiencing a decrease in the quality and quantity of fish and game,***" said William Hite, president of a plumbing and pipe-fitting trade union.

The absolutely packed chambers heard testimony from representatives of a newly created Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA) of labor union members, conservationists and sportsmen. Approximately 70 percent of working men and women that comprise union membership are hunters and anglers, according to the group. The Colorado Wildlife Federation and Colorado Rep. Gibbs, the Wildlife Institute, TRCP, the Boone and Crockett Club and an energy executive from Questar Energy that owns the nations-second largest natural gas field in Wyoming also testified before the Oversight Committee.

While none of the testifying sportsmen called for an end to drilling, development or leasing they did instead all ask for greater balance, greater protection for sensitive wildlife areas and increased evaluation of the impacts before development is approved. According to a report to the committee, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) total for the number of drilling permits approved by the Bureau of Land Management has more than tripled since 2005. While the industry argues that there is a decrease in areas to drill on federal lands, the reality is that this is due to the millions of acres of public land already leased and not being yet drilled. In the meantime, companies are looking to states like Montana to lease everything they can before policies change and therefore, there is less land on the market.

Hunters, Anglers and Energy Development

So, what does all this mean to Montana hunters, anglers and wildlife enthusiasts?

These are our lands – it is our wildlife – our quality of life – our Montana and we must take some ownership in how we deal with energy development, we must flex our muscle in this race today to determine the wildlife and hunting and fishing opportunities we enjoy tomorrow. WE can be the architects of our wildlife future but we need to get involved, we need to demand responsible energy development policies from our decision makers, and long-term planning that considers Montana's wildlife values. Hunters and anglers can no longer separate themselves from the issues as being – environmental, hook, or bullet.

"We think Montana deserves the best," said T.O. Smith. "***Montana needs our own comprehensive plan for energy development that addresses what we want for Montana – we deserve better than what we're seeing in other places.***"

Where development does take place, we need to ensure that proper mitigations, stipulations are in place, and enforced to protect our wildlife future.

As writer Richard Nelson puts it: "***After we've lost a natural place, it's gone for everyone – hikers, campers, boaters, bicyclists, animal watchers, fishers, hunters and wildlife – a complete and absolutely democratic tragedy of emptiness. For this reason, it's vital that we overcome our differences, find common ground in our shared love for the natural world, and work together to defend the wild.***

2145 Applegate Avenue
Klamath Falls, Oregon 97601
April 7-2007

Mr. Greg Hollstein
Director's Office
Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901

Comment 236

Dear Sir:

I read your legal ad in the recent 3-22-'07 Shelby Promoter which I subscribe to since I was born + raised 7 miles west of Sunburst, Montana and still own property in that area.

I inherited property from my parents in the area where the electric transmission line will be built - along with others in our family including my daughter and a nephew - who owns a major share and farms it for us.

I'm trying to keep up with the project as much as I can since I don't live in the area and would appreciate a copy of the map or E.I.S. referred to in your ad. + the proposed line + alternatives offered.

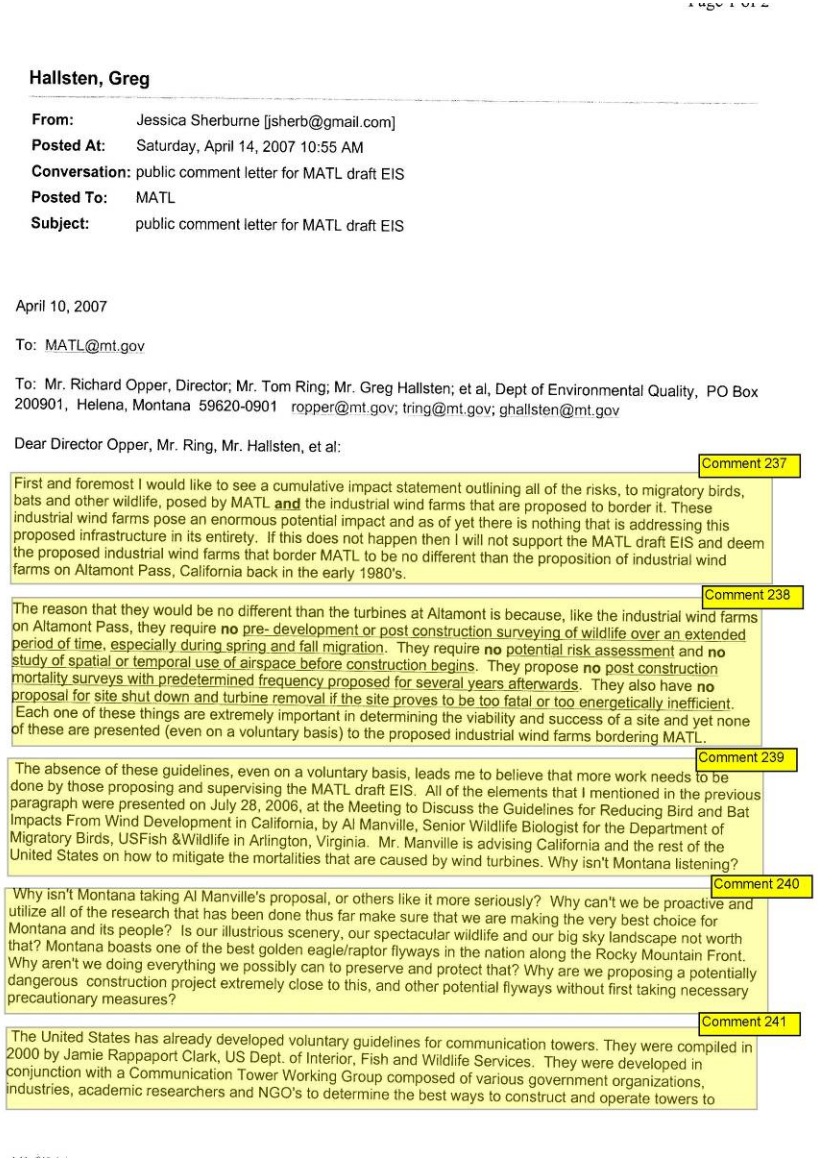
My parents homesteaded in 1910 & all the property they acquired in their lifetime is still in our family - and I think harnessing the wind for power is a blessing to those hard working farmers in those dry land areas especially.

Sincerely,
Geraldine I. Austen

RECEIVED
APR 13 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

100

Response 236: Comment noted. A map showing alignments in the area in question was sent to Geraldine Austin.



Hallsten, Greg

From: Jessica Sherburne [jsherb@gmail.com]
Posted At: Saturday, April 14, 2007 10:55 AM
Conversation: public comment letter for MATL draft EIS
Posted To: MATL
Subject: public comment letter for MATL draft EIS

April 10, 2007

To: MATL@mt.gov

To: Mr. Richard Opper, Director; Mr. Tom Ring; Mr. Greg Hallsten; et al, Dept of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901 ropper@mt.gov; tring@mt.gov; ghallsten@mt.gov

Dear Director Opper, Mr. Ring, Mr. Hallsten, et al:

Comment 237

First and foremost I would like to see a cumulative impact statement outlining all of the risks, to migratory birds, bats and other wildlife, posed by MATL **and** the industrial wind farms that are proposed to border it. These industrial wind farms pose an enormous potential impact and as of yet there is nothing that is addressing this proposed infrastructure in its entirety. If this does not happen then I will not support the MATL draft EIS and deem the proposed industrial wind farms that border MATL to be no different than the proposition of industrial wind farms on Altamont Pass, California back in the early 1980's.

Comment 238

The reason that they would be no different than the turbines at Altamont is because, like the industrial wind farms on Altamont Pass, they require **no** pre- development or post construction surveying of wildlife over an extended period of time, especially during spring and fall migration. They require **no** potential risk assessment and **no** study of spatial or temporal use of airspace before construction begins. They propose **no** post construction mortality surveys with predetermined frequency proposed for several years afterwards. They also have **no** proposal for site shut down and turbine removal if the site proves to be too fatal or too energetically inefficient. Each one of these things are extremely important in determining the viability and success of a site and yet none of these are presented (even on a voluntary basis) to the proposed industrial wind farms bordering MATL.

Comment 239

The absence of these guidelines, even on a voluntary basis, leads me to believe that more work needs to be done by those proposing and supervising the MATL draft EIS. All of the elements that I mentioned in the previous paragraph were presented on July 28, 2006, at the Meeting to Discuss the Guidelines for Reducing Bird and Bat Impacts From Wind Development in California, by Al Manville, Senior Wildlife Biologist for the Department of Migratory Birds, USFish &Wildlife in Arlington, Virginia. Mr. Manville is advising California and the rest of the United States on how to mitigate the mortalities that are caused by wind turbines. Why isn't Montana listening?

Comment 240

Why isn't Montana taking Al Manville's proposal, or others like it more seriously? Why can't we be proactive and utilize all of the research that has been done thus far make sure that we are making the very best choice for Montana and its people? Is our illustrious scenery, our spectacular wildlife and our big sky landscape not worth that? Montana boasts one of the best golden eagle/raptor flyways in the nation along the Rocky Mountain Front. Why aren't we doing everything we possibly can to preserve and protect that? Why are we proposing a potentially dangerous construction project extremely close to this, and other potential flyways without first taking necessary precautionary measures?

Comment 241

The United States has already developed voluntary guidelines for communication towers. They were compiled in 2000 by Jamie Rappaport Clark, US Dept. of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Services. They were developed in conjunction with a Communication Tower Working Group composed of various government organizations, industries, academic researchers and NGO's to determine the best ways to construct and operate towers to

Response 237: Comment noted. See responses to comment 20, Section 3.8, and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Section 4.9.

Response 238: Comment noted. Because the state does not have regulatory authority over wind farms, there is no agency that can require the studies you list. In order to place any controls on wind farm development, the legislature would have to authorize state agencies by law to implement them.

Response 239: While the suggested guidelines may have merit, the state has not adopted any of them and is unlikely to unless the legislature gives state agencies the authority to regulate wind farm development. Short of this, adherence to any guidelines would be voluntary on the part of developers.

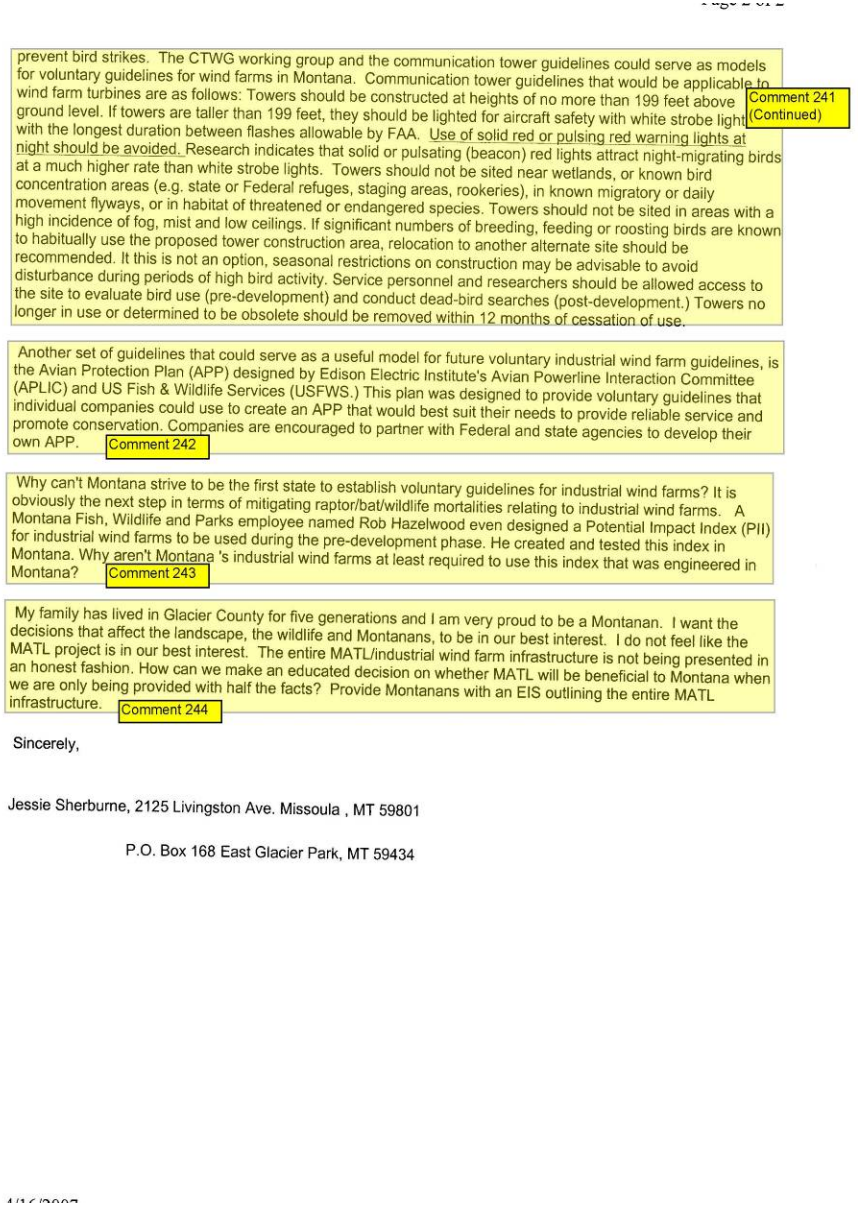
Response 240: DEQ is not requiring additional study as recommended by Al Manville and others because the Montana legislature removed DEQ's regulatory authority over the siting of most types of generating facilities, including wind farms. Possible study protocols pertaining to avian use and mortality are mentioned in the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4. Also note that on July 17, 2007, the *Committee Draft Report,* California Guidelines for Reducing Impacts to Birds and Bats from Wind Energy Development, was issued which may provide additional guidelines.

Response 241: Comment noted. With other voluntary guidelines in place and under current law, the agencies have no role in developing guidelines for wind farms. See response to comment 196 for a discussion of legislative direction. The desire for development of avian guidelines for development of wind farms has been referred to Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Montana's wildlife management agency.

Response 242: Comment noted. See response to comment 239.

Response 243: See response to comment 241.

Response 244: Comment noted. The entire infrastructure proposed by MATL is described in the draft EIS. Additional discussions of cumulative impacts resulting from wind farms are presented in Section4.1.



prevent bird strikes. The CTWG working group and the communication tower guidelines could serve as models for voluntary guidelines for wind farms in Montana. Communication tower guidelines that would be applicable to wind farm turbines are as follows: Towers should be constructed at heights of no more than 199 feet above ground level. If towers are taller than 199 feet, they should be lighted for aircraft safety with white strobe lights with the longest duration between flashes allowable by FAA. Use of solid red or pulsing red warning lights at night should be avoided. Research indicates that solid or pulsating (beacon) red lights attract night-migrating birds at a much higher rate than white strobe lights. Towers should not be sited near wetlands, or known bird concentration areas (e.g. state or Federal refuges, staging areas, rookeries), in known migratory or daily movement flyways, or in habitat of threatened or endangered species. Towers should not be sited in areas with a high incidence of fog, mist and low ceilings. If significant numbers of breeding, feeding or roosting birds are known to habitually use the proposed tower construction area, relocation to another alternate site should be recommended. It this is not an option, seasonal restrictions on construction may be advisable to avoid disturbance during periods of high bird activity. Service personnel and researchers should be allowed access to the site to evaluate bird use (pre-development) and conduct dead-bird searches (post-development.) Towers no longer in use or determined to be obsolete should be removed within 12 months of cessation of use.

Comment 241 (Continued)

Another set of guidelines that could serve as a useful model for future voluntary industrial wind farm guidelines, is the Avian Protection Plan (APP) designed by Edison Electric Institute's Avian Powerline Interaction Committee (APLIC) and US Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS.) This plan was designed to provide voluntary guidelines that individual companies could use to create an APP that would best suit their needs to provide reliable service and promote conservation. Companies are encouraged to partner with Federal and state agencies to develop their own APP.

Comment 242

Why can't Montana strive to be the first state to establish voluntary guidelines for industrial wind farms? It is obviously the next step in terms of mitigating raptor/bat/wildlife mortalities relating to industrial wind farms. A Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks employee named Rob Hazelwood even designed a Potential Impact Index (PII) for industrial wind farms to be used during the pre-development phase. He created and tested this index in Montana. Why aren't Montana 's industrial wind farms at least required to use this index that was engineered in Montana?

Comment 243

My family has lived in Glacier County for five generations and I am very proud to be a Montanan. I want the decisions that affect the landscape, the wildlife and Montanans, to be in our best interest. I do not feel like the MATL project is in our best interest. The entire MATL/industrial wind farm infrastructure is not being presented in an honest fashion. How can we make an educated decision on whether MATL will be beneficial to Montana when we are only being provided with half the facts? Provide Montanans with an EIS outlining the entire MATL infrastructure.

Comment 244

Sincerely,

Jessie Sherburne, 2125 Livingston Ave. Missoula , MT 59801

P.O. Box 168 East Glacier Park, MT 59434

Hallsten, Greg

From: ARTHUR PEARSON [artlorip@msn.com]
Posted At: Monday, April 30, 2007 7:24 AM
Conversation: MATL transmission line
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL transmission line

Comment 245

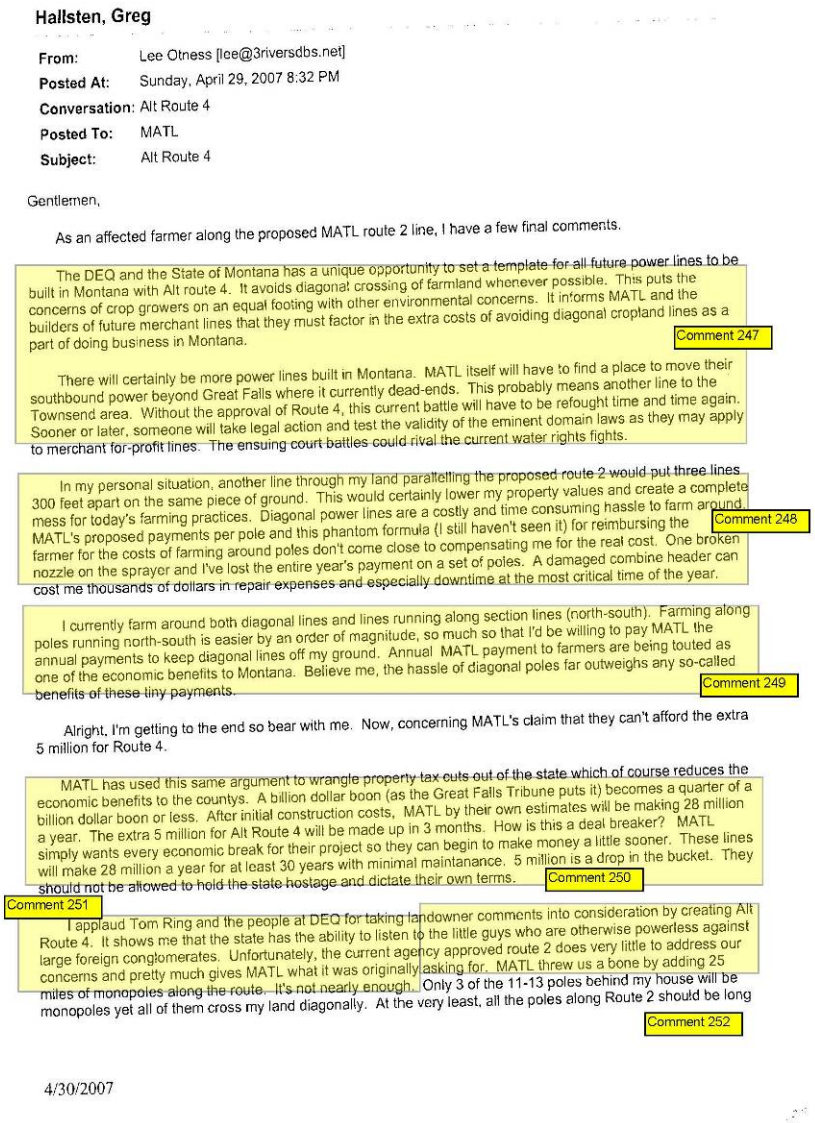
The proposed line (proposal #2) would be my first choice if it were to come to a vote. I do not favor
#4 at all. If #4 should be chosen, I can tell you the best place for the 1 1/2 miles of single pole yet to be designated, would be along the road on our farm. Another good reason to stick with line proposal #2 is the
saving of 7 Million in initial costs. If this line is to be put in, then do it right and use the 7Mil saved to help the
struggling small rural communities along the line. Comment 246

Arthur J. Pearson
2787 Primrose Rd N.
Conrad, MT 59425
(406)278-3033

4/30/2007

Response 245: Comment noted.

Response 246: Comment noted. The money saved from construction of Alternative 2 compared to other alternatives would not go to small rural communities in Montana. It would simply be money saved by the project developers.



Hallsten, Greg

From: Lee Otness [lee@3riversdbs.net]
Posted At: Sunday, April 29, 2007 8:32 PM
Conversation: Alt Route 4
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Alt Route 4

Gentlemen,

As an affected farmer along the proposed MATL route 2 line, I have a few final comments.

The DEQ and the State of Montana has a unique opportunity to set a template for all future power lines to be built in Montana with Alt route 4. It avoids diagonal crossing of farmland whenever possible. This puts the concerns of crop growers on an equal footing with other environmental concerns. It informs MATL and the builders of future merchant lines that they must factor in the extra costs of avoiding diagonal cropland lines as a part of doing business in Montana. Comment 247

There will certainly be more power lines built in Montana. MATL itself will have to find a place to move their southbound power beyond Great Falls where it currently dead-ends. This probably means another line to the Townsend area. Without the approval of Route 4, this current battle will have to be refought time and time again. Sooner or later, someone will take legal action and test the validity of the eminent domain laws as they may apply to merchant for-profit lines. The ensuing court battles could rival the current water rights fights.

In my personal situation, another line through my land paralleling the proposed route 2 would put three lines 300 feet apart on the same piece of ground. This would certainly lower my property values and create a complete mess for today's farming practices. Diagonal power lines are a costly and time consuming hassle to farm around. MATL's proposed payments per pole and this phantom formula (I still haven't seen it) for reimbursing the farmer for the costs of farming around poles don't come close to compensating me for the real cost. One broken nozzle on the sprayer and I've lost the entire year's payment on a set of poles. A damaged combine header can cost me thousands of dollars in repair expenses and especially downtime at the most critical time of the year. Comment 248

I currently farm around both diagonal lines and lines running along section lines (north-south). Farming along poles running north-south is easier by an order of magnitude, so much so that I'd be willing to pay MATL the annual payments to keep diagonal lines off my ground. Annual MATL payment to farmers are being touted as one of the economic benefits to Montana. Believe me, the hassle of diagonal poles far outweighs any so-called benefits of these tiny payments. Comment 249

Alright, I'm getting to the end so bear with me. Now, concerning MATL's claim that they can't afford the extra 5 million for Route 4.

MATL has used this same argument to wrangle property tax cuts out of the state which of course reduces the economic benefits to the countys. A billion dollar boon (as the Great Falls Tribune puts it) becomes a quarter of a billion dollar boon or less. After initial construction costs, MATL by their own estimates will be making 28 million a year. The extra 5 million for Alt Route 4 will be made up in 3 months. How is this a deal breaker? MATL simply wants every economic break for their project so they can begin to make money a little sooner. These lines will make 28 million a year for at least 30 years with minimal maintanance. 5 million is a drop in the bucket. They should not be allowed to hold the state hostage and dictate their own terms. Comment 250

Comment 251

I applaud Tom Ring and the people at DEQ for taking landowner comments into consideration by creating Alt Route 4. It shows me that the state has the ability to listen to the little guys who are otherwise powerless against large foreign conglomerates. Unfortunately, the current agency approved route 2 does very little to address our concerns and pretty much gives MATL what it was originally asking for. MATL threw us a bone by adding 25 miles of monopoles along the route. It's not nearly enough. Only 3 of the 11-13 poles behind my house will be monopoles yet all of them cross my land diagonally. At the very least, all the poles along Route 2 should be long Comment 252

4/30/2007

Response 247: Comment noted.

Response 248: Existing evidence suggests that in general land values are not significantly affected by transmission lines. To the extent that the MATL line would lower land values, that would be a cost to landowners. See the revised discussion on land values in Section 3.13. The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for more information.

Response 249: See response to comment 248.

Response 250: Comment noted. The tax cuts would only apply to property taxes for the transmission line. See the revised discussion of tax revenues in Section 3.13. The new state tax structure passed in the 2007 Legislative Special Session would only apply to property taxes for transmission lines that transmit power generated from renewable resources such as wind and clean coal plants. These new lower tax rates would not apply to wind farms.

Response 251: Comment noted.

Response 252: Comment noted.

span monopoles.

Finally, Bob Williams stated in the Tribune that they've tried to work with farmers from the beginning. This is absolutely untrue. When we were first contacted we were told it was a take it or leave it contract. Only after we resisted their heavy handed intimdation and veiled threats did MATL start to listen to us. In the meetings we've had with MATL officials and their hired land agents, they have repeatedly dismissed our concerns about diagonal poles. Our only hope now is that the DEQ will approve Alt Route 4. MATL, a Canadian corporation, is refusing to be a good neighbor. It seems they must be forced to acknowledge the damage that Route 2 will cause our farming operations. You have the power to do this. You can stand up and tell MATL that the state's Number 1 industy (and generations of property tax paying landowners) need to have their concerns addressed. I sincerely hope that we can count on you.

Comment 253

Thanks for listening.

Lee Otness
Brady, Montana

4/30/2007

Response 253: Comment noted.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Hilger, Stephanie
Sent: Monday, April 30, 2007 9:31 AM
To: MATL
Subject: DEIS comments from MDT

Attachments: DEIS_COMMENTS_043007.DOC

Greg,
Please accept MDT's comments on the Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV Transmission Line DEIS.
I am putting a signed copy in the mail today, also.
Please let me know if you have any questions.

Stephanie Hilger
Program & Policy Analysis Section
Rail, Transit & Planning Division
Montana Department of Transportation
(406) 444-6126

DEIS_COMMENTS_
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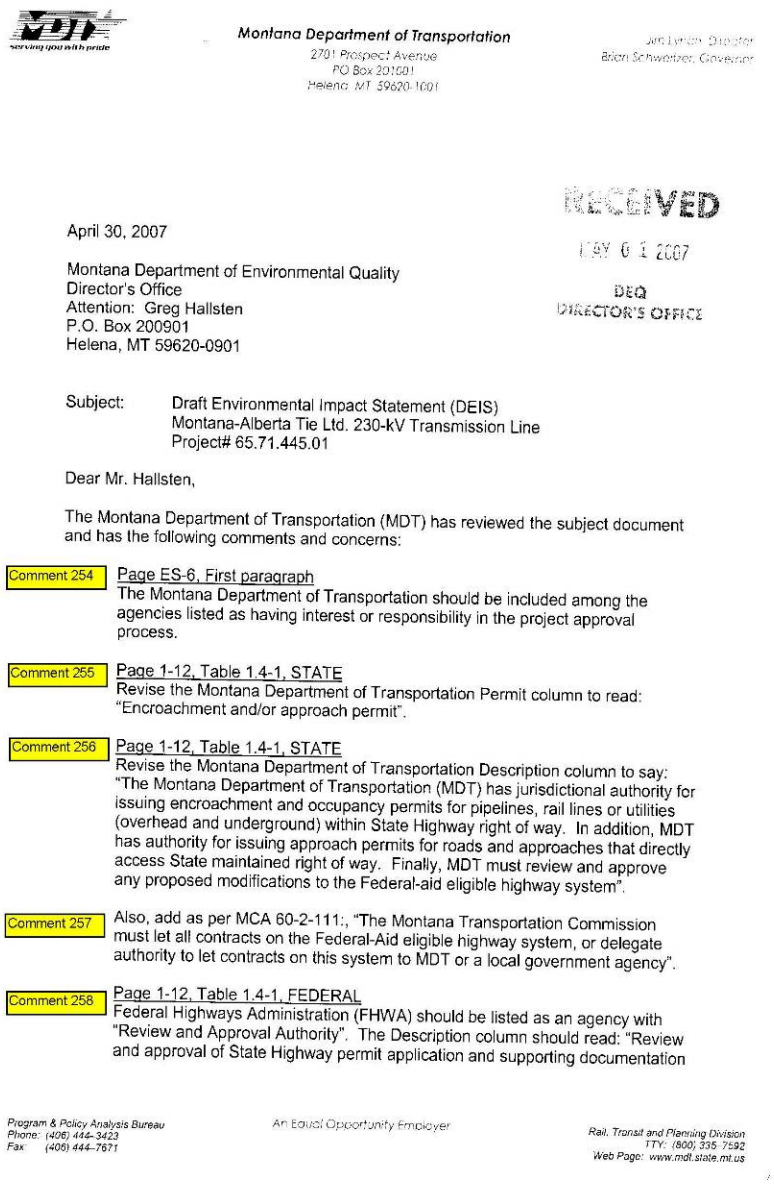

Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

Jim Lynch, Director
Brian Schweitzer, Governor

RECEIVED
MAY 01 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

April 30, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
Attention: Greg Hallsten
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV Transmission Line
Project# 65.71.445.01

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has reviewed the subject document and has the following comments and concerns:

Comment 254 Page ES-6, First paragraph
The Montana Department of Transportation should be included among the agencies listed as having interest or responsibility in the project approval process.

Comment 255 Page 1-12, Table 1.4-1, STATE
Revise the Montana Department of Transportation Permit column to read: "Encroachment and/or approach permit".

Comment 256 Page 1-12, Table 1.4-1, STATE
Revise the Montana Department of Transportation Description column to say: "The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has jurisdictional authority for issuing encroachment and occupancy permits for pipelines, rail lines or utilities (overhead and underground) within State Highway right of way. In addition, MDT has authority for issuing approach permits for roads and approaches that directly access State maintained right of way. Finally, MDT must review and approve any proposed modifications to the Federal-aid eligible highway system".

Comment 257 Also, add as per MCA 60-2-111:, "The Montana Transportation Commission must let all contracts on the Federal-Aid eligible highway system, or delegate authority to let contracts on this system to MDT or a local government agency".

Comment 258 Page 1-12, Table 1.4-1, FEDERAL
Federal Highways Administration (FHWA) should be listed as an agency with "Review and Approval Authority". The Description column should read: "Review and approval of State Highway permit application and supporting documentation

Program & Policy Analysis Bureau
Phone: (406) 444-3423
Fax (406) 444-7671

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Rail, Transit and Planning Division
TTY: (800) 335-7592
Web Page: www.mdt.state.mt.us

Response 254: Under the Major Facility Siting Act, no further state permits are required after a certificate has been issued. "(1)Notwithstanding any other law, a state or regional agency or municipality or other local government may not require any approval, consent, permit, certificate, or other condition for the construction, operation, or maintenance of a facility authorized by a certificate issued pursuant to this chapter, except that the department and board retain the authority that they have or may be granted to determine compliance of the proposed facility with state and federal standards and implementation plans for air and water quality and to enforce those standards. (2) This chapter does not prevent the application of state laws for the protection of employees engaged in the construction, operation, or maintenance of a facility." (75-20-401, MCA).

DEQ addresses the need to safely construct transmission lines across roads in its environmental specifications for the project (Appendix F, Section 2.6) which require consultation with Montana Department of Transportation.

Response 255: See response to comment 254.

Response 256: See response to comment 254 and revisions to Table 1.4-1.

Response 257: The agencies agree with the suggested change.

Response 258: The agencies agree with the suggested change.

for transmission lines in the Interstate Highway System right of way". The Authority column should state "23 CFR Part 645".

Comment 259 — Page 2-16, first bullet, *Pre-Construction*
MDT permitting should be included as a transmission line pre-construction task.

Comment 260 — Page 2-16, fourth bullet, *Access Planning and Preparation*
Please add: "An encroachment permit must be obtained from MDT before entering MDT right of way for constructing, operating, and maintaining the transmission line".

Comment 261 — Page 2-16, fifth bullet, *Delivery and Assembly*
It should be added: "If transporting a load or if there is equipment that exceeds the legal dimensions on Montana's state highway system, over-dimensional permits for width, length or height or any combination of width, length and height are required from MDT".

Comment 262 — Throughout the document
When describing the route of each alternative, all State Highways impacted by each alternative should be listed.

Comment 263 — Throughout the document
It should be stated that no poles will be allowed in MDT right of way.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this draft document. If you have any questions or need clarification, please don't hesitate to contact me at (406) 444-6126.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Hilger, Planner
Program & Policy Analysis Section
Rail, Transit & Planning Division

Cc: Sandra Straehl, Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator
Mick Johnson, Great Falls District Administrator
Steve Prinzing, P.E., Great Falls Engineering Services Engineer
Jim Skinner, Program & Policy Analysis Manager
Dan Smith, P.E., Environmental Services Acting Bureau Chief
Dick Turner, Multimodal Planning Bureau Chief
Lynn Zanto, Statewide and Urban Planning Supervisor
Walt Scott, Right-of-Way Utilities Section Supervisor
File

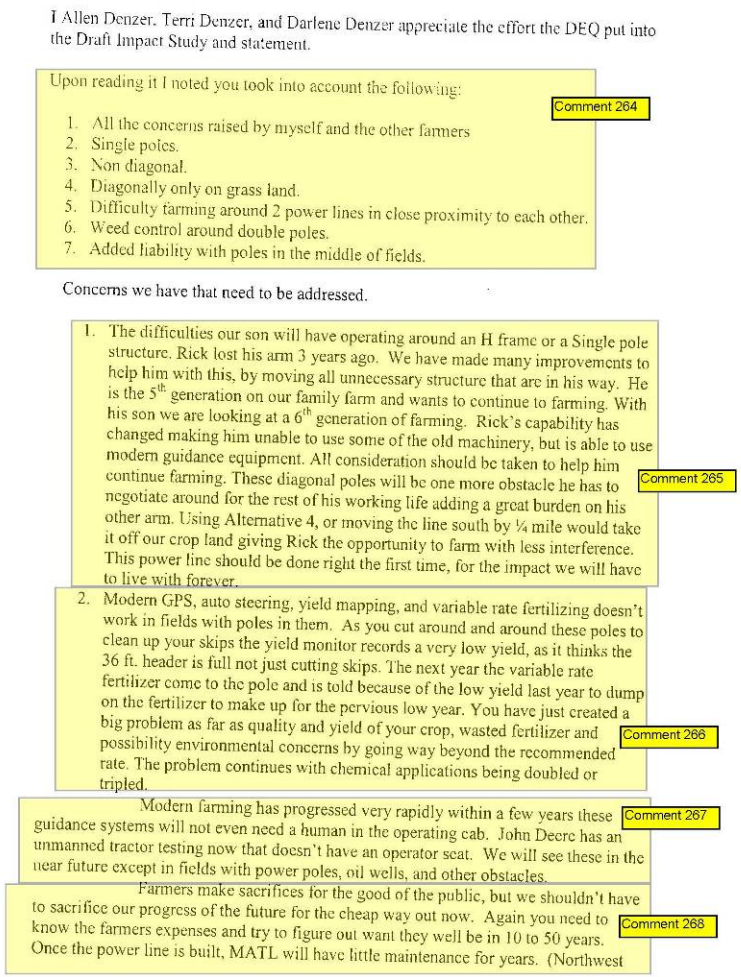
Response 259: See response to comment 254.

Response 260: See response to comment 254.

Response 261: Your suggested language has been added to Section 3.1.2. The Major Facility Siting Act does not prevent the Department of Transportation from requiring permits for oversized loads operating off the proposed transmission line right of way.

Response 262: The agencies agree with the suggested change. See Table 3.1-6 for a list of highways crossed by each alternative and the crossing points.

Response 263: See response to comment 254. Also note that state law allows electric power lines to be built on public rights of way as long as the lines are constructed in a manner as not to incommode or endanger the use of roads (see 69-4-101, MCA).



I Allen Denzer, Terri Denzer, and Darlene Denzer appreciate the effort the DEQ put into the Draft Impact Study and statement.

Upon reading it I noted you took into account the following:

1. All the concerns raised by myself and the other farmers
2. Single poles.
3. Non diagonal.
4. Diagonally only on grass land.
5. Difficulty farming around 2 power lines in close proximity to each other.
6. Weed control around double poles.
7. Added liability with poles in the middle of fields.

Comment 264

Concerns we have that need to be addressed.

1. The difficulties our son will have operating around an H frame or a Single pole structure. Rick lost his arm 3 years ago. We have made many improvements to help him with this, by moving all unnecessary structure that are in his way. He is the 5th generation on our family farm and wants to continue to farming. With his son we are looking at a 6th generation of farming. Rick's capability has changed making him unable to use some of the old machinery, but is able to use modern guidance equipment. All consideration should be taken to help him continue farming. These diagonal poles will be one more obstacle he has to negotiate around for the rest of his working life adding a great burden on his other arm. Using Alternative 4, or moving the line south by ¼ mile would take it off our crop land giving Rick the opportunity to farm with less interference. This power line should be done right the first time, for the impact we will have to live with forever.

Comment 265

2. Modern GPS, auto steering, yield mapping, and variable rate fertilizing doesn't work in fields with poles in them. As you cut around and around these poles to clean up your skips the yield monitor records a very low yield, as it thinks the 36 ft. header is full not just cutting skips. The next year the variable rate fertilizer come to the pole and is told because of the low yield last year to dump on the fertilizer to make up for the pervious low year. You have just created a big problem as far as quality and yield of your crop, wasted fertilizer and possibility environmental concerns by going way beyond the recommended rate. The problem continues with chemical applications being doubled or tripled.

Comment 266

Modern farming has progressed very rapidly within a few years these guidance systems will not even need a human in the operating cab. John Deere has an unmanned tractor testing now that doesn't have an operator seat. We will see these in the near future except in fields with power poles, oil wells, and other obstacles.

Comment 267

Farmers make sacrifices for the good of the public, but we shouldn't have to sacrifice our progress of the future for the cheap way out now. Again you need to know the farmers expenses and try to figure out want they well be in 10 to 50 years. Once the power line is built, MATL will have little maintenance for years. (Northwest

Comment 268

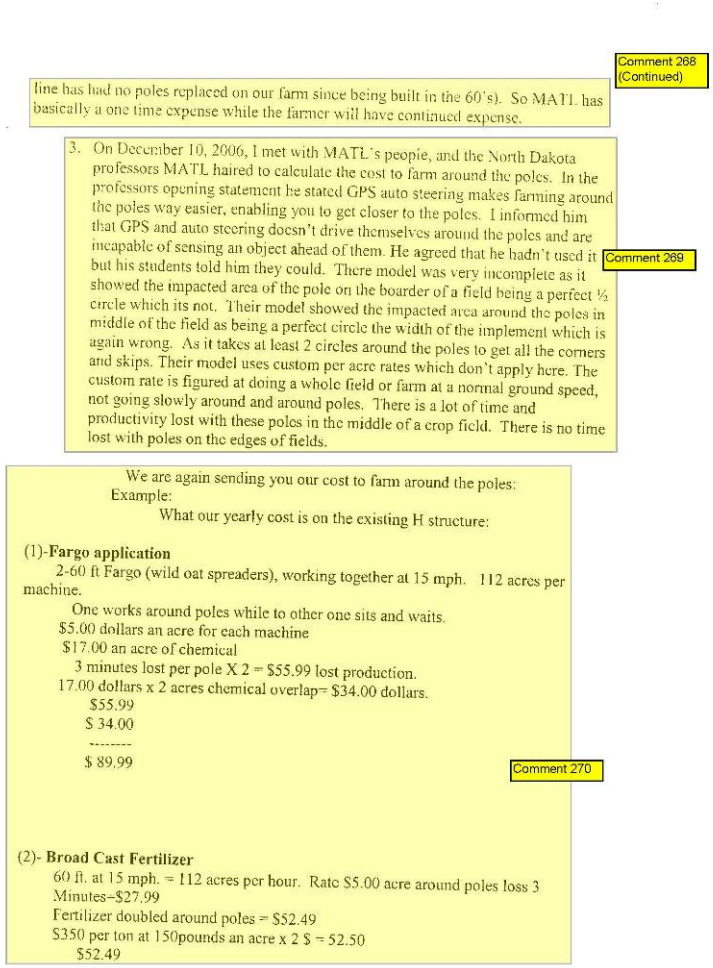
Response 264: Comment noted.

Response 265: Comment noted. The agencies have worked with the Denzers and their neighbors to develop possible routing options to reduce diagonal alignments through crop land in this area. Section 3.16 describes the mileage of various land use categories crossed by the proposed action and the Southeast of Conrad local routing option. In general terms, the option would use pasture and range land to a larger extent than the proposed action and thereby avoid crossing as much cropland. The costs of this local routing option are not great and the agencies are inclined to prefer it over the proposed action.

Response 266: Comment noted.

Response 267: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of potential impacts to use of GPS assisted farming equipment and the discussion of impacts to farming in Sections 3.1 and 3.4 of this document and the response to comment 599.

Response 268: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of potential costs of farming around structures in Section 3.13.



line has had no poles replaced on our farm since being built in the 60's). So MATL has basically a one time expense while the farmer will have continued expense.

Comment 268 (Continued)

3. On December 10, 2006, I met with MATL's people, and the North Dakota professors MATL haired to calculate the cost to farm around the poles. In the professors opening statement he stated GPS auto steering makes farming around the poles way easier, enabling you to get closer to the poles. I informed him that GPS and auto steering doesn't drive themselves around the poles and are incapable of sensing an object ahead of them. He agreed that he hadn't used it but his students told him they could. There model was very incomplete as it showed the impacted area of the pole on the boarder of a field being a perfect ½ circle which its not. Their model showed the impacted area around the poles in middle of the field as being a perfect circle the width of the implement which is again wrong. As it takes at least 2 circles around the poles to get all the corners and skips. Their model uses custom per acre rates which don't apply here. The custom rate is figured at doing a whole field or farm at a normal ground speed, not going slowly around and around poles. There is a lot of time and productivity lost with these poles in the middle of a crop field. There is no time lost with poles on the edges of fields.

Comment 269

We are again sending you our cost to farm around the poles:
Example:
What our yearly cost is on the existing H structure:

(1)-**Fargo application**
2-60 ft Fargo (wild oat spreaders), working together at 15 mph. 112 acres per machine.
One works around poles while to other one sits and waits.
$5.00 dollars an acre for each machine
$17.00 an acre of chemical
3 minutes lost per pole X 2 = $55.99 lost production.
17.00 dollars x 2 acres chemical overlap= $34.00 dollars.
$55.99
$ 34.00

$ 89.99

Comment 270

(2)- **Broad Cast Fertilizer**
60 ft. at 15 mph. = 112 acres per hour. Rate $5.00 acre around poles loss 3 Minutes=$27.99
Fertilizer doubled around poles = $52.49
$350 per ton at 150pounds an acre x 2 $ = 52.50
$52.49

Response 269: The information provided was considered in quantifying the costs of the line to farmers.

Response 270: The information provided to the agencies was considered as the costs of the line to farmers were quantified.

$52.50

$80.49

Comment 270 (Continued)

(3) **Pre Plant Spray**
3 Sprayers:
90ft. at 12 mph at $5.00 per acre 116 acre per hour
90 ft at 12 mph at $5.00 per acre 116 acre per hour
60 ft at 12 mph at $5.00 per acre 87 acre per hour
One sprayer goes around poles while the other 2 wait at in line for the first to get back in the row. Time lost 9 minutes =$230.00
Chemical = $ 9.18

$248.43

(4) **Heavy Harrow**
60 ft. at 14 mph = 105 acres per hour
$5.00 per acre, 3 minutes lost =
$26.25

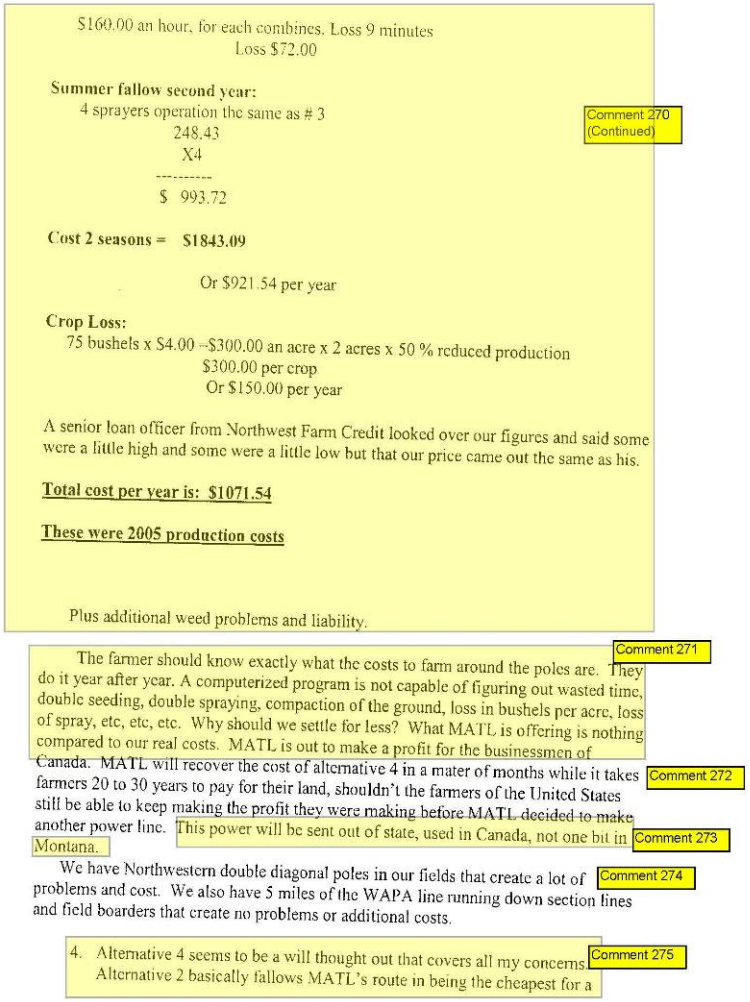
(5) **Seeding:**
57 ft. air drill at 6 mph, $42.75 acre per hour at $7.00 per acre
525 hp tractor
3 minutes lost $14.97
Seed and fertilizer $24.00 x 2 =$48.00
$14.96
$ 48.00

$62.96

(6) **Weed spraying same as #3 for time and machinery**
Time $239.25
Chemical
$15.00 x 2 $30.00

$269.25

(7) **Harvest:**
3 combines; tractor and grain cart working together totals $1,000.00
Investment one cuts around poles while the others wait. Operating cost of



$160.00 an hour, for each combines. Loss 9 minutes
Loss $72.00

Summer fallow second year:
4 sprayers operation the same as # 3
248.43
X4

$ 993.72

Comment 270 (Continued)

Cost 2 seasons = $1843.09

Or $921.54 per year

Crop Loss:
75 bushels x $4.00 --$300.00 an acre x 2 acres x 50 % reduced production
$300.00 per crop
Or $150.00 per year

A senior loan officer from Northwest Farm Credit looked over our figures and said some were a little high and some were a little low but that our price came out the same as his.

Total cost per year is: $1071.54

These were 2005 production costs

Plus additional weed problems and liability.

Comment 271

The farmer should know exactly what the costs to farm around the poles are. They do it year after year. A computerized program is not capable of figuring out wasted time, double seeding, double spraying, compaction of the ground, loss in bushels per acre, loss of spray, etc, etc, etc. Why should we settle for less? What MATL is offering is nothing compared to our real costs. MATL is out to make a profit for the businessmen of Canada. MATL will recover the cost of alternative 4 in a mater of months while it takes farmers 20 to 30 years to pay for their land, shouldn't the farmers of the United States still be able to keep making the profit they were making before MATL decided to make another power line. This power will be sent out of state, used in Canada, not one bit in Montana.

Comment 272

Comment 273

We have Northwestern double diagonal poles in our fields that create a lot of problems and cost. We also have 5 miles of the WAPA line running down section lines and field boarders that create no problems or additional costs.

Comment 274

4. Alternative 4 seems to be a will thought out that covers all my concerns. Alternative 2 basically fallows MATL's route in being the cheapest for a

Comment 275

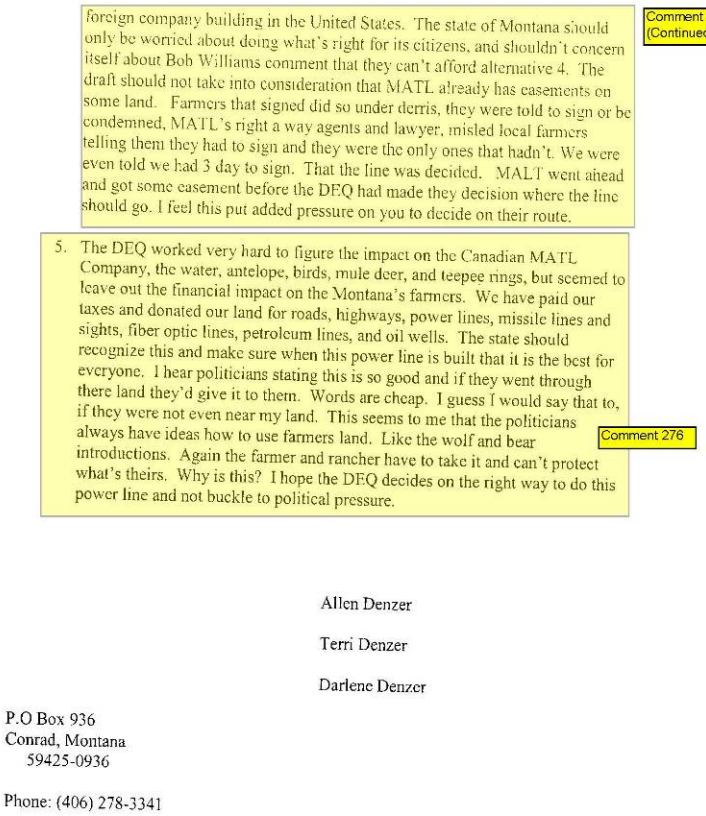
Response 271: The information provided was considered as the costs of the line to farmers were quantified.

Response 272: Comment noted.

Response 273: Power could flow both ways on the MATL line. MATL's 300 MW of southbound capacity is underpinned by long-term contracts but these contracts continue to be subject to the shippers' confirmation of acceptance. Also see the revised discussion in section 3.13.

Response 274: Comment noted.

Response 275: Comment noted.



foreign company building in the United States. The state of Montana should only be worried about doing what's right for its citizens, and shouldn't concern itself about Bob Williams comment that they can't afford alternative 4. The draft should not take into consideration that MATL already has easements on some land. Farmers that signed did so under derris, they were told to sign or be condemned, MATL's right a way agents and lawyer, misled local farmers telling them they had to sign and they were the only ones that hadn't. We were even told we had 3 day to sign. That the line was decided. MALT went ahead and got some easement before the DEQ had made they decision where the line should go. I feel this put added pressure on you to decide on their route.

Comment 275 (Continued)

5. The DEQ worked very hard to figure the impact on the Canadian MATL Company, the water, antelope, birds, mule deer, and teepee rings, but seemed to leave out the financial impact on the Montana's farmers. We have paid our taxes and donated our land for roads, highways, power lines, missile lines and sights, fiber optic lines, petroleum lines, and oil wells. The state should recognize this and make sure when this power line is built that it is the best for everyone. I hear politicians stating this is so good and if they went through there land they'd give it to them. Words are cheap. I guess I would say that to, if they were not even near my land. This seems to me that the politicians always have ideas how to use farmers land. Like the wolf and bear introductions. Again the farmer and rancher have to take it and can't protect what's theirs. Why is this? I hope the DEQ decides on the right way to do this power line and not buckle to political pressure.

Comment 276

Allen Denzer

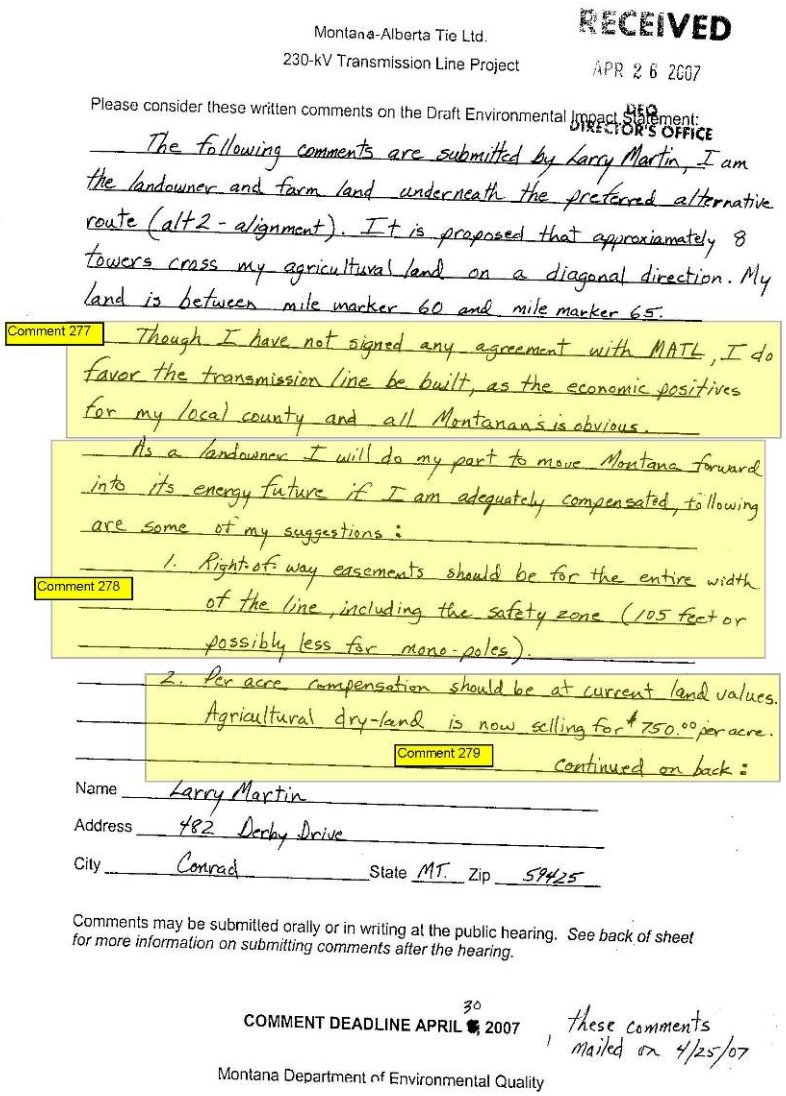
Terri Denzer

Darlene Denzer

P.O Box 936
Conrad, Montana
59425-0936

Phone: (406) 278-3341

Response 276: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of potential costs of farming around structures in Section 3.13.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

RECEIVED
APR 26 2007
DEQ DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Please consider these written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement:

The following comments are submitted by Larry Martin, I am the landowner and farm land underneath the preferred alternative route (alt2 - alignment). It is proposed that approximately 8 towers cross my agricultural land on a diagonal direction. My land is between mile marker 60 and mile marker 65.

Comment 277

Though I have not signed any agreement with MATL, I do favor the transmission line be built, as the economic positives for my local county and all Montanans is obvious.

As a landowner I will do my part to move Montana forward into its energy future if I am adequately compensated, following are some of my suggestions:

1. Right-of-way easements should be for the entire width of the line, including the safety zone (105 feet or possibly less for mono-poles).

Comment 278

2. Per acre compensation should be at current land values. Agricultural dry-land is now selling for $750.00 per acre.

Comment 279

continued on back:

Name Larry Martin
Address 482 Derby Drive
City Conrad State MT. Zip 59425

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. *See back of sheet for more information on submitting comments after the hearing.*

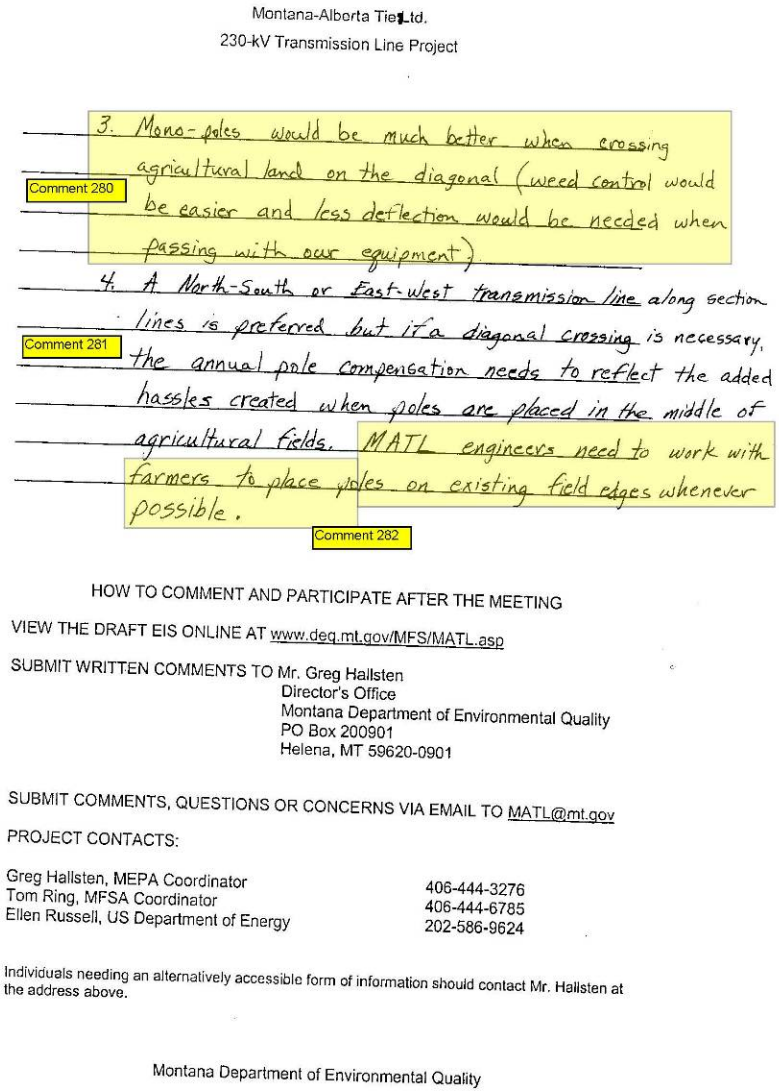
COMMENT DEADLINE APRIL 30 2007, these comments mailed on 4/25/07

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Response 277: Comment noted.

Response 278: Comment noted.

Response 279: Comment noted.



Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
230-kV Transmission Line Project

3. Mono-poles would be much better when crossing agricultural land on the diagonal (weed control would be easier and less deflection would be needed when passing with our equipment)

Comment 280

4. A North-South or East-West transmission line along section lines is preferred but if a diagonal crossing is necessary, the annual pole compensation needs to reflect the added hassles created when poles are placed in the middle of agricultural fields. MATL engineers need to work with farmers to place poles on existing field edges whenever possible.

Comment 281

Comment 282

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE MEETING

VIEW THE DRAFT EIS ONLINE AT www.deq.mt.gov/MFS/MATL.asp

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENTS TO Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

SUBMIT COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS VIA EMAIL TO MATL@mt.gov

PROJECT CONTACTS:

Greg Hallsten, MEPA Coordinator	406-444-3276
Tom Ring, MFSA Coordinator	406-444-6785
Ellen Russell, US Department of Energy	202-586-9624

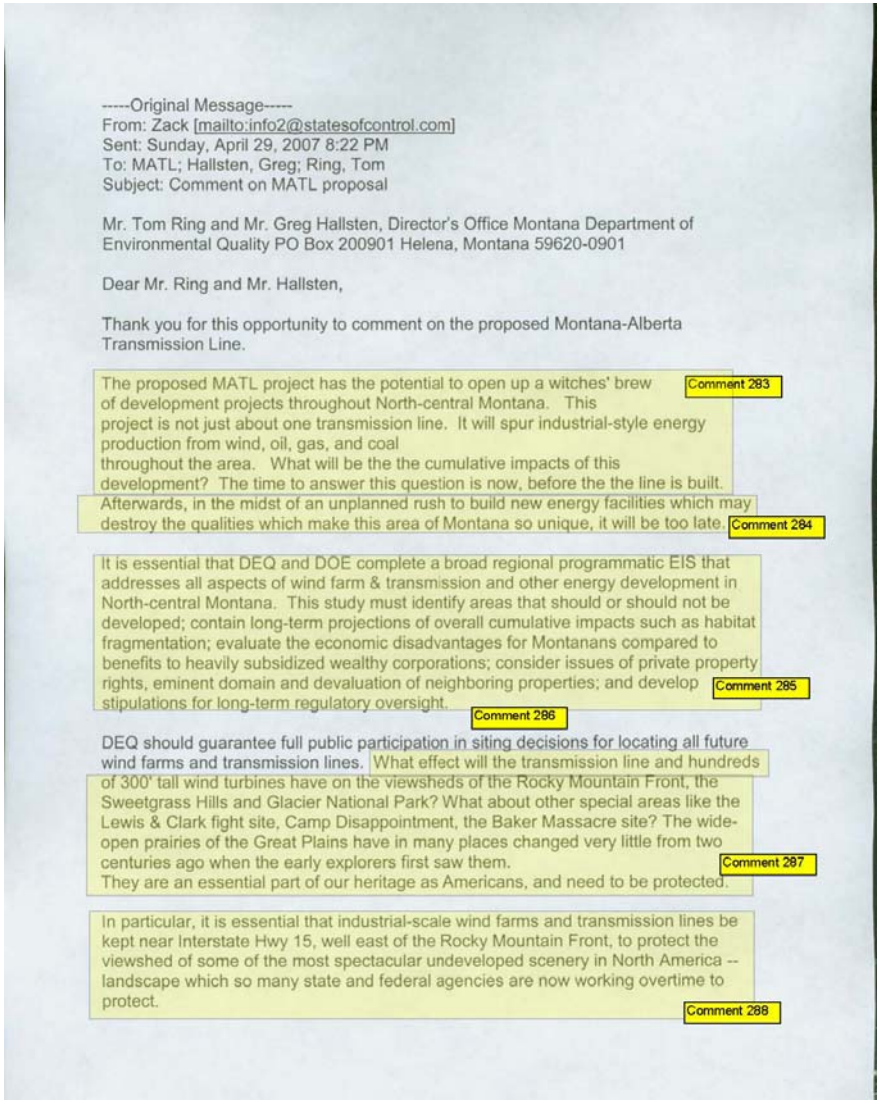
Individuals needing an alternatively accessible form of information should contact Mr. Hallsten at the address above.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Response 280: Comment noted.

Response 281: Comment noted.

Response 282: Comment noted.



-----Original Message-----
From: Zack [mailto:info2@statesofcontrol.com]
Sent: Sunday, April 29, 2007 8:22 PM
To: MATL; Hallsten, Greg; Ring, Tom
Subject: Comment on MATL proposal

Mr. Tom Ring and Mr. Greg Hallsten, Director's Office Montana Department of Environmental Quality PO Box 200901 Helena, Montana 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring and Mr. Hallsten,

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed Montana-Alberta Transmission Line.

The proposed MATL project has the potential to open up a witches' brew of development projects throughout North-central Montana. This project is not just about one transmission line. It will spur industrial-style energy production from wind, oil, gas, and coal throughout the area. What will be the the cumulative impacts of this development? The time to answer this question is now, before the the line is built. Afterwards, in the midst of an unplanned rush to build new energy facilities which may destroy the qualities which make this area of Montana so unique, it will be too late.

Comment 283

Comment 284

It is essential that DEQ and DOE complete a broad regional programmatic EIS that addresses all aspects of wind farm & transmission and other energy development in North-central Montana. This study must identify areas that should or should not be developed; contain long-term projections of overall cumulative impacts such as habitat fragmentation; evaluate the economic disadvantages for Montanans compared to benefits to heavily subsidized wealthy corporations; consider issues of private property rights, eminent domain and devaluation of neighboring properties; and develop stipulations for long-term regulatory oversight.

Comment 285

Comment 286

DEQ should guarantee full public participation in siting decisions for locating all future wind farms and transmission lines. What effect will the transmission line and hundreds of 300' tall wind turbines have on the viewsheds of the Rocky Mountain Front, the Sweetgrass Hills and Glacier National Park? What about other special areas like the Lewis & Clark fight site, Camp Disappointment, the Baker Massacre site? The wide-open prairies of the Great Plains have in many places changed very little from two centuries ago when the early explorers first saw them. They are an essential part of our heritage as Americans, and need to be protected.

Comment 287

In particular, it is essential that industrial-scale wind farms and transmission lines be kept near Interstate Hwy 15, well east of the Rocky Mountain Front, to protect the viewshed of some of the most spectacular undeveloped scenery in North America -- landscape which so many state and federal agencies are now working overtime to protect.

Comment 288

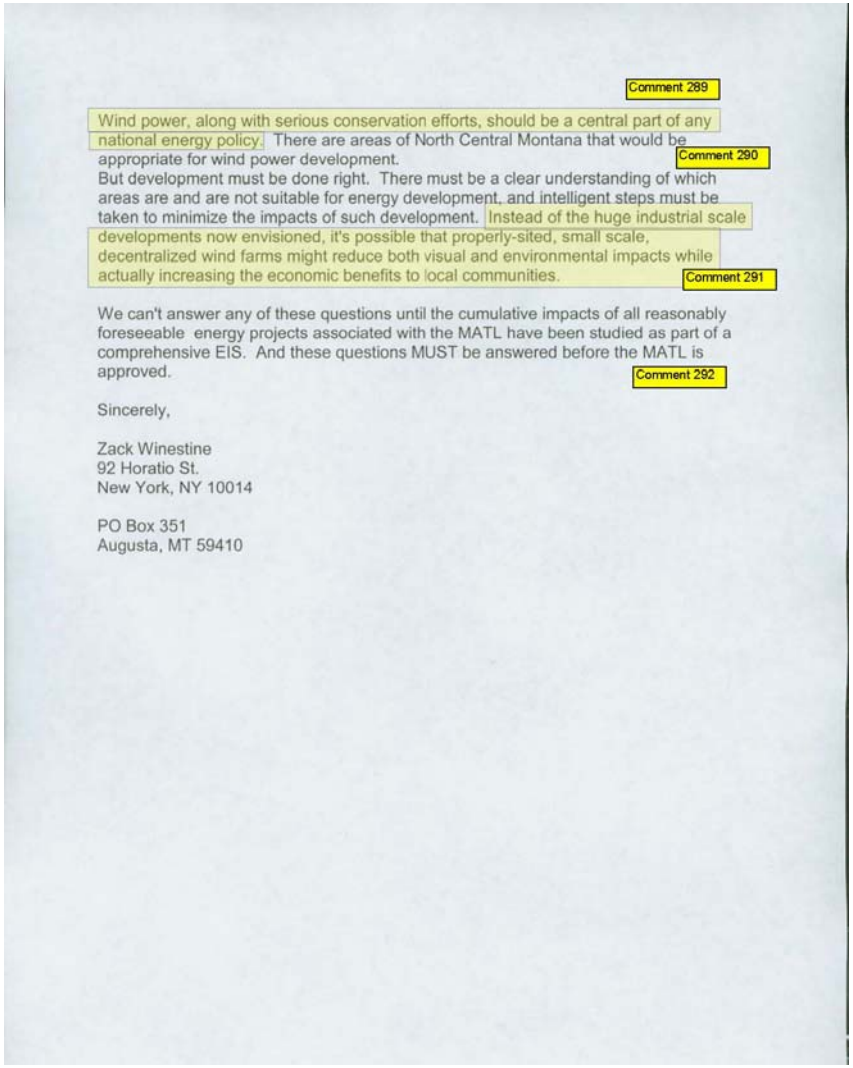
Response 283: The agencies agree that the availability of the MATL line could spur wind farm development in the northern part of the study area, as described in the revised discussion of cumulative impacts. The agencies do not know of any oil and gas well development in the area that would be spurred by approval of the MATL line. Coal development that has been discussed in Montana is not directly dependent on the MATL line because the firm capacity of the line has not been contracted for by a coal-fired generator as indicated in Table 4.1-2. However the agencies acknowledge that power generated from existing or new sources could be transmitted over the line on a short-term basis. Also see response to comment 216. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 284: Comment noted.

Response 285: See response to comment 283 and also 24. No programmatic review is required for the MATL line.

Response 286: DOE and DEQ do not have the authority to guarantee public participation in wind farm siting because they have no regulatory authority over wind farm siting. See response to comment 23.

Response 287: DOE and DEQ do not have regulatory authority over siting of wind farms. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Section 4.16 for more description of potential visual impacts associated with wind farm development.



Comment 289

Wind power, along with serious conservation efforts, should be a central part of any national energy policy. There are areas of North Central Montana that would be appropriate for wind power development.

Comment 290

But development must be done right. There must be a clear understanding of which areas are and are not suitable for energy development, and intelligent steps must be taken to minimize the impacts of such development. Instead of the huge industrial scale developments now envisioned, it's possible that properly-sited, small scale, decentralized wind farms might reduce both visual and environmental impacts while actually increasing the economic benefits to local communities.

Comment 291

We can't answer any of these questions until the cumulative impacts of all reasonably foreseeable energy projects associated with the MATL have been studied as part of a comprehensive EIS. And these questions MUST be answered before the MATL is approved.

Comment 292

Sincerely,

Zack Winestine
92 Horatio St.
New York, NY 10014

PO Box 351
Augusta, MT 59410

Response 288: Comment noted. Part of the transmission line must be located on the west side of the interstate to cross the border and join the rest of the line in Canada. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 for more information on potential wind farm developments.

Response 289: Comment noted.

Response 290: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 for more information on potential wind farm developments and potential measures to reduce impacts associated with their development.

Response 291: Comment noted. It is also possible that such smaller scale development of wind farms would result in a proliferation of small turbines scattered across the landscape rather than concentrating the development in a handful of commercial wind farms. See response to comment 522.

Response 292: Comment noted. Under the Montana Environmental Policy Act, 'cumulative impacts' means "the collective impacts on the human environment of the proposed action when considered in conjunction with other past, present, and future actions related to the proposed action by location or generic type" (75-1-220(3), MCA). Further, "related future actions may only be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any agency through preimpact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluations, or permit processing procedures" (75-1-208(11), MCA). Beyond these requirements of law, DEQ cannot speculate on potential future energy development. Federal requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act are discussed in Chapter 4

Greg Hallsten, MEPA Coordinator
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RECEIVED
APR 27 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Re: MATL Comments, Questions and Concerns

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

I have been privileged to be a citizen of Montana for nearly thirty-two years. I've also been a property owner in Glacier County for many years and have a home in Missoula. In view of the importance of the decision whether to grant a permit to build the Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. transmission line, commonly referred to as MATL, I would like to share some concerns and to ask for your help with a few questions. If the questions are not perceived as necessarily germane to the issues addressed in Draft Environmental Impact Statement, perhaps you will see the logic in my asking them, as they are placed alongside the probable outcome, if the requested permit is granted.

Comment 293

I would like to begin by saying there are two issues that share central prominence for me, regarding MATL.[a] The first is the apparent purpose and the probable residual effect of this transmission line; that is, to help facilitate the development of industrial wind complexes called wind farms, and their potential visual impact upon the areas where they will be built.[b] The second of these issues is the presumed financial benefit of the line, with the probable development of these large complexes or wind farms along the Rocky Mountain Front.

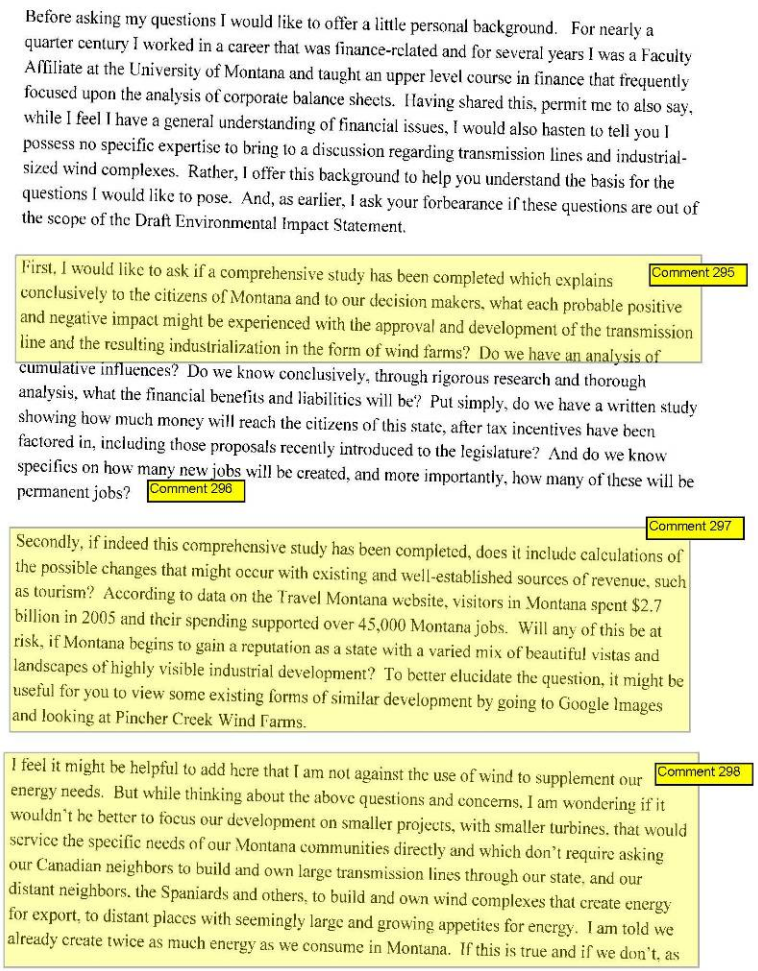
My preference would be to focus solely on the first concern and persuade you with my thoughts and words about the importance of the grandeur in the unencumbered sweep and glide of the prairies, as they lead subtly up to the great massing of rock and snow we all revere as a part of our home here in Montana, the beautiful mountains of Glacier Park and the vast mountain faces that carry southward. They - the open prairies and the mountains - would tend to be less, one without the other. It is part of why my family has lived in Montana for all these years and, perhaps, why you have, as well.

Comment 294

But, because I know, for many Montanans, of necessity, economics is at least of parallel importance when placed beside Montana's beauty, I would like to focus on this second concern, as it relates to the proposed developments.

Response 293: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Sections 4.14 and 4.16 for more information on visual and socioeconomic impacts of wind farms.

Response 294: Comment noted.



Before asking my questions I would like to offer a little personal background. For nearly a quarter century I worked in a career that was finance-related and for several years I was a Faculty Affiliate at the University of Montana and taught an upper level course in finance that frequently focused upon the analysis of corporate balance sheets. Having shared this, permit me to also say, while I feel I have a general understanding of financial issues, I would also hasten to tell you I possess no specific expertise to bring to a discussion regarding transmission lines and industrial-sized wind complexes. Rather, I offer this background to help you understand the basis for the questions I would like to pose. And, as earlier, I ask your forbearance if these questions are out of the scope of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Comment 295

First, I would like to ask if a comprehensive study has been completed which explains conclusively to the citizens of Montana and to our decision makers, what each probable positive and negative impact might be experienced with the approval and development of the transmission line and the resulting industrialization in the form of wind farms? Do we have an analysis of cumulative influences? Do we know conclusively, through rigorous research and thorough analysis, what the financial benefits and liabilities will be? Put simply, do we have a written study showing how much money will reach the citizens of this state, after tax incentives have been factored in, including those proposals recently introduced to the legislature? And do we know specifics on how many new jobs will be created, and more importantly, how many of these will be permanent jobs?

Comment 296

Comment 297

Secondly, if indeed this comprehensive study has been completed, does it include calculations of the possible changes that might occur with existing and well-established sources of revenue, such as tourism? According to data on the Travel Montana website, visitors in Montana spent $2.7 billion in 2005 and their spending supported over 45,000 Montana jobs. Will any of this be at risk, if Montana begins to gain a reputation as a state with a varied mix of beautiful vistas and landscapes of highly visible industrial development? To better elucidate the question, it might be useful for you to view some existing forms of similar development by going to Google Images and looking at Pincher Creek Wind Farms.

Comment 298

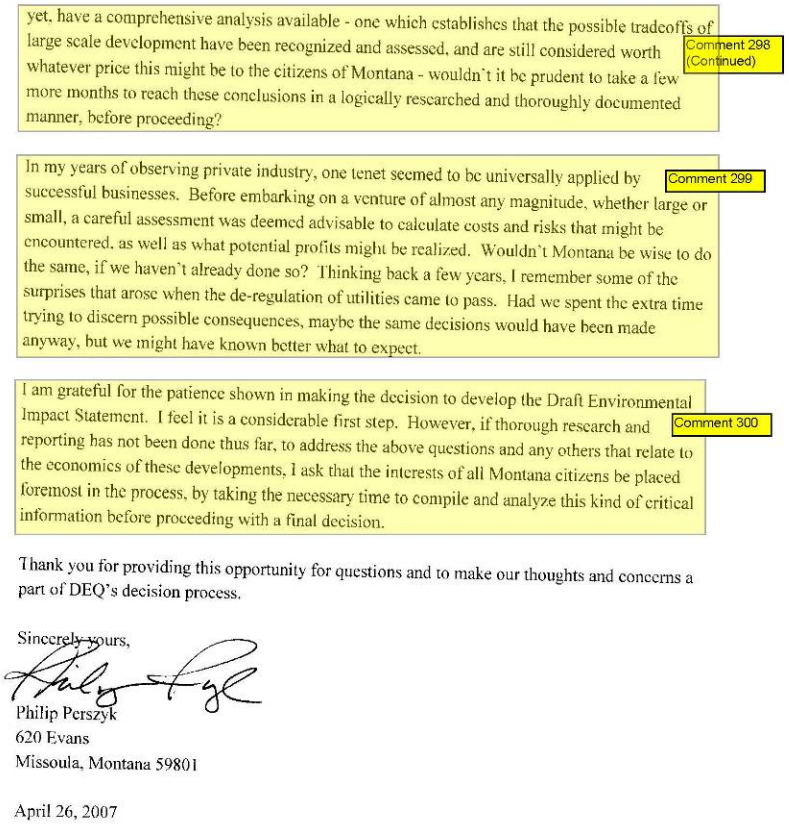
I feel it might be helpful to add here that I am not against the use of wind to supplement our energy needs. But while thinking about the above questions and concerns, I am wondering if it wouldn't be better to focus our development on smaller projects, with smaller turbines, that would service the specific needs of our Montana communities directly and which don't require asking our Canadian neighbors to build and own large transmission lines through our state, and our distant neighbors, the Spaniards and others, to build and own wind complexes that create energy for export, to distant places with seemingly large and growing appetites for energy. I am told we already create twice as much energy as we consume in Montana. If this is true and if we don't, as

Response 295: Comment noted. The draft EIS presents the potential impacts of construction of the transmission line. The potential cumulative impacts of wind farms that might be connected to the transmission line in the future are further discussed in Chapter 4, as far as available information allows.

Response 296: The benefits and costs of MATL to Montana are discussed in Section 1.2 and Section 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13. See the revised cumulative impacts Section 4.14 for a discussion of the effects from wind farms on the local economy.

Response 297: See response to comment 296. Both the transmission line and wind turbines would introduce linear elements into viewed landscapes. It is unlikely these structures would conceal or hide surrounding mountain ranges. Whether this constitutes industrial development that degrades scenic vistas is a value judgment.

Response 298: Such a comprehensive study would be outside of DEQ's purview because of the agency's limited regulatory authority. The Montana legislature could, by resolution, order its Environmental Quality Council to perform a study of this type.



yet, have a comprehensive analysis available - one which establishes that the possible tradeoffs of large scale development have been recognized and assessed, and are still considered worth whatever price this might be to the citizens of Montana - wouldn't it be prudent to take a few more months to reach these conclusions in a logically researched and thoroughly documented manner, before proceeding?

Comment 298 (Continued)

In my years of observing private industry, one tenet seemed to be universally applied by successful businesses. Before embarking on a venture of almost any magnitude, whether large or small, a careful assessment was deemed advisable to calculate costs and risks that might be encountered, as well as what potential profits might be realized. Wouldn't Montana be wise to do the same, if we haven't already done so? Thinking back a few years, I remember some of the surprises that arose when the de-regulation of utilities came to pass. Had we spent the extra time trying to discern possible consequences, maybe the same decisions would have been made anyway, but we might have known better what to expect.

Comment 299

I am grateful for the patience shown in making the decision to develop the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I feel it is a considerable first step. However, if thorough research and reporting has not been done thus far, to address the above questions and any others that relate to the economics of these developments, I ask that the interests of all Montana citizens be placed foremost in the process, by taking the necessary time to compile and analyze this kind of critical information before proceeding with a final decision.

Comment 300

Thank you for providing this opportunity for questions and to make our thoughts and concerns a part of DEQ's decision process.

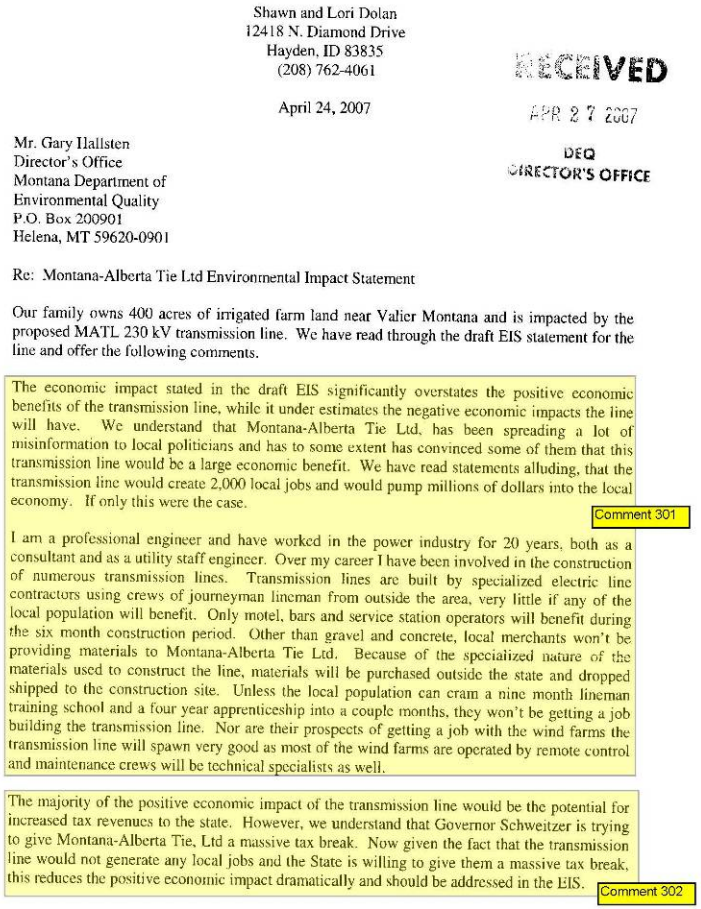
Sincerely yours,

Philip Perszyk
620 Evans
Missoula, Montana 59801

April 26, 2007

Response 299: Costs and risks of the MATL project to Montana are discussed in the draft EIS. The benefits and costs of MATL to Montana are discussed in Sections 1.2 and 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13.

Response 300: Comment noted.



Shawn and Lori Dolan
12418 N. Diamond Drive
Hayden, ID 83835
(208) 762-4061

April 24, 2007

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APR 27 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Mr. Gary Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of
Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd Environmental Impact Statement

Our family owns 400 acres of irrigated farm land near Valier Montana and is impacted by the proposed MATL 230 kV transmission line. We have read through the draft EIS statement for the line and offer the following comments.

The economic impact stated in the draft EIS significantly overstates the positive economic benefits of the transmission line, while it under estimates the negative economic impacts the line will have. We understand that Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd, has been spreading a lot of misinformation to local politicians and has to some extent has convinced some of them that this transmission line would be a large economic benefit. We have read statements alluding, that the transmission line would create 2,000 local jobs and would pump millions of dollars into the local economy. If only this were the case.

Comment 301

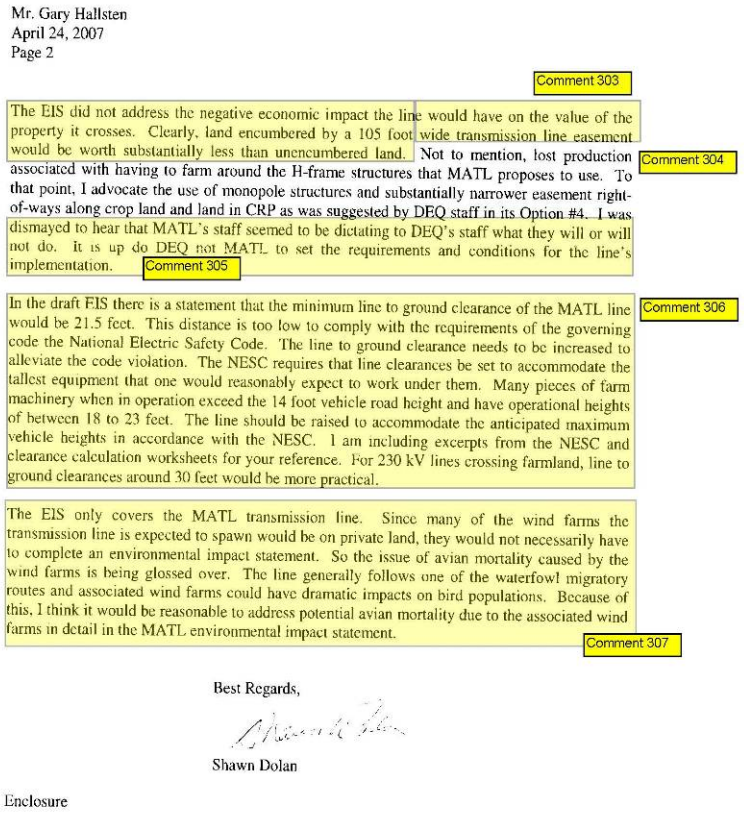
I am a professional engineer and have worked in the power industry for 20 years, both as a consultant and as a utility staff engineer. Over my career I have been involved in the construction of numerous transmission lines. Transmission lines are built by specialized electric line contractors using crews of journeyman lineman from outside the area, very little if any of the local population will benefit. Only motel, bars and service station operators will benefit during the six month construction period. Other than gravel and concrete, local merchants won't be providing materials to Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. Because of the specialized nature of the materials used to construct the line, materials will be purchased outside the state and dropped shipped to the construction site. Unless the local population can cram a nine month lineman training school and a four year apprenticeship into a couple months, they won't be getting a job building the transmission line. Nor are their prospects of getting a job with the wind farms the transmission line will spawn very good as most of the wind farms are operated by remote control and maintenance crews will be technical specialists as well.

The majority of the positive economic impact of the transmission line would be the potential for increased tax revenues to the state. However, we understand that Governor Schweitzer is trying to give Montana-Alberta Tie, Ltd a massive tax break. Now given the fact that the transmission line would not generate any local jobs and the State is willing to give them a massive tax break, this reduces the positive economic impact dramatically and should be addressed in the EIS.

Comment 302

Response 301: The agencies agree that 2,000 jobs will not be created as a result of the proposed action. The beneficial impacts from this project are described as "small and short term" to the local area in Section 3.13.3.2. The income, job and secondary benefits were estimated with the best information available, and it is understood that many of these jobs will go to out-of-state residents. Also, some benefits would be felt outside the study area by customers of the line. See Section 3.13 and the revised cumulative impacts Section 4.14 for a discussion of the effects from wind farms on the local economy.

Response 302: See revised Section 3.13 for estimates on property tax savings to MATL as a result of the lower tax rate recently passed by the 2007 Montana Legislature.



Mr. Gary Hallsten
April 24, 2007
Page 2

Comment 303

The EIS did not address the negative economic impact the line would have on the value of the property it crosses. Clearly, land encumbered by a 105 foot wide transmission line easement would be worth substantially less than unencumbered land. Not to mention, lost production Comment 304 associated with having to farm around the H-frame structures that MATL proposes to use. To that point, I advocate the use of monopole structures and substantially narrower easement right-of-ways along crop land and land in CRP as was suggested by DEQ staff in its Option #4. I was dismayed to hear that MATL's staff seemed to be dictating to DEQ's staff what they will or will not do. It is up do DEQ not MATL to set the requirements and conditions for the line's implementation. Comment 305

In the draft EIS there is a statement that the minimum line to ground clearance of the MATL line Comment 306 would be 21.5 feet. This distance is too low to comply with the requirements of the governing code the National Electric Safety Code. The line to ground clearance needs to be increased to alleviate the code violation. The NESC requires that line clearances be set to accommodate the tallest equipment that one would reasonably expect to work under them. Many pieces of farm machinery when in operation exceed the 14 foot vehicle road height and have operational heights of between 18 to 23 feet. The line should be raised to accommodate the anticipated maximum vehicle heights in accordance with the NESC. I am including excerpts from the NESC and clearance calculation worksheets for your reference. For 230 kV lines crossing farmland, line to ground clearances around 30 feet would be more practical.

The EIS only covers the MATL transmission line. Since many of the wind farms the transmission line is expected to spawn would be on private land, they would not necessarily have to complete an environmental impact statement. So the issue of avian mortality caused by the wind farms is being glossed over. The line generally follows one of the waterfowl migratory routes and associated wind farms could have dramatic impacts on bird populations. Because of this, I think it would be reasonable to address potential avian mortality due to the associated wind farms in detail in the MATL environmental impact statement. Comment 307

Best Regards,

Shawn Dolan

Enclosure

Response 303: See the revised discussion on land values in Section 3.13. Agricultural lands that have transmission lines traversing them do have a potential to have lower real estate values. A case study found that real estates values varied widely depending upon the amount of disruption the line had on agricultural operations (Kroll and Priestly 1992). To the extent that MATL would lower land values, these would be costs to landowners.

Response 304: The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Response 305: Comment noted. The decision to approve the line, to approve the line with conditions, or to deny the certificate for the line lies with the agencies.

Response 306: See response to comment 10.

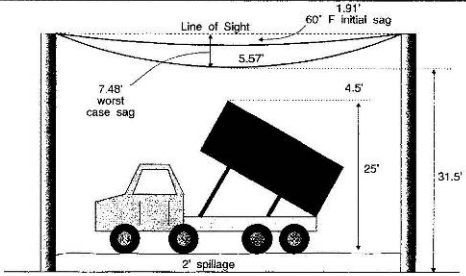
Response 307: See response to comment 20, and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Segment 6: Clearance Development Answers

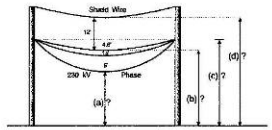
Comment 306 (Continued)

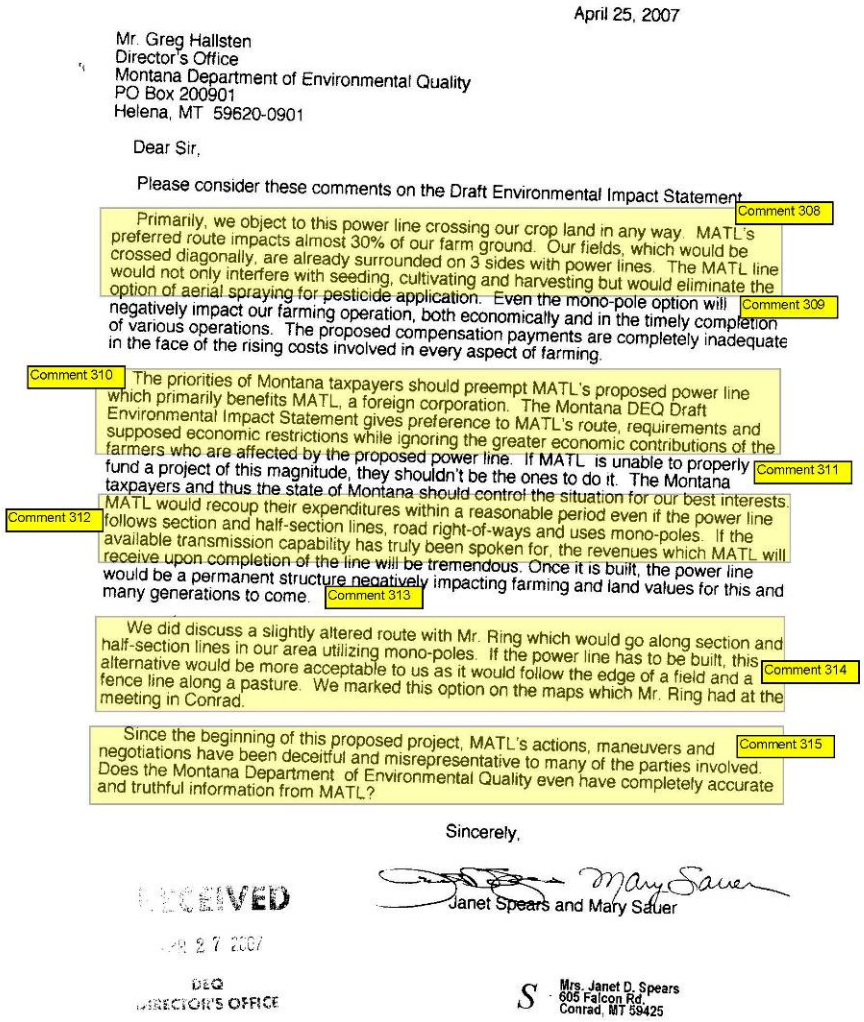
There are two ways to consider this problem:

METHOD 1		METHOD 2	
25.0'	Truck Height	18.5'	Normal Road Clearance
-14.0'	Included in Code Clearance (See Appendix A, Table A2)	-14.0'	Reference Height for a Truck
11.0'	Needed Extra Above Table Value	4.5'	Over the Reference Height
+2.0'	Planned Road Elevation Change	+25.0'	Actual Truck Height (See Appendix A, Table A1)
13.0'	Total Extra Needed @ Worst Case Condition	+2.0'	Planned Road Elevation Change
+18.5'	Table Value		
=31.5'	Total Needed @ Worst Case Condition	=31.5'	



METHOD A		METHOD B	
Worst case total final sag @ 32 degrees F with 1/2" radial ice	7.48'	Worst case total final sag @ 32 degrees F with 1/2" radial ice	7.48'
Less Initial Sag @ 60 degrees F	-1.91'	Plus required "not-less-than" clearance	+ 31.50'
= Sag change from 60 degrees F initial to 32 degrees F final with ice	=5.57'	= Required Line-of-Sight (LOS) between conductor attachment points	=38.98'
Plus required "not-less-than" clearance	+ 31.50'	Less Initial Sag @ 60 degrees F	-1.91'
= Required clearance at 60 degrees F initial sag	=37.07'	= Required clearance at 60 degrees F initial sag	=37.07'

7. Ruff Woods is a forest along Highway 1. **What vertical clearance is required** for a phase conductor of a 19.9/34.5kV effectively grounded wye line running along the highway and: a. within the highway R/W? b. on private R/W?	Comment 306 (Continued) **18.5'-Category 9—See Table 232-1, Column 4** **18.5'-Category 4**
8. **What clearance above a roadway is required** for a span of 230kV conductors?	**[230kV/1.732=132.79] = *nominal* phase-to-neutral voltage.** **[132.79 x 1.05=139.4kV] = *maximum operating* voltage.** **[139.4-22=117.4kV] = kV above 22kV-to-ground** **[117kV x 0.4"/kV=46.96"] = 4' voltage adder** **18.5' + 4' = 22.5'.**
9. Now assume that a 230kV line in the Light Loading District has a maximum design temperature of 156 deg F. We know that the conductor will change in sag with time and with temperature. Assume that the sag change from initial unloaded sag of 4.6 feet at 60 deg F down to final unloaded sag at 60 deg F is 1.5 feet. When the conductor temperature increases to 156 deg F, the conductor sags a further 6 feet lower, i.e., the sag at 156 deg F is 4.6 + 1.5 + 6 = 12.1 feet.	**a. The basic clearance at closest approach is 18.5 feet. To this must be added the voltage adder of 4 feet (as calculated in Answer 8). This gives us 22.5' as the lowest conductor position allowed above the road under any circumstances.**
	
a. What is the least clearance allowed above the road during maximum sag conditions?	
b. If you originally install the conductor at 60 degrees F initial sag, **how high above the roadway must it be** to meet the vertical clearance requirements?	**b. Add the difference between worst case sag and initial stringing sag (7.5') to the required clearance (22.5') to get the required height above the road at initial installation of 30 feet.**
c. How high is the line of sight between the 230 kV conductor attachments above the road? Now assume that our 230kV conductor is initially installed 12 feet below the level of an overhead shield (static) surge protection wire.	**c. Add the initial sag of 4.6 feet to get the height of the LOS above the roadway of 34.6 feet.**
d. **What is the height of that shield wire above the roadway** at initial installation?	**d. 30' + 12' = 42'**



April 25, 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Sir,

Please consider these comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.

Comment 308

Primarily, we object to this power line crossing our crop land in any way. MATL's preferred route impacts almost 30% of our farm ground. Our fields, which would be crossed diagonally, are already surrounded on 3 sides with power lines. The MATL line would not only interfere with seeding, cultivating and harvesting but would eliminate the option of aerial spraying for pesticide application. Even the mono-pole option will negatively impact our farming operation, both economically and in the timely completion of various operations. The proposed compensation payments are completely inadequate in the face of the rising costs involved in every aspect of farming.

Comment 309

Comment 310

The priorities of Montana taxpayers should preempt MATL's proposed power line which primarily benefits MATL, a foreign corporation. The Montana DEQ Draft Environmental Impact Statement gives preference to MATL's route, requirements and supposed economic restrictions while ignoring the greater economic contributions of the farmers who are affected by the proposed power line. If MATL is unable to properly fund a project of this magnitude, they shouldn't be the ones to do it. The Montana taxpayers and thus the state of Montana should control the situation for our best interests.

Comment 311

Comment 312

MATL would recoup their expenditures within a reasonable period even if the power line follows section and half-section lines, road right-of-ways and uses mono-poles. If the available transmission capability has truly been spoken for, the revenues which MATL will receive upon completion of the line will be tremendous. Once it is built, the power line would be a permanent structure negatively impacting farming and land values for this and many generations to come.

Comment 313

We did discuss a slightly altered route with Mr. Ring which would go along section and half-section lines in our area utilizing mono-poles. If the power line has to be built, this alternative would be more acceptable to us as it would follow the edge of a field and a fence line along a pasture. We marked this option on the maps which Mr. Ring had at the meeting in Conrad.

Comment 314

Since the beginning of this proposed project, MATL's actions, maneuvers and negotiations have been deceitful and misrepresentative to many of the parties involved. Does the Montana Department of Environmental Quality even have completely accurate and truthful information from MATL?

Comment 315

Sincerely,

Janet Spears and Mary Sauer

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APR 27 2007
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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Mrs. Janet D. Spears
605 Falcon Rd.
Conrad, MT 59425

Response 308: An alternative location for the line in the area southwest of Conrad is described in Section 2.6.

Response 309: Further information pertaining to the increased cost of farming around the line is presented in Section 3.13.

Response 310: Comment noted. The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

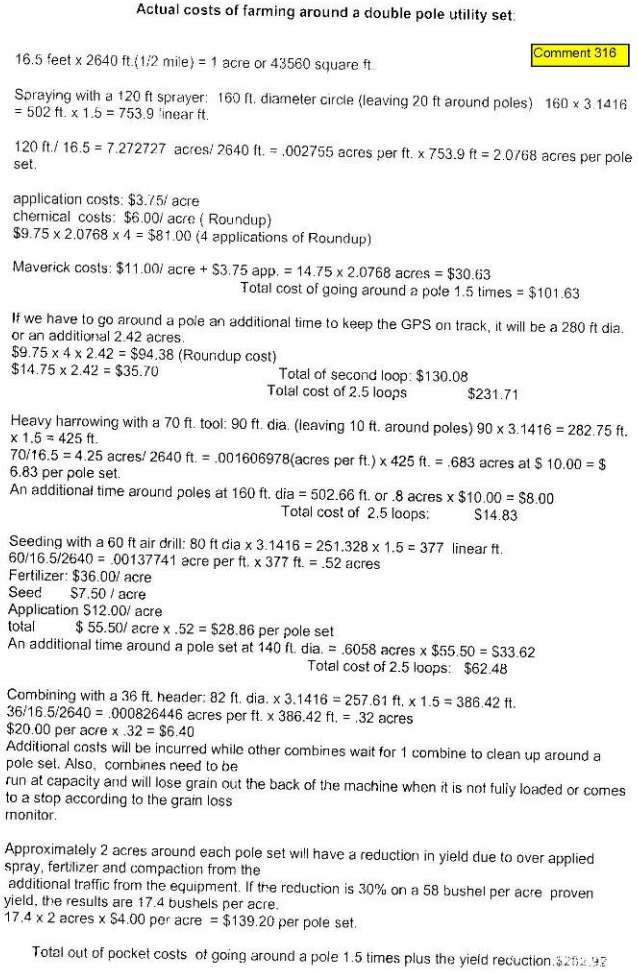
Response 311: Comment noted.

Response 312: Comment noted.

Response 313: Comment noted. See Section 3.13 for further information pertaining to the increased cost of farming around the line and the response to comment 303 regarding land values.

Response 314: Comment noted. See Section 2.6 for further discussion of an alternative location for the line in the area southwest of Conrad.

Response 315: Thank you for your comment. The agencies attempt to verify the information provided by an applicant as far as possible.



Actual costs of farming around a double pole utility set:

Comment 316

16.5 feet x 2640 ft.(1/2 mile) = 1 acre or 43560 square ft.

Spraying with a 120 ft sprayer: 160 ft. diameter circle (leaving 20 ft around poles) 160 x 3.1416 = 502 ft. x 1.5 = 753.9 linear ft.

120 ft./ 16.5 = 7.272727 acres/ 2640 ft. = .002755 acres per ft. x 753.9 ft = 2.0768 acres per pole set.

application costs: $3.75/ acre
chemical costs: $6.00/ acre (Roundup)
$9.75 x 2.0768 x 4 = $81.00 (4 applications of Roundup)

Maverick costs: $11.00/ acre + $3.75 app. = 14.75 x 2.0768 acres = $30.63
Total cost of going around a pole 1.5 times = $101.63

If we have to go around a pole an additional time to keep the GPS on track, it will be a 280 ft dia. or an additional 2.42 acres.
$9.75 x 4 x 2.42 = $94.38 (Roundup cost)
$14.75 x 2.42 = $35.70
Total of second loop: $130.08
Total cost of 2.5 loops $231.71

Heavy harrowing with a 70 ft. tool: 90 ft. dia. (leaving 10 ft. around poles) 90 x 3.1416 = 282.75 ft. x 1.5 = 425 ft.
70/16.5 = 4.25 acres/ 2640 ft. = .001606978(acres per ft.) x 425 ft. = .683 acres at $ 10.00 = $ 6.83 per pole set.
An additional time around poles at 160 ft. dia = 502.66 ft. or .8 acres x $10.00 = $8.00
Total cost of 2.5 loops: $14.83

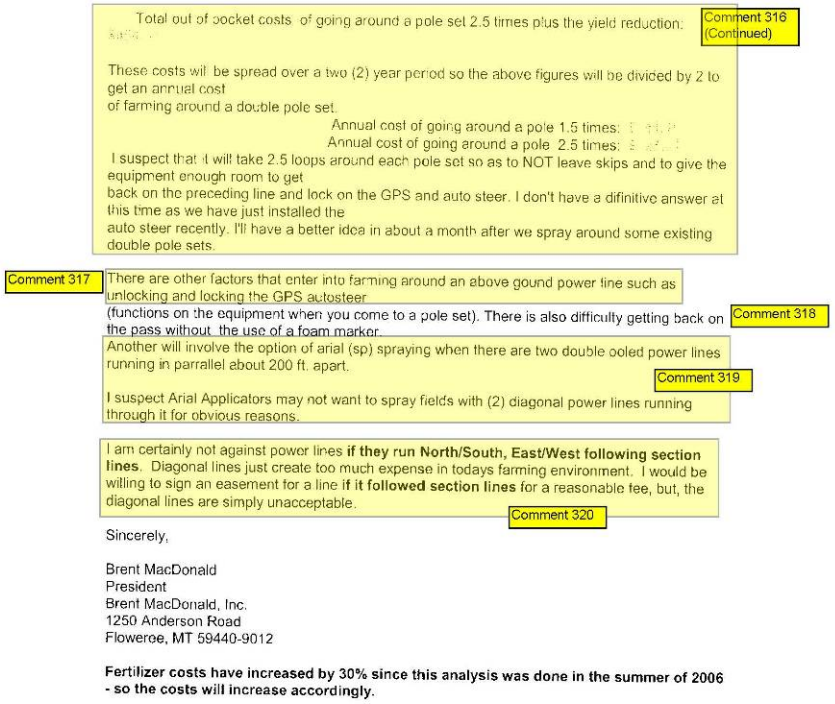
Seeding with a 60 ft air drill: 80 ft dia x 3.1416 = 251.328 x 1.5 = 377 linear ft.
60/16.5/2640 = .00137741 acre per ft. x 377 ft. = .52 acres
Fertilizer: $36.00/ acre
Seed $7.50 / acre
Application $12.00/ acre
total $ 55.50/ acre x .52 = $28.86 per pole set
An additional time around a pole set at 140 ft. dia. = .6058 acres x $55.50 = $33.62
Total cost of 2.5 loops: $62.48

Combining with a 36 ft. header: 82 ft. dia. x 3.1416 = 257.61 ft. x 1.5 = 386.42 ft.
36/16.5/2640 = .000826446 acres per ft. x 386.42 ft. = .32 acres
$20.00 per acre x .32 = $6.40
Additional costs will be incurred while other combines wait for 1 combine to clean up around a pole set. Also, combines need to be
run at capacity and will lose grain out the back of the machine when it is not fully loaded or comes to a stop according to the grain loss
monitor.

Approximately 2 acres around each pole set will have a reduction in yield due to over applied spray, fertilizer and compaction from the
additional traffic from the equipment. If the reduction is 30% on a 58 bushel per acre proven yield, the results are 17.4 bushels per acre.
17.4 x 2 acres x $4.00 per acre = $139.20 per pole set.

Total out of pocket costs of going around a pole 1.5 times plus the yield reduction $[illegible]

Response 316: Thank you for your comment. The information provided was considered as the costs of the line to farmers were refined. See Section 3.13 for additional discussion.



Total out of pocket costs of going around a pole set 2.5 times plus the yield reduction:

Comment 316 (Continued)

These costs will be spread over a two (2) year period so the above figures will be divided by 2 to get an annual cost
of farming around a double pole set.

Annual cost of going around a pole 1.5 times:

Annual cost of going around a pole 2.5 times:

I suspect that it will take 2.5 loops around each pole set so as to NOT leave skips and to give the equipment enough room to get
back on the preceding line and lock on the GPS and auto steer. I don't have a difinitive answer at this time as we have just installed the
auto steer recently. I'll have a better idea in about a month after we spray around some existing double pole sets.

Comment 317

There are other factors that enter into farming around an above gound power line such as unlocking and locking the GPS autosteer
(functions on the equipment when you come to a pole set). There is also difficulty getting back on the pass without the use of a foam marker.

Comment 318

Another will involve the option of arial (sp) spraying when there are two double poled power lines running in parrallel about 200 ft. apart.

Comment 319

I suspect Arial Applicators may not want to spray fields with (2) diagonal power lines running through it for obvious reasons.

I am certainly not against power lines **if they run North/South, East/West following section lines**. Diagonal lines just create too much expense in todays farming environment. I would be willing to sign an easement for a line **if it followed section lines** for a reasonable fee, but, the diagonal lines are simply unacceptable.

Comment 320

Sincerely,

Brent MacDonald
President
Brent MacDonald, Inc.
1250 Anderson Road
Floweroe, MT 59440-9012

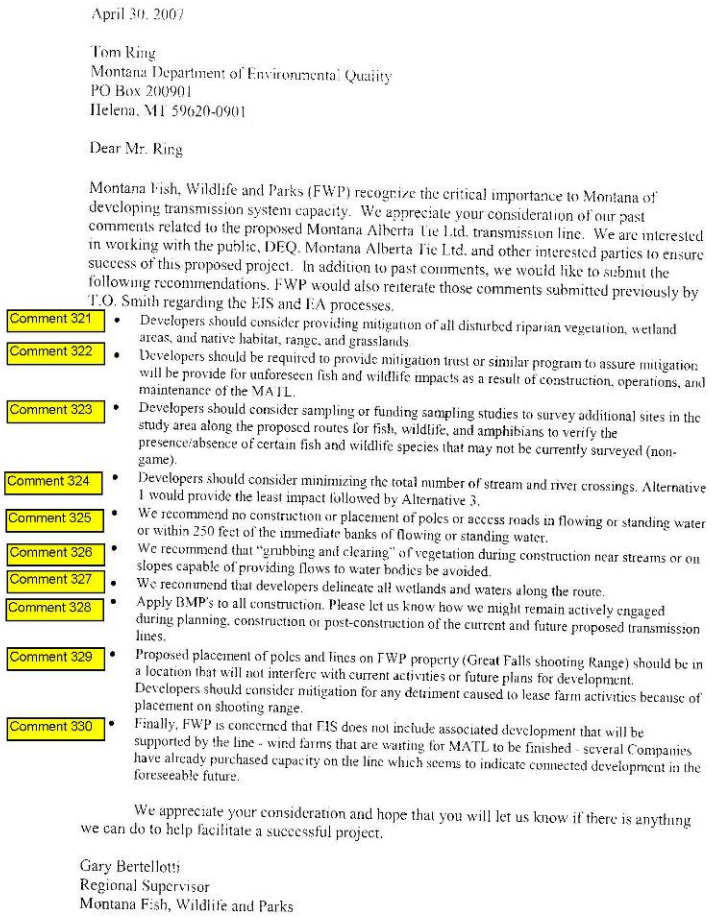
Fertilizer costs have increased by 30% since this analysis was done in the summer of 2006 - so the costs will increase accordingly.

Response 317: Comment noted. The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information. See the revised discussion of potential effects to GPS equipment in Section 3.4 and response to comment 599.

Response 318: Comment noted. The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Response 319: See the expanded discussion of effects to aerial spraying in Section 3.1.3.2.

Response 320: Comment noted.



April 30, 2007

Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) recognize the critical importance to Montana of developing transmission system capacity. We appreciate your consideration of our past comments related to the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. transmission line. We are interested in working with the public, DEQ, Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. and other interested parties to ensure success of this proposed project. In addition to past comments, we would like to submit the following recommendations. FWP would also reiterate those comments submitted previously by T.O. Smith regarding the EIS and EA processes.

Comment 321 • Developers should consider providing mitigation of all disturbed riparian vegetation, wetland areas, and native habitat, range, and grasslands.

Comment 322 • Developers should be required to provide mitigation trust or similar program to assure mitigation will be provide for unforeseen fish and wildlife impacts as a result of construction, operations, and maintenance of the MATL.

Comment 323 • Developers should consider sampling or funding sampling studies to survey additional sites in the study area along the proposed routes for fish, wildlife, and amphibians to verify the presence/absence of certain fish and wildlife species that may not be currently surveyed (non-game).

Comment 324 • Developers should consider minimizing the total number of stream and river crossings. Alternative 1 would provide the least impact followed by Alternative 3.

Comment 325 • We recommend no construction or placement of poles or access roads in flowing or standing water or within 250 feet of the immediate banks of flowing or standing water.

Comment 326 • We recommend that "grubbing and clearing" of vegetation during construction near streams or on slopes capable of providing flows to water bodies be avoided.

Comment 327 • We recommend that developers delineate all wetlands and waters along the route.

Comment 328 • Apply BMP's to all construction. Please let us know how we might remain actively engaged during planning, construction or post-construction of the current and future proposed transmission lines.

Comment 329 • Proposed placement of poles and lines on FWP property (Great Falls shooting Range) should be in a location that will not interfere with current activities or future plans for development. Developers should consider mitigation for any detriment caused to lease farm activities because of placement on shooting range.

Comment 330 • Finally, FWP is concerned that EIS does not include associated development that will be supported by the line - wind farms that are waiting for MATL to be finished - several Companies have already purchased capacity on the line which seems to indicate connected development in the foreseeable future.

We appreciate your consideration and hope that you will let us know if there is anything we can do to help facilitate a successful project.

Gary Bertellotti
Regional Supervisor
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Response 321: Comment noted. MATL proposes to reclaim disturbed areas and the agencies require these areas to be reclaimed.

Response 322: Under the Major Facility Siting Act DEQ can require mitigation of significant impacts at the time of certification. However, as a matter of policy DEQ does not require mitigation (including compensation) of speculative impacts that cannot be reasonably predicted prior to a certification decision. With previous certified projects, if additional studies were needed to quantify a potential impact after a facility was constructed, such study was required in the certificate and the degree of mitigation was determined after these studies were completed.

Response 323: If an alignment is selected that has not been surveyed for wildlife and there is a potential for adverse impact if wildlife were present, then the agencies would require surveys of these areas and if sensitive species are found, timing restrictions or other types of mitigation would be required as conditions to the certificate. For example, if Alternative 4 were selected, there is a potential for sharp-tailed grouse leks to be found along Dry Fork Coulee which contains pasture and range vegetation. The area would be surveyed for grouse leks by either DEQ or MATL and if they are found, construction would not be allowed in an area until after the breeding season. In addition perch preventers would be installed on transmission line structures near grouse leks to prevent raptors from using the line as hunting perches. Cropland would not be surveyed for sensitive wildlife species.

Response 324: Comment noted. The number of potential stream crossings differs between alternatives and final line location and design are likely to reduce the number of crossings along each alternative. The number of potential stream crossings, those within 250 feet of a reference transmission line centerline, is indicated in Section 3.5. The actual number of crossings is expected to be lower.

Response 325: Comment noted. Depending on local conditions, it may be more desirable to locate a structure closer than 250 feet to a stream to avoid impacts to the riparian zone. For example, it may be advisable to locate a structure close to one side of a stream on a high terrace without riparian vegetation to facilitate a span of the riparian zone. Limiting structure location to more than 250 feet from a stream may result in more clearing of riparian vegetation because of the sag of the line.

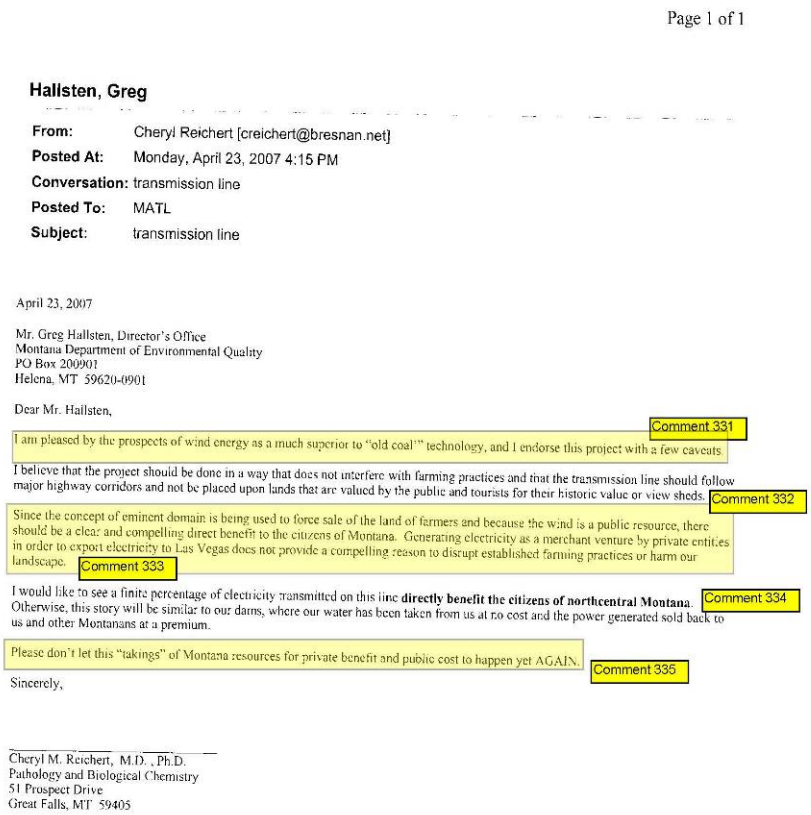
Response 326: Comment noted. DEQ requires that shrubs be crushed rather than cleared and that where clearing is necessary, that tall shrubs be cut off at ground level rather than removed by the roots. Further soil disturbance and earth moving must be kept to a minimum.

Response 327: Comment noted.

Response 328: See Appendix F.

Response 329: Comment noted.

Response 330: See response to comment 20 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.



Page 1 of 1

Hallsten, Greg

From: Cheryl Reichert [creichert@bresnan.net]
Posted At: Monday, April 23, 2007 4:15 PM
Conversation: transmission line
Posted To: MATL
Subject: transmission line

April 23, 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten, Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

I am pleased by the prospects of wind energy as a much superior to "old coal'" technology, and I endorse this project with a few caveats Comment 331

I believe that the project should be done in a way that does not interfere with farming practices and that the transmission line should follow major highway corridors and not be placed upon lands that are valued by the public and tourists for their historic value or view sheds. Comment 332

Since the concept of eminent domain is being used to force sale of the land of farmers and because the wind is a public resource, there should be a clear and compelling direct benefit to the citizens of Montana. Generating electricity as a merchant venture by private entities in order to export electricity to Las Vegas does not provide a compelling reason to disrupt established farming practices or harm our landscape. Comment 333

I would like to see a finite percentage of electricity transmitted on this line **directly benefit the citizens of northcentral Montana**. Comment 334
Otherwise, this story will be similar to our dams, where our water has been taken from us at no cost and the power generated sold back to us and other Montanans at a premium.

Please don't let this "takings" of Montana resources for private benefit and public cost to happen yet AGAIN. Comment 335

Sincerely,

Cheryl M. Reichert, M.D., Ph.D.
Pathology and Biological Chemistry
51 Prospect Drive
Great Falls, MT 59405

4/24/2007

Response 331: Comment noted.

Response 332: Comment noted. Locating a line along a highway corridor would increase visual impacts to the public and tourists traveling the State's highways. Such a line location may also result in greater public exposure to EMF.

Response 333: Comment noted. See response to comment 8.

Response 334: The agencies do not have the authority to reserve transmission capacity for a particular use. Under regulations of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, MATL is required to provide open access to generators without special treatment for anyone.

Response 335: Comment noted.

MONTANA ALBERTA TIE LTD

800, 615 Macleod Trail S.E.
Calgary, Alberta, Canada
T2G 4T8

Phone: (403) 264-4465
Fax: (403) 265-1299
Toll Free: 1-877-290-6285
Website: www.matl.ca

April 5, 2007

Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Lee Metcalf Building
1520 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Subject: Draft EIS corrections

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) is writing to provide you with its proposed corrections to the Draft EIS. The corrections are presented in the order that they appear in the document.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert L Williams

Bob Williams
Vice President, Regulatory

RECEIVED
APR 09 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

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April 9, 2007

Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Lee Metcalf Building
1520 East Sixth Avenue
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Subject: Replacement of Table 2.3-1 for Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) is writing to provide you with an updated Table 2.3-1, (reference page 2-12 of the Draft EIS). Although an updated Table 2.3-1 was submitted in our previous letter of 'Draft EIS Corrections', dated April 5, 2007, please disregard that particular table and instead replace it with the correct Table 2.3-1 attached. We apologize for any inconvenience that this may have caused.

If you have any comments or questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

Robert L Williams

Bob Williams
Vice President, Regulatory

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APR 13 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

RECEIVED
APR 11 2007
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

1. **Reference**: Page 2-12, Table 2.3-1 Comment 336

   Comments: Replace Table 2.3-1 with the updated version below.

TABLE 2.3-1
TYPICAL DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Design Element	H-frame Characteristic	Monopole Characteristic
Line Length within Montana (approximate)	130 miles	Same
Right-of-Way Width	45 feet	20 feet
Safety Zone Width	30 feet on each side of Right-of0Way	20 feet on each side of Right-of-Way
Thermal Capacity for 230-kV line	625 MVA @ 212° Fahrenheit	Same
Nominal Voltage	230,000 volts (230-kV)	Same
Conductor Size	1590 kcmil Falcon	Same
Conductor Type	ACSR (aluminum core steel reinforced)	Same
Overhead Shield Wire	3/8-inch diameter galvanized	Incorporated into optical ground wire (OPGW) which has a diameter of no more than 0.433 inches
Electric field at edge of right of way	4.78 kV/m	3.87 kV/m
Electric field at edge of safety zone	1.61 kV/m	1.71 kV/m
Magnetic field at edge of right of way	191.46 mG	127.95 mG
Magnetic field at edge of safety zone	62.75 mG	65.62 mG
Electrostatic short-circuit current limit	5 milliampere (mA)	Same
Structure Height above Ground (approximate)	65 feet average	80 feet average
Length of Span (approximate)	800 feet ruling span	460 feet ruling span,
Minimum Ground Clearance of Conductor	22.97 feet @ 212° Fahrenheit	Same
Typical Structure Base Dimensions	2 poles: 1 feet x 2 feet	1 pole: 1.5 feet x 2 feet
Land temporarily disturbed per site for conductor reel and pole storage yards	10 acres	Same
Area required for each structure base	44 square feet	4 square feet

2. **Reference**: Page 2-12, footnote 'a' below Table 2.3-1. Comment 337

   Comments: Add the following information to footnote 'a,' after the second sentence, regarding long-span monopoles: "Long-span monopoles would require the same right of way width as that for H-frame structures."

Response 336: Thank you for the updated information. Revisions have been incorporated into this document. The agencies agree with the suggested addition.

Response 337: The agencies agree with the suggested change. Revisions have been incorporated into this document.

3. **Reference**: Page 2-17, second bullet. Comment 338

   "Restoration"

   Comments: "Restoration" should be replaced with "Reclamation."

4. **Reference**: Pages 3-48, 3-51, and 3-52 Comment 339

   "21 feet"

   Comments:

5. **Reference**: Page 3-103, third paragraph; Page 3-121, second paragraph. Comment 340

   "Avian collisions would be reduced as approved line marking devices would be installed every 50 feet within a ¼ mile buffer on either side of streams, rivers, or wetlands."

   Comments: Replace the words, "every 50 feet" with "according to manufacturers' recommendations." Please refer to MATL's response to the DEQ's January 4, 2007 information request, bullet #7 for further information.

6. **Reference**: Page 3-104, fourth paragraph. Comment 341

   "Activities would not disturb wintering animals as the construction activities would occur during the spring and summer months. In the event that activities would occur within the winter months, animals could be disturbed and potentially displaced; however, disturbance within a specific area would be temporary."

   Comments: Replace the word "would" in the third sentence with "may". After the fourth sentence, add the following text: "MATL would comply with all Fish and Wildlife recommendations and restrictions to reduce disturbance to big game species".

7. **Reference**: Page 3-191, fifth paragraph. Comment 342

   "Potential impacts to system reliability from the Project and alternatives are under evaluation by the NERC and will be disclosed in a report in early 2007."

   Comments: Replace "NERC" with "WECC."

8. **Reference**: Page 3-193, first bullet. Comment 343

   "Flows greater than 150 MW on the line would require voltage additions at Cut Bank to compensate for line losses, such as those due to heat."

Response 338: The agencies agree with the suggested change. Revisions have been incorporated into this document.

Response 339: Revisions have been incorporated into this document.

Response 340: Appropriate changes have been made in this document.

Response 341: The comment to replace "would" with "may" is unclear, and the change will not be made.

Response 342: Revisions have been incorporated into this document.

Response 343: Revisions have been incorporated into this document.

Comments: This sentence is technically incorrect. It should instead read: "Flows greater than 150 MW on the line would require voltage support equipment at the Marias Substation, to compensate for reactive losses."

Comment 343 (Continued)

TABLE 2.3-1
TYPICAL DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS

Comment 344

Design Element	H-frame Characteristic	Monopole Characteristic
Line Length within Montana (approximate)	130 miles	Same
Right-of-Way Width	45 feet	20 feet
Safety Zone Width	30 feet on each side of Right-ofWay	20 feet on each side of Right-of-Way
Thermal Capacity for 230-kV line	625 MVA @ 212° Fahrenheit	Same
Nominal Voltage	230,000 volts (230-kV)	Same
Conductor Size	1590 kcmil Falcon	Same
Conductor Type	ACSR (aluminum core steel reinforced)	Same
Overhead Sheild Wire	3/8-inch diameter galvanized	Incorporated into optical ground wire (OPGW) which has a diameter of no more than 0.433 inches
Electric field at edge of right of way	4.78 kV/m	3.87 kV/m
Electric field at edge of safety zone	1.61 kV/m	1.71 kV/m
Magnetic field at edge of right of way	191.46 mG	127.95 mG
Magnetic field at edge of safety zone	62.75 mG	65.62 mG
Electrostatic short-circuit current limit	5 milliampere (mA)	Same
Structure Height above Ground (approximate)	65 feet average	80 feet average
Length of Span (approximate)	800 feet ruling span	460 feet ruling span,
Minimum Ground Clearance of Conductor	21.1 feet @ 212° Fahrenheit	Same
Typical Structure Base Dimensions	2 poles: 1 feet x 2 feet	1 pole: 1.5 feet x 2 feet
Land temporarily disturbed per site for conductor reel and pole storage yards	10 acres	Same
Area required for each structure base	44 square feet	4 square feet

Response 344: Appropriate changes are included in Table 2.3-1.

Comments on the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line*

1. Fiber Optic Comment 345

On page 2-10 of the Draft EIS, the agency states: "No plans have been made to use the excess fiber capacity for commercial purposes."

Six months ago, a document released by Tonbridge Power Inc. (of which MATL is a wholly owned subsidiary) included the following language:[1]

> In addition to transmission line revenues, the Company has begun to explore the commercial value of its fibre-optic capacity. The Company has to build in shield wire on the transmission line for lightening strikes, which wire has thirty six strands of fibre embedded within it. A small portion of the Project's fibre will be required for the operation and control of the line; accordingly substantial amounts of the remaining fibre may be available for resale or rental to others. The capital and operating costs of such a business proposal are being explored, as is the market potential.

If the Company does in fact plan to gain revenue from the sale or rental of fiber optic capacity, would this not aid in the recovery of the extra costs associated with Agency Alternative 4, and make the alternative more economically feasible?

2. Increased Line Capacity Comment 346

On page 2-40 of the Draft EIS, the agency states: "Another related future action is the potential upgrade of the MATL line from 300 MW in each direction (600 MW total) to 400 MW in each direction (800 MW total). MATL may construct the line using conductors and insulators designed to carry the additional wattage."

In the same document referenced above, Tonbridge stated:

[1] *Management's Discussion and Analysis*, Sept. 30, 2006; p.11.

Page 1

Response 345: At this time no plans have been made by MATL to use the excess fiber capacity for commercial purposes. See Section 2.3.

Response 346: In response to a question posed by DEQ about MATL's plans to enlarge the project in the future, MATL indicated (letter dated January 4, 2007) that:

"a. MATL had applied and designed for a path rating of 300 MW in both directions.

b. The1590 kcmil Falcon conductor selected for the project can carry up to 600 MW and ensures low line losses at the current applied for capacity of 300 MW.

c. MATL's Board of directors has not approved an initiative to increase the capacity of the project beyond 300 MW. The capacity of this project could only be increased after the appropriate technical, economic and regulatory requirements have been met."

The line is rated at 300 MW of continuous load at the present time. Whether the line takes 300 MW from north to south, south to north or midpoint each direction, the line is still rated at 300 MW, not 450 or 600 MW. The mention of a 400 MW potential loading is explained in that if the MATL line would be loaded to the 300 MW, an extra contingency load of up to 100 MW must be carried by the line to support existing power facilities in the area in case of outages on other transmission lines.

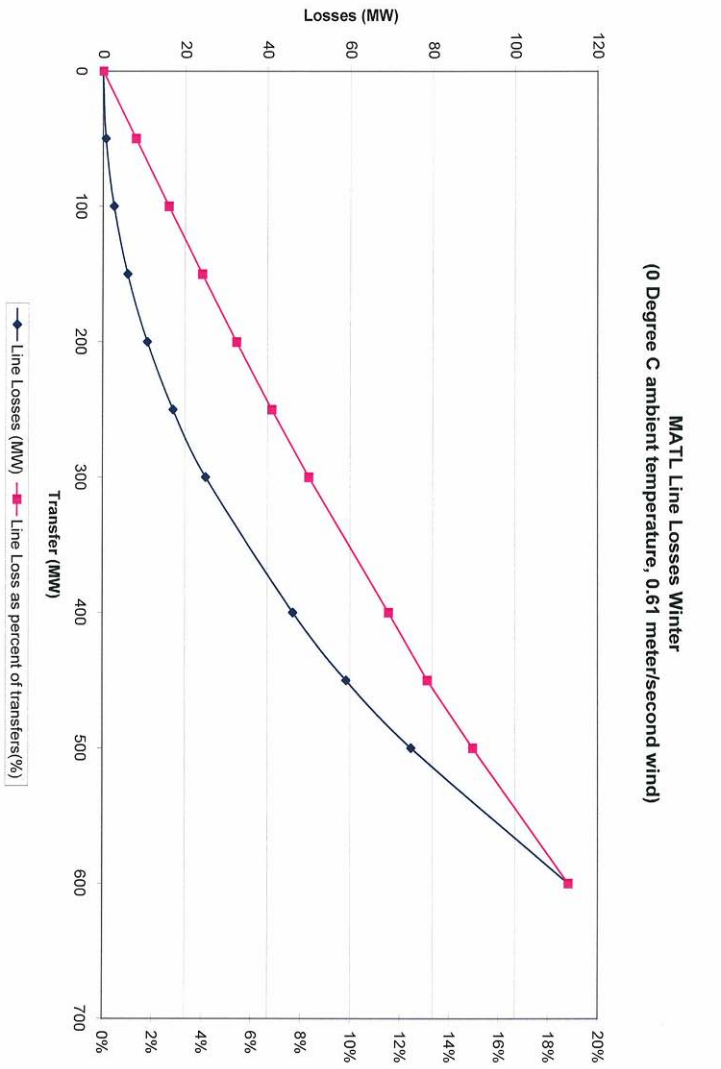
Table 2.3-1 indicates the thermal capacity of the line rated at 625 MVA at 212° Fahrenheit which equates to 600 MW at a .96 power factor. The current flow at 600 MW would result in extremely high line losses that make that load economically infeasible. If this conductor were to carry 600 MW, roughly 20 percent of the energy (roughly 115 MW) would be lost in transport (MATL 2007b). MATL has made commitments to its customers who have signed contracts that line losses will not exceed 10 percent. The two attached figures show the estimated line losses during winter and summer conditions.

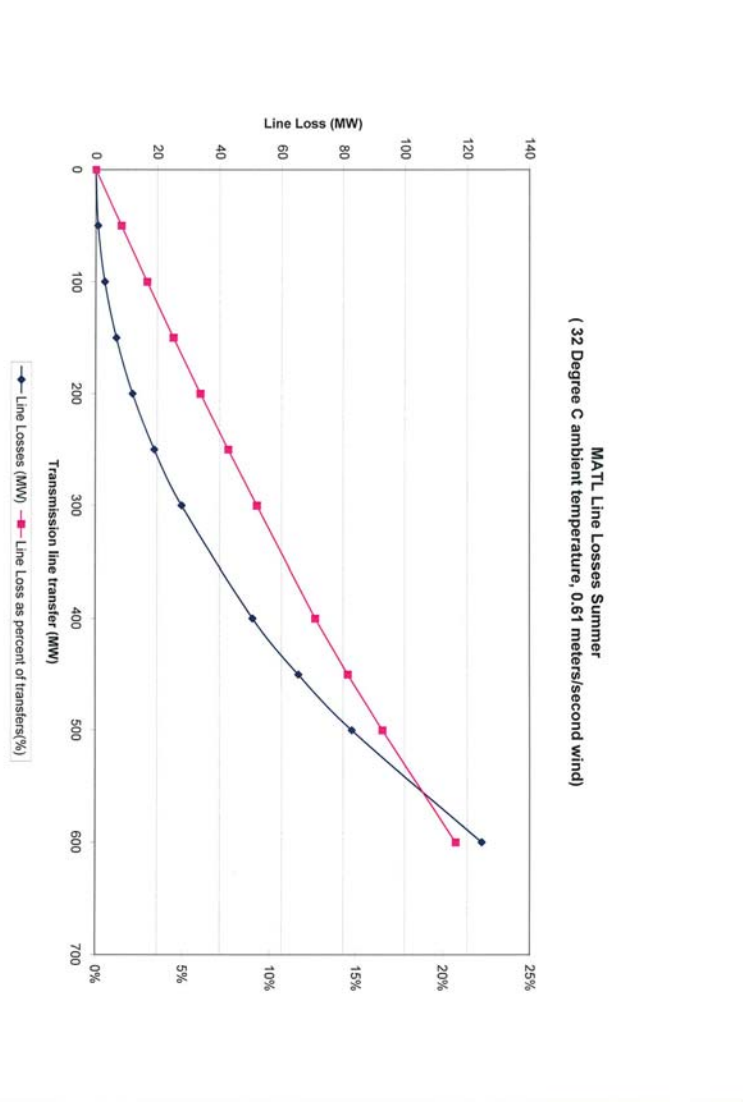
The comment assumes that there would be a 25 percent increase in revenue with little additional cost. According to MATL (2007b) to increase the capacity to 400 or 600 MW a second phase shifting transformer could theoretically be installed in parallel at the substation near Lethbridge, but engineering studies would be required to confirm the practicality of installing this equipment and the limitations on incremental capacity that could be added this way. MATL estimates that the engineering studies and procurement and installation of a second phase shifting transformer would cost $15 to $20 million (USD).

In addition, the voltage level at the Marias substation is forecast to drop below WECC standards when power transfers between the Great Falls and Lethbridge terminals are in the range of 390 to 450 MW, depending on system conditions. It may be possible to raise the "end-to-end" power transfer rate beyond this range by installing additional series and/or shunt capacitors. Engineering studies would be required to confirm the feasibility of this proposed solution. The estimated range of costs to conduct such studies, perform the detailed engineering, procure and construct the additional capacitors is $10 to $15 million (USD).

Lastly, the delivery and take–away capacity at Great Falls and Lethbridge would require upgrades to transfer more than 300 MW of power. MATL has not submitted interconnection requests to either NorthWestern Energy or the Alberta Electric System Operator for the upgrades required to transfer 400 or 600 MW into their respective systems, so the costs of these upgrades is not known. MATL is contributing approximately $5 million for network upgrades at NorthWestern Energy's Great Falls substation as part of MATL's existing 300 MW interconnection request.

MATL's right of way and safety zone are wide enough to handle 600 MW.


MATL Line Losses Winter
(0 Degree C ambient temperature, 0.61 meter/second wind)
Losses (MW)
Transfer (MW)
Line Losses (MW)
Line Loss as percent of transfers(%)


MATL Line Losses Summer
(32 Degree C ambient temperature, 0.61 meters/second wind)
Line Loss (MW)
Transmission line transfer (MW)
Line Losses (MW)
Line Loss as percent of transfers(%)

> Detailed design on the actual line route has commenced, ... As part of the design, the size and rating of conductor and the impact on weight on pole requirements has been decided, ... The Company has been advised the range of thermal capacity of the selected conductor, at acceptable line loss performance in the most adverse wind and temperature condition, is at least like to be 450 MWs or higher.[2]

If these larger wattage conductors are included in the construction costs referenced in Table 4.5-1, what would the cost be if MATL used conductors rated for the 300 MW capacity line?

Since the Company has chosen the larger capacity conductor, why should MATL be able to increase its revenue stream by 25% with little cost to itself, and yet be allowed to claim it is not economically feasible to build the line as laid out in Agency Alternative 4? The possibility of this increased revenue stream seems great considering the Company received requests for 5 times the available capacity which was up for bid in the June 2006 capacity auction.[3]

3. Alternative Considered But Dismissed Comment 347

On pages 2-45–47, four proposals were dismissed solely on the grounds of higher costs: a) guyed vs. self-supporting angle and dead end structures, b) underground line, c) monopoles, and d) tie-in to WAPA's system at Shelby.

Why is it appropriate for the agency to dismiss alternatives based upon concern for MATL's costs (all of which are recoverable in the market) and yet ignore the costs incurred by farmers when these line structures are placed diagonally in cropland? The agency admits the costs to farmers are higher, but the preliminary approved route and design do not require the Company to use monopoles placed on field lines.

For the agency to rely on the Company to somehow mitigate these increased costs with some yet-to-be-calculated and agreed upon payment is not appropriate. The Company is not required by law to make such payments and if no agreement can be reached as to the amount of the payment, the farmer will simply have to absorb the increased costs when the Company exercises its power of eminent domain to build the line. The agency, in its preliminary selected action, seems willing to protect MATL from any declared increased costs, but is not willing to protect farmers from the same fate.

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[2] *Id.*

[3] http://www.tonbridgepower.com/MATL/eco.asp, ¶2.

Page 2

Response 347: Costs to the applicant as well as costs to society are considerations under the Major Facility Siting Act, which is the regulatory statute under which one permitting decision will be made. A revised discussion of costs to farm around structures is found in Section 3.13.

This is not the proper balancing of factors the agency is supposed to use in order to comply with the MFSA, MEPA, and ARM 17.20.1607.

4. Tax Revenues Comment 348

Table 3.13-11 of the report sets out "Tax Benefit Estimates" for the various counties in which the line is to be built. The agency discusses these benefits as a positive socioeconomic factor regarding the proposed project. However, these revenues are very possibly going to be cut by 75% when a bill supported by Gov. Schweitzer is introduced and passed by the current Legislature.

5. MATL's Easement Payments Comment 349

On page 4-18 of the report, the agency discusses easement payments which are not part of the proper legal analysis required of the Department:

> MATL has already negotiated easements across portions of the proposed Project alignment. The cost to MATL is unknown. If MATL has already paid for right-of-way access to lands that may be crossed by the Alternative 2 alignment, and that alignment is not permitted, MATL may lose the money already spent.

The decision by MATL to seek and pay for easements on any particular route prior to this agency's review was a business decision it was free to make. It took such action at its own risk, and the agency should not base decisions about the project on any such payments. There appears to be no legal authority for such a consideration.

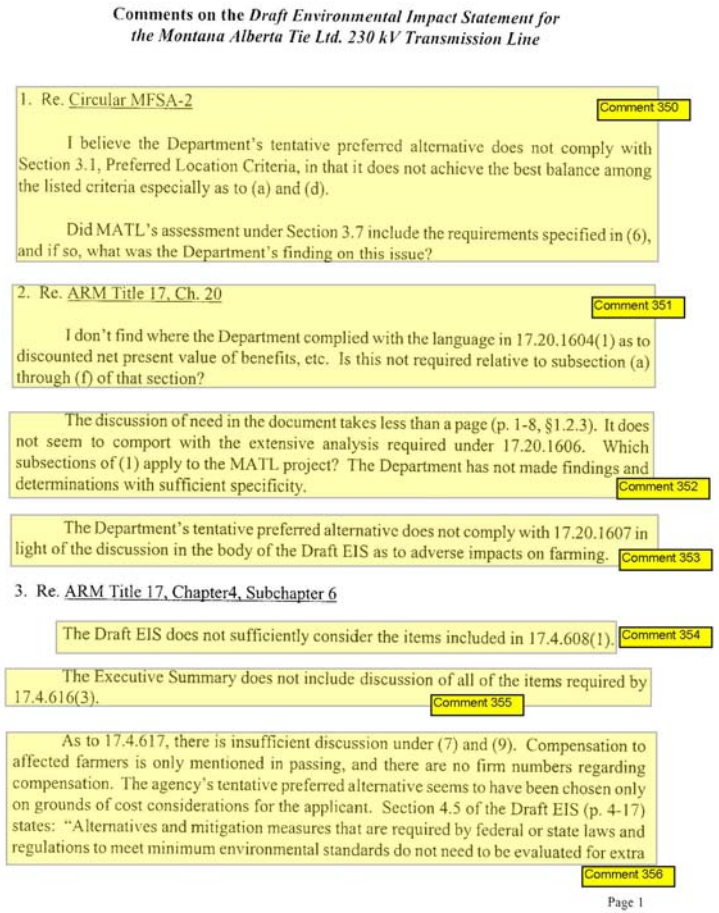
Respectfully submitted this 27th day of March, 2007, at the Conrad hearing.

Katrina Wilson Martin
1720 24th Ln NE
Dutton, MT 59433
463-2337

Page 3

Response 348: See the revised discussion on land values in Section 3.13. Recent legislation reduced the estimated tax revenues from the project.

Response 349: The Montana Environmental Policy Act requires DEQ to disclose the costs to the applicant of its regulations, whether or not the cost can properly be used as a decision criterion. Costs must be considered under the Montana Major Facility Siting Act when making a finding required under 75-20-301(1)(c), MCA, prior to certification that the facility minimizes adverse environmental impact, considering the state of available technology and the nature and economics of the various alternatives. Easement payments made before a permit is issued are the applicant's responsibility.



Comments on the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line*

1. Re. Circular MFSA-2 — Comment 350

I believe the Department's tentative preferred alternative does not comply with Section 3.1, Preferred Location Criteria, in that it does not achieve the best balance among the listed criteria especially as to (a) and (d).

Did MATL's assessment under Section 3.7 include the requirements specified in (6), and if so, what was the Department's finding on this issue?

2. Re. ARM Title 17, Ch. 20 — Comment 351

I don't find where the Department complied with the language in 17.20.1604(1) as to discounted net present value of benefits, etc. Is this not required relative to subsection (a) through (f) of that section?

The discussion of need in the document takes less than a page (p. 1-8, §1.2.3). It does not seem to comport with the extensive analysis required under 17.20.1606. Which subsections of (1) apply to the MATL project? The Department has not made findings and determinations with sufficient specificity. — Comment 352

The Department's tentative preferred alternative does not comply with 17.20.1607 in light of the discussion in the body of the Draft EIS as to adverse impacts on farming. — Comment 353

3. Re. ARM Title 17, Chapter4, Subchapter 6

The Draft EIS does not sufficiently consider the items included in 17.4.608(1). — Comment 354

The Executive Summary does not include discussion of all of the items required by 17.4.616(3). — Comment 355

As to 17.4.617, there is insufficient discussion under (7) and (9). Compensation to affected farmers is only mentioned in passing, and there are no firm numbers regarding compensation. The agency's tentative preferred alternative seems to have been chosen only on grounds of cost considerations for the applicant. Section 4.5 of the Draft EIS (p. 4-17) states: "Alternatives and mitigation measures that are required by federal or state laws and regulations to meet minimum environmental standards do not need to be evaluated for extra — Comment 356

Page 1

Response 350: MFSA-2 describes information that an applicant must include in its application. The required information includes at least two alternative locations for the facility proposed by the applicant and the applicant's identification of its preferred facility location. MFSA-2 does not completely govern DEQ's selection of a preferred alternative. Other required findings are listed in 75-20-301, MCA and in ARM 17.20.1607. MATL's application contained the assessment of public attitudes and concerns required by MFSA-2(3.7)(6).

Response 351: If DEQ is able to make the findings necessary for certification, the findings, including findings on public interest, convenience and necessity, will be set forth in the Record of Decision.

Response 352: If DEQ is able to make the findings necessary for certification, the findings, including findings on the need for the facility, will be set forth in the Record of Decision.

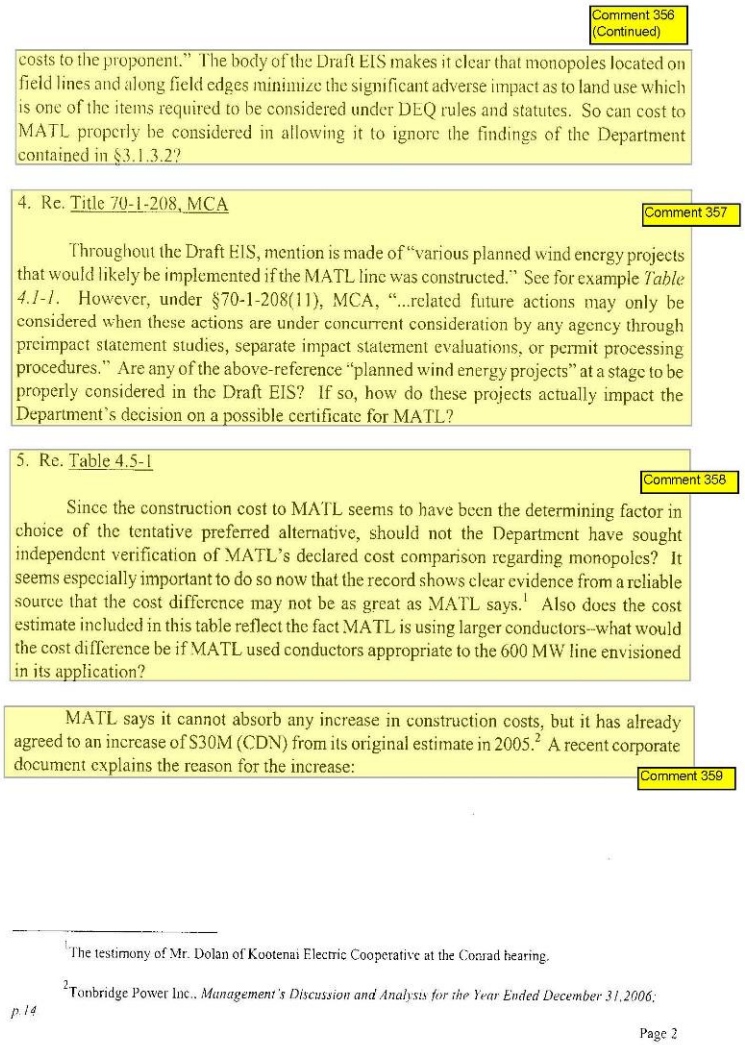
Response 353: Thank you for your opinion. See response to comment 351. The supplemental draft EIS contains additional analysis of the proposed project's impact on farming. If DEQ is able to make the findings necessary for certification, the findings, including findings on minimum adverse environmental impacts, will be set forth in the Record of Decision.

Response 354: Thank you for your opinion. Discussions regarding the significance of impacts on the quality of the human environment are found throughout Chapter 3.

Response 355: The Summary describes the proposed action and alternatives and Figure S-1 shows their locations. The Summary also lists ten issues that were identified based, in part, on public comment. Table S-5 summarizes the impacts of the alternatives, including tradeoffs among alternatives and conclusions regarding the issues identified during scoping. The agencies' preferred alternative was identified in the cover letter to the March 2007 document.

At the time the draft EIS was published, little information was available to the agencies regarding cost to farmers. Additional information has been procured and is provided in 3.13. The reference to Section 4.20 is for the regulatory restrictions analysis required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The EIS must disclose the economic impact on the applicant of additional requirements imposed by the agency that are not absolutely required by law. This information must be provided whether or not cost to the applicant is a decision criterion under the permitting statute.

Response 356: The state has no regulatory authority over wind farms, so no state agency is concurrently considering wind farm permitting. While, strictly speaking, the Montana Environmental Policy Act would not require wind farms to be considered in the cumulative impacts analysis, the EIS was prepared jointly by DEQ and DOE, and so must also comply with the National Environmental Policy Act. The National Environmental Policy Act requires that "reasonably foreseeable future actions" be considered in the cumulative impacts analysis. Because some wind generation firms have contracted for capacity on the MATL line, it is assumed the wind farm development is reasonably foreseeable. Very little information is available about developers' plans. Additional information on the impacts of wind farms is provided in Chapters 3 and 4. ARM 17.20.1604 says that DEQ must take into account "the effects of the economic activity resulting from the proposed facility."



Comment 356 (Continued)

costs to the proponent." The body of the Draft EIS makes it clear that monopoles located on field lines and along field edges minimize the significant adverse impact as to land use which is one of the items required to be considered under DEQ rules and statutes. So can cost to MATL properly be considered in allowing it to ignore the findings of the Department contained in §3.1.3.2?

4. Re. Title 70-1-208, MCA

Comment 357

Throughout the Draft EIS, mention is made of "various planned wind energy projects that would likely be implemented if the MATL line was constructed." See for example *Table 4.1-1*. However, under §70-1-208(11), MCA, "...related future actions may only be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any agency through preimpact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluations, or permit processing procedures." Are any of the above-reference "planned wind energy projects" at a stage to be properly considered in the Draft EIS? If so, how do these projects actually impact the Department's decision on a possible certificate for MATL?

5. Re. Table 4.5-1

Comment 358

Since the construction cost to MATL seems to have been the determining factor in choice of the tentative preferred alternative, should not the Department have sought independent verification of MATL's declared cost comparison regarding monopoles? It seems especially important to do so now that the record shows clear evidence from a reliable source that the cost difference may not be as great as MATL says.[1] Also does the cost estimate included in this table reflect the fact MATL is using larger conductors–what would the cost difference be if MATL used conductors appropriate to the 600 MW line envisioned in its application?

MATL says it cannot absorb any increase in construction costs, but it has already agreed to an increase of $30M (CDN) from its original estimate in 2005.[2] A recent corporate document explains the reason for the increase:

Comment 359

[1] The testimony of Mr. Dolan of Kootenai Electric Cooperative at the Conrad hearing.

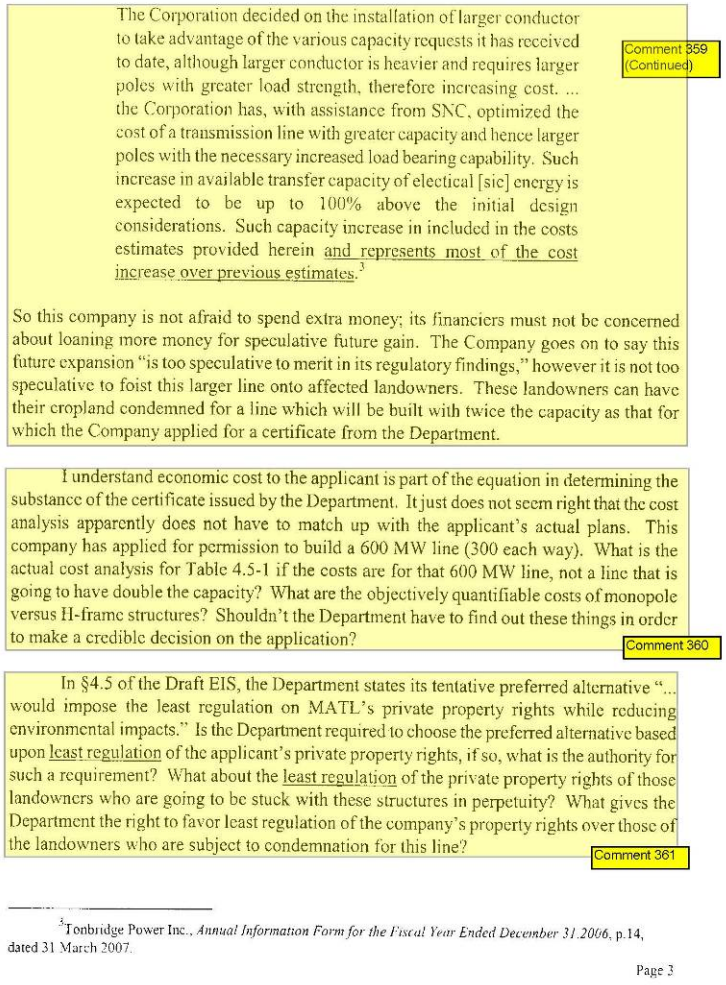
[2] Tonbridge Power Inc., *Management's Discussion and Analysis for the Year Ended December 31,2006;* p.14

Page 2

Response 357: Wind farms are not under concurrent consideration by any agency and, thus, DEQ would not be allowed to include wind farms in its cumulative impacts analysis under Section 75-1-208, MCA, if it were not preparing a joint environmental review document with DOE. Pursuant to ARM 17.4.627, whenever a state agency prepares a joint environmental impact statement that must comply with National Environmental Policy Act and Montana Environmental Policy Act, the joint document must be prepared in compliance with both statutes. The state agency may accede to and follow more stringent federal requirements, such as additional content. National Environmental Policy Act requires reasonably foreseeable future actions to be included in the cumulative impacts analysis, not just those undergoing concurrent review. In order to comply with the more stringent federal requirement, DEQ has prepared this supplement to the draft environmental impact statement that, in part, includes a cumulative impacts analysis regarding wind farms.

Response 358: The agencies contracted with an independent consulting firm, HDR in Billings, MT, to review MATL's costs. HDR compared the MATL costs to similar projects they have completed or have estimated and agree with the MATL costs at this time. HDR noted that the labor and material prices are very volatile presently and cost estimates are subject to change in short periods of time.

Response 359: Comment noted.



> The Corporation decided on the installation of larger conductor to take advantage of the various capacity requests it has received to date, although larger conductor is heavier and requires larger poles with greater load strength, therefore increasing cost. ... the Corporation has, with assistance from SNC, optimized the cost of a transmission line with greater capacity and hence larger poles with the necessary increased load bearing capability. Such increase in available transfer capacity of electical [sic] energy is expected to be up to 100% above the initial design considerations. Such capacity increase in included in the costs estimates provided herein and represents most of the cost increase over previous estimates.[3]

Comment 359 (Continued)

So this company is not afraid to spend extra money; its financiers must not be concerned about loaning more money for speculative future gain. The Company goes on to say this future expansion "is too speculative to merit in its regulatory findings," however it is not too speculative to foist this larger line onto affected landowners. These landowners can have their cropland condemned for a line which will be built with twice the capacity as that for which the Company applied for a certificate from the Department.

I understand economic cost to the applicant is part of the equation in determining the substance of the certificate issued by the Department. It just does not seem right that the cost analysis apparently does not have to match up with the applicant's actual plans. This company has applied for permission to build a 600 MW line (300 each way). What is the actual cost analysis for Table 4.5-1 if the costs are for that 600 MW line, not a line that is going to have double the capacity? What are the objectively quantifiable costs of monopole versus H-frame structures? Shouldn't the Department have to find out these things in order to make a credible decision on the application?

Comment 360

In §4.5 of the Draft EIS, the Department states its tentative preferred alternative "... would impose the least regulation on MATL's private property rights while reducing environmental impacts." Is the Department required to choose the preferred alternative based upon least regulation of the applicant's private property rights, if so, what is the authority for such a requirement? What about the least regulation of the private property rights of those landowners who are going to be stuck with these structures in perpetuity? What gives the Department the right to favor least regulation of the company's property rights over those of the landowners who are subject to condemnation for this line?

Comment 361

[3] Tonbridge Power Inc., *Annual Information Form for the Fiscal Year Ended December 31 2006*, p.14, dated 31 March 2007.

Page 3

Response 360: Comment noted. Refer to response to comment 358 for information on a third party review of MATL's cost estimates.

Response 361: The agencies are not required to choose a preferred alternative based only on cost to the applicant. The statement in Section 4.5 of the March 2007 document is simply a statement of fact of the regulatory restrictions analysis required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The legal requirement to disclose the regulatory impact on the applicant's private property rights applies only to the applicant and not to other people who might be affected by the permitting action. This is a matter of law, not DEQ's choice. The cost to the applicant may be a factor in the permitting decision, but it is not the only factor.

In §4.4 the Department states: "Because Alternative 4 contains additional environmental mitigation measures for avoiding adverse impacts to farming, riparian areas, and surface water, this alternative presents the most protective alternative for the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity of the environment while benefitting socio-economic resources." When the Department balanced the factors to make its decision, apparently these clear benefits of Alternative 4 are not entitled to as much weight as the least regulation of MATL's property rights. Is this a proper interpretation of the strong environmental protection provisions set forth in our state's Constitution and the various statutes administered by the Department? Comment 362

Thank you very much for your consideration of these comments.

Respectfully submitted this 24th day of April, 2007 .

Katrina Wilson Martin
1720 24th Ln NE
Dutton, MT 59433
463-2337
katrinam@3rivers.net

Response 362: The Montana Legislature enacted the Major Facility Siting Act to implement the environmental provisions set forth in Article II, Section 3, and Article IX of the Montana Constitution. DEQ will make its certification decision based on the findings required by the Major Facility Siting Act in Section 75-20-301, MCA. These findings will be set forth in the Record of Decision.

Comments on the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line*

My name is Katrina Martin; my neighbors and I farm east of Dutton. On their behalf and my own, I rise in support of the Agency Alternative in the Draft EIS. Comment 363

Alternative 4 properly balances all the various factors the Montana statutues and the Department's administrative rules require. In the EIS's comparison of the alternatives, Alternative 4 is superior to the others in every way except minor impact to wetlands and the need for additional stream crossings.

Most importantly it minimizes the negative effects on land use. Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the study area is agricultural land, 69% is dryland cropland/CRP.[1] Reducing adverse impacts to this category of land is obviously critical in maintaining a balance between the benefits and disadvantages of the proposed project; the effects on cropland should be entitled to great weight when comparing the alternatives.

Although Alternative 4 is 10 miles longer than the tentatively preferred Alternative 2, it crosses 5 fewer miles of cropland/CRP.[2] Even more importantly, the line crosses diagonally on **50%** less cropland (27 miles versus 53 miles), and has a N/S, E/W orientation on 60 miles versus 40 miles.[3] These are huge considerations for the ag producers on the ground.

Alternative 4 also specifies the use of a long-span monopole structure in cropland/CRP. Such structures are obviously much less onerous to farm around and, when placed on field lines or at the edge of fields, they substantially reduce the long-term negative impacts on farming.

MATL states monopoles are more expensive to erect than the H-frame structures it wants to use. The cost difference used in the Draft EIS is $5 million. This constitutes a possible one-time expense which would greatly mitigate the life-time negative impact these structures place on farmers; such costly impacts, while not quantified by the agency, were clearly recognized and acknowledged.

Five million dollars is a lot of money; some say MATL cannot possibly be expected to spend that extra money to build the line described in Alternative 4. The total cost of the line

[1] *Draft EIS*, page ES-8; Table 3.1-2.

[2] *Id.*, Table 3.1-4.

[3] *Id.*, Table 3.1-3.

is projected at $100 million dollars or so; five percent extra hardly seems to justify wreaking economic hardship on so many folks on the ground.

MATL's refusal to spend the additional money comes at the same time its parent company, Tonbridge Power Inc., is telling prospective investors the following:

> "... the unique design of MATL's, FERC approved take or pay contracts, has provided the project with sufficient contracted revenues to date, ... , to yield $28.4 million in revenues with low expected costs in the first year after commissioning.[4] Comment 363 (Continued)
>
> ... annual revenues of $28.4 million by mid-2009 [will] increase at a contractual inflator rate of 2.5% per annum thereafter. Over the life of the project, gross revenue from these new twenty-five year contracts and existing long term contracts should total close to CDN$900 million.[5]

To me those numbers are staggering. This company is going to generate three-quarters of a billion US dollars in revenue, with low off-setting costs, over a 25-year period. Is it any wonder farmers are unwilling to accept the notion that the company cannot possibly afford to build Alternative 4?

We farmers have been told all of us have to sacrifice for the common good; we heard that sentiment expressed at the two earlier hearings. The degree of anger and resentment I feel when I hear such comments is hard to control. We <u>are</u> willing to sacrifice for the common good. We are not here arguing for the "No Action" alternative; we have never tried to stop the construction of this line. We all use electricity. We all want to see economic development in our region, but new development cannot properly be built on the backs of those who have long been engaged in the existing economic development.

Most of us are third or fourth generation Montanans who have farmed here for decades; we are committed to the state and to the land. We are more than willing to sacrifice for this line, even though it is a "merchant line" created merely for the profit of the owner. Our sacrifice however, should only require having to accommodate and farm around <u>90</u> miles of monopoles which will stand forever in our cropland. We should not have to sacrifice more just because this company may have to spend an extra $5million of its eventual $750 million.

[4] http://www.tonbridgepower.com/index.aspx

[5] http://www.tonbridgepower.com/MATLeco.asp

As with everything in life, there is a right way and a wrong way to do things. Alternative 4 is the right way to build this power line.

Comment 363 (Continued)

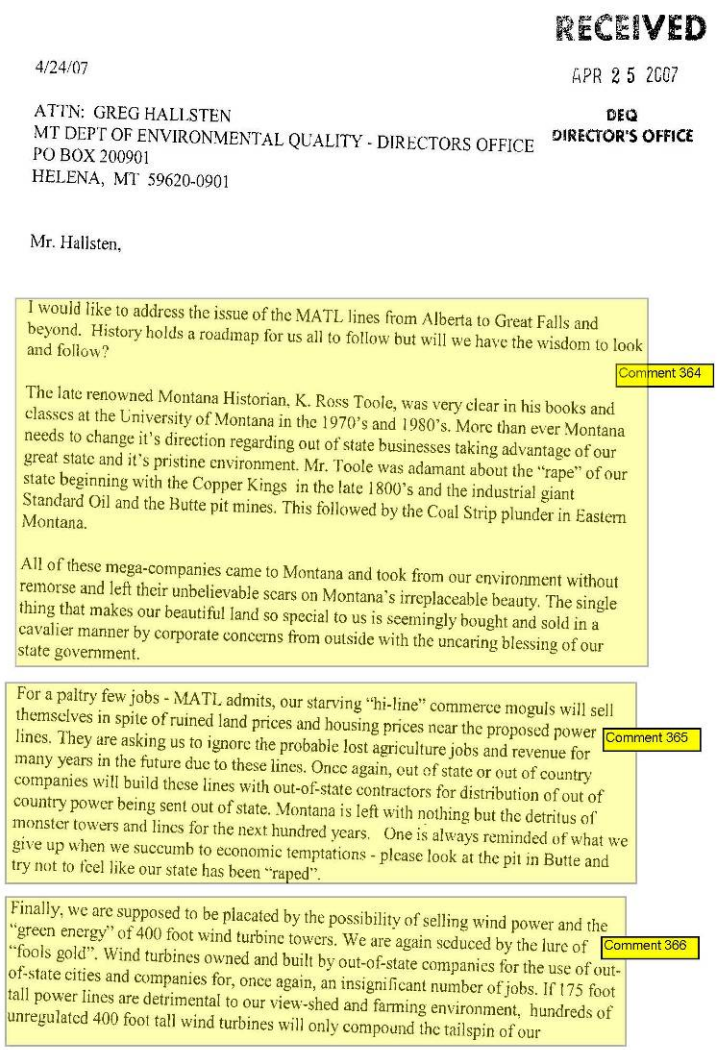
Thank you very much.

Respectfully submitted this 29th day of March, 2007, at the hearing in Great Falls, MT.

Katrina Wilson Martin
1720 24th Ln NE
Dutton, MT 59433
463-2337
katrinam@3rivers.net

Page 3

Response 363: Comment noted.



RECEIVED
APR 25 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

4/24/07

ATTN: GREG HALLSTEN
MT DEPT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY - DIRECTORS OFFICE
PO BOX 200901
HELENA, MT 59620-0901

Mr. Hallsten,

I would like to address the issue of the MATL lines from Alberta to Great Falls and beyond. History holds a roadmap for us all to follow but will we have the wisdom to look and follow?

Comment 364

The late renowned Montana Historian, K. Ross Toole, was very clear in his books and classes at the University of Montana in the 1970's and 1980's. More than ever Montana needs to change it's direction regarding out of state businesses taking advantage of our great state and it's pristine environment. Mr. Toole was adamant about the "rape" of our state beginning with the Copper Kings in the late 1800's and the industrial giant Standard Oil and the Butte pit mines. This followed by the Coal Strip plunder in Eastern Montana.

All of these mega-companies came to Montana and took from our environment without remorse and left their unbelievable scars on Montana's irreplaceable beauty. The single thing that makes our beautiful land so special to us is seemingly bought and sold in a cavalier manner by corporate concerns from outside with the uncaring blessing of our state government.

For a paltry few jobs - MATL admits, our starving "hi-line" commerce moguls will sell themselves in spite of ruined land prices and housing prices near the proposed power lines. They are asking us to ignore the probable lost agriculture jobs and revenue for many years in the future due to these lines. Once again, out of state or out of country companies will build these lines with out-of-state contractors for distribution of out of country power being sent out of state. Montana is left with nothing but the detritus of monster towers and lines for the next hundred years. One is always reminded of what we give up when we succumb to economic temptations - please look at the pit in Butte and try not to feel like our state has been "raped".

Comment 365

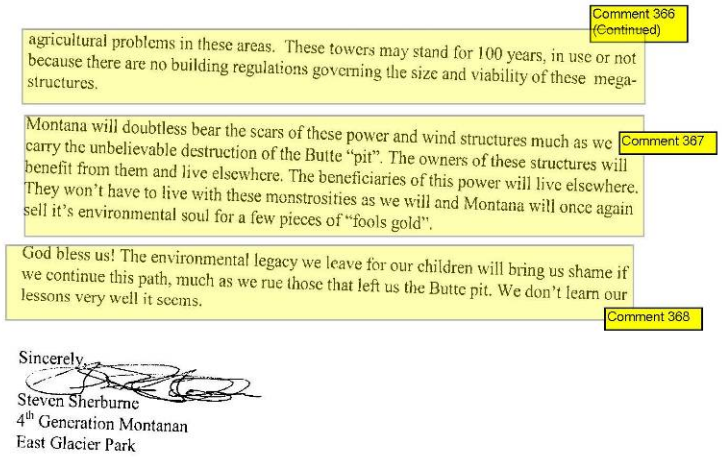
Finally, we are supposed to be placated by the possibility of selling wind power and the "green energy" of 400 foot wind turbine towers. We are again seduced by the lure of "fools gold". Wind turbines owned and built by out-of-state companies for the use of out-of-state cities and companies for, once again, an insignificant number of jobs. If 175 foot tall power lines are detrimental to our view-shed and farming environment, hundreds of unregulated 400 foot tall wind turbines will only compound the tailspin of our

Comment 366

Response 364: Comment noted.

Response 365: Comment noted. Costs and risks of the MATL line to Montana are discussed in the draft EIS. The benefits and cost of the MATL line to Montana are discussed in Sections 1.2 and 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13.

Response 366: Comment noted. See response to comment 365. The draft EIS notes that visual impacts of the proposed line would be long term. Visual effects from wind farms would also be present for the life of these projects. DEQ environmental specifications (Appendix F) state that when the transmission line is no longer used or useful, structures, conductors, and ground wires shall be removed and disturbed areas reclaimed using methods outlined in the reclamation and revegetation plan. Decommissioning of wind farms could occur as agreed to between project owners and landowners.



agricultural problems in these areas. These towers may stand for 100 years, in use or not because there are no building regulations governing the size and viability of these mega-structures.

Comment 366 (Continued)

Montana will doubtless bear the scars of these power and wind structures much as we carry the unbelievable destruction of the Butte "pit". The owners of these structures will benefit from them and live elsewhere. The beneficiaries of this power will live elsewhere. They won't have to live with these monstrosities as we will and Montana will once again sell it's environmental soul for a few pieces of "fools gold".

Comment 367

God bless us! The environmental legacy we leave for our children will bring us shame if we continue this path, much as we rue those that left us the Butte pit. We don't learn our lessons very well it seems.

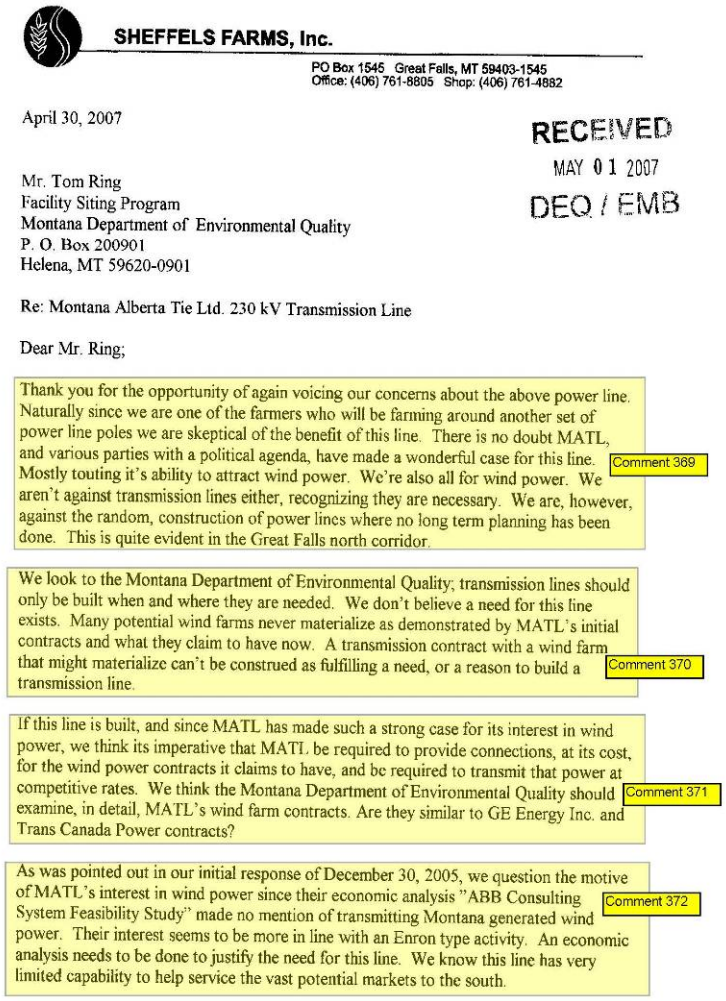
Comment 368

Sincerely,

Steven Sherburne
4th Generation Montanan
East Glacier Park

Response 367: Comment noted.

Response 368: Comment noted.



SHEFFELS FARMS, Inc.

PO Box 1545 Great Falls, MT 59403-1545
Office: (406) 761-8805 Shop: (406) 761-4882

April 30, 2007

RECEIVED
MAY 01 2007
DEQ / EMB

Mr. Tom Ring
Facility Siting Program
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P. O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line

Dear Mr. Ring;

Thank you for the opportunity of again voicing our concerns about the above power line. Naturally since we are one of the farmers who will be farming around another set of power line poles we are skeptical of the benefit of this line. There is no doubt MATL, and various parties with a political agenda, have made a wonderful case for this line. Mostly touting it's ability to attract wind power. We're also all for wind power. We aren't against transmission lines either, recognizing they are necessary. We are, however, against the random, construction of power lines where no long term planning has been done. This is quite evident in the Great Falls north corridor. Comment 369

We look to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality; transmission lines should only be built when and where they are needed. We don't believe a need for this line exists. Many potential wind farms never materialize as demonstrated by MATL's initial contracts and what they claim to have now. A transmission contract with a wind farm that might materialize can't be construed as fulfilling a need, or a reason to build a transmission line. Comment 370

If this line is built, and since MATL has made such a strong case for its interest in wind power, we think its imperative that MATL be required to provide connections, at its cost, for the wind power contracts it claims to have, and be required to transmit that power at competitive rates. We think the Montana Department of Environmental Quality should examine, in detail, MATL's wind farm contracts. Are they similar to GE Energy Inc. and Trans Canada Power contracts? Comment 371

As was pointed out in our initial response of December 30, 2005, we question the motive of MATL's interest in wind power since their economic analysis "ABB Consulting System Feasibility Study" made no mention of transmitting Montana generated wind power. Their interest seems to be more in line with an Enron type activity. An economic analysis needs to be done to justify the need for this line. We know this line has very limited capability to help service the vast potential markets to the south. Comment 372

Response 369: Comment noted.

Response 370: Comment noted. See response to comment 25.

Response 371: Owners of wind farms who have contracted for services with MATL are found in Table 4.1-2. In addition, the transmission tariff is set by FERC, not by the agencies.

Response 372: Your opinion is noted. See response to comment 365.

We still remember MATL's initial response to our question; "Why don't you connect at either Shelby or Cut Bank?" It was, because it would not be economically feasible to pay the tariffs on the existing lines. Certainly not a reason, or a need, for a third line to the same area Comment 373

Remember MATL expects to make $28.4 million in revenues with low expected costs in the first year after commissioning.[1] There should be no financial problem with being fair with landowners and doing it right. They should be required to avoid cropland wherever possible, use single poles, provide wind power connections, and a method of insuring payments of easements and maintenance since we are dealing with a foreign company. Comment 374

As stated in an earlier response, routing No. 4 with alignment north of existing lines on our farm is unacceptable.

Sheffels Farms, Inc.

John Sheffels Jim Sheffels

Enc.

[1] http://www.tonbridgepower.com/

2

Response 373: A discussion about MATL tying into the Shelby substation as an alternative is found in Section 2.7, Alternatives Considered but Dismissed. Also see the response to comment 40.

Response 374: Comment noted.

Hallsten, Greg

From: chere@preservemontana.org
Posted At: Monday, April 30, 2007 11:16 PM
Conversation: MATL comments from MPA
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL comments from MPA

MATL comments from MPA.doc (18...

Dear Mr.Hallsten

Comment 375

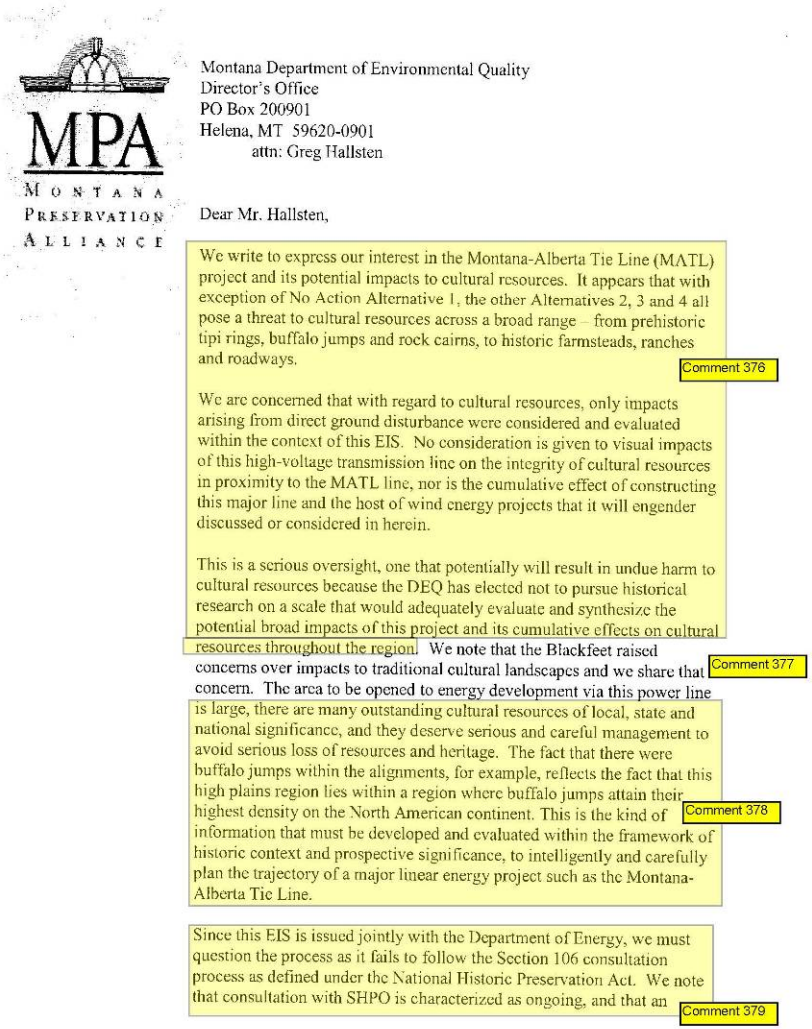
We are writing to offer our perspective on the Montana-Alberta Tie Line project, proposed to run from Great Falls to Lethbirdge, Alberta. Before we do, however, we would note that a large number of interested groups representing various public audiences were contacted and consulted during the development of the alternatives discussed in the EIS. However, groups interested in the cultural resources in the area were inadequately represented. We would request, therefore, that in future discussions of this project and other EIS processes that DEQ is coordinating, that the cultural heritage of our state not be overlooked. Please add Montana Preservation Alliance to the list of interested public and parties to be consulted as proposals which may impact Montana's cultural resources are developed.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.
Sincerely,
Chere Jiusto

Executive Director
Montana Preservation Alliance
516 N. Park Ave., Suite A
Helena, MT 59601
406-457-2822

1

Response 375: Comment noted. Montana Preservation Alliance been added to the list of interested parties.



MPA
MONTANA PRESERVATION ALLIANCE

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
attn: Greg Hallsten

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

We write to express our interest in the Montana-Alberta Tie Line (MATL) project and its potential impacts to cultural resources. It appears that with exception of No Action Alternative 1, the other Alternatives 2, 3 and 4 all pose a threat to cultural resources across a broad range – from prehistoric tipi rings, buffalo jumps and rock cairns, to historic farmsteads, ranches and roadways. Comment 376

We are concerned that with regard to cultural resources, only impacts arising from direct ground disturbance were considered and evaluated within the context of this EIS. No consideration is given to visual impacts of this high-voltage transmission line on the integrity of cultural resources in proximity to the MATL line, nor is the cumulative effect of constructing this major line and the host of wind energy projects that it will engender discussed or considered in herein.

This is a serious oversight, one that potentially will result in undue harm to cultural resources because the DEQ has elected not to pursue historical research on a scale that would adequately evaluate and synthesize the potential broad impacts of this project and its cumulative effects on cultural resources throughout the region. We note that the Blackfeet raised concerns over impacts to traditional cultural landscapes and we share that concern. Comment 377 The area to be opened to energy development via this power line is large, there are many outstanding cultural resources of local, state and national significance, and they deserve serious and careful management to avoid serious loss of resources and heritage. The fact that there were buffalo jumps within the alignments, for example, reflects the fact that this high plains region lies within a region where buffalo jumps attain their highest density on the North American continent. This is the kind of Comment 378 information that must be developed and evaluated within the framework of historic context and prospective significance, to intelligently and carefully plan the trajectory of a major linear energy project such as the Montana-Alberta Tie Line.

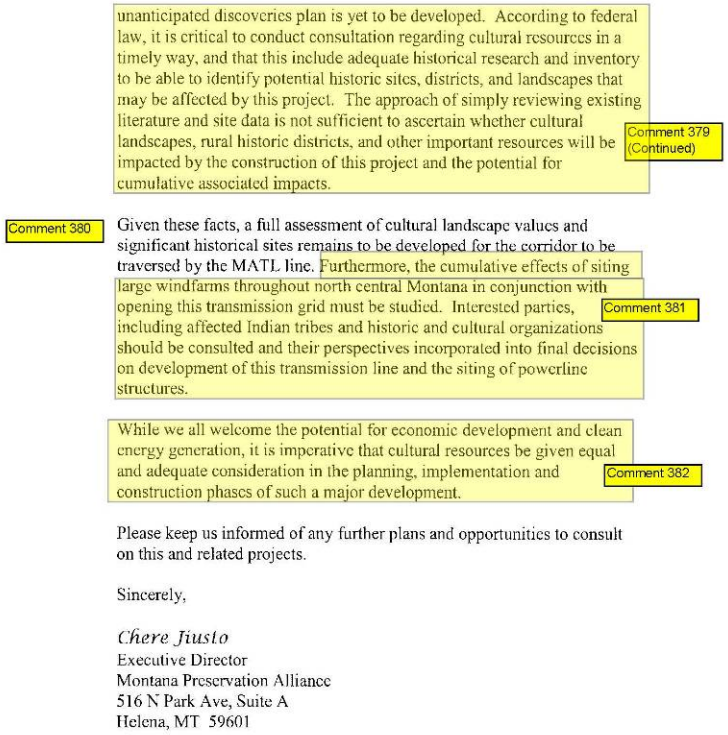
Since this EIS is issued jointly with the Department of Energy, we must question the process as it fails to follow the Section 106 consultation process as defined under the National Historic Preservation Act. We note that consultation with SHPO is characterized as ongoing, and that an Comment 379

Response 376: The discussion contained in the draft EIS was based largely on extant information available in literature and data file searches as on-the-ground information was not yet available. Thorough cultural resource inventories have now been completed, identifying all historic properties in close proximity to the proposed right-of-way and addressing issues such as landscape and traditional cultural properties. There is not a serious oversight on our part; the draft EIS was not intended to satisfy Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the data analysis was not yet available for inclusion in the draft EIS.

Response 377: In most areas, the existing landscape has been completely modified by the advent of agricultural pursuits, and both residential and industrial construction. No traditional cultural properties or landscapes were identified by the recent cultural resources inventory.

Response 378: The cultural resource inventory that was conducted addressed historic and prehistoric contexts and evaluated site significance within those contexts. A buffalo jump site was identified by the cultural resource inventory. As this concern is locale specific, if this alternative is chosen, the actual location of the proposed power line will be adjusted to avoid direct impacts to the prehistoric site. In almost all cases, avoidance of prehistoric sites is the preferred choice of mitigating impacts, and pole locations on the selected alternative will be adjusted to avoid impacts to sites and features.

Response 379: The March 2007 document was prepared on the basis of extant data; communication with the SHPO and the public was ongoing in accordance with the required procedures of the National Environmental Policy Act/Montana Environmental Policy Act processes. Cultural inventories designed to satisfy the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and consultations with the SHPO and other required parties were not completed at the time and were not included in its preparation. In July 2007, pursuant to the NHPA, DOE initiated consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office and with the Blackfeet Nation and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.



unanticipated discoveries plan is yet to be developed. According to federal law, it is critical to conduct consultation regarding cultural resources in a timely way, and that this include adequate historical research and inventory to be able to identify potential historic sites, districts, and landscapes that may be affected by this project. The approach of simply reviewing existing literature and site data is not sufficient to ascertain whether cultural landscapes, rural historic districts, and other important resources will be impacted by the construction of this project and the potential for cumulative associated impacts.

Comment 379 (Continued)

Comment 380

Given these facts, a full assessment of cultural landscape values and significant historical sites remains to be developed for the corridor to be traversed by the MATL line. Furthermore, the cumulative effects of siting large windfarms throughout north central Montana in conjunction with opening this transmission grid must be studied. Interested parties, including affected Indian tribes and historic and cultural organizations should be consulted and their perspectives incorporated into final decisions on development of this transmission line and the siting of powerline structures.

Comment 381

While we all welcome the potential for economic development and clean energy generation, it is imperative that cultural resources be given equal and adequate consideration in the planning, implementation and construction phases of such a major development.

Comment 382

Please keep us informed of any further plans and opportunities to consult on this and related projects.

Sincerely,

Chere Jiusto
Executive Director
Montana Preservation Alliance
516 N Park Ave, Suite A
Helena, MT 59601

Response 380: An intensive cultural resource inventory sufficient to satisfy all requirements of Section 106 of the NHPA has been completed and all appropriate cultural issues have been addressed in the cultural report. Formal consultations with the SHPO and with the Blackfeet Nation and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes were initiated in July 2007. As stated in response to comment 68 above, some of the wind generation proposed to be constructed in Montana has not yet been designed and therefore cannot be analyzed in detail. Nevertheless, this Draft EIS contains discussion of the impacts associated with wind farm development in Chapter 4.

Response 381: Appropriate cultural investigations and analysis will be conducted when such large wind farm projects and power line facilities are proposed. Cultural resource evaluations are largely locale specific and speculating about the effects of yet-to-be-proposed facilities on cultural resources is conjectural. Details on wind farm locations, number of turbines and other project-specific information are lacking. This information is not necessary for certification of the transmission line. Wind farm developers would complete necessary cultural resource investigations when wind farm projects are proposed and locations of turbines and roads are known. The description of potential visual impacts associated with wind farm development has been expanded in this document.

Response 382: Cultural resources have been and are being given equal and adequate consideration in the planning, implementation and construction phases of this project. Data gathering and analysis sufficient to meet the requirements of the NHPA were not completed at the time of release of the March 2007 document. DOE has now initiated consultation with the SHPO, the Blackfeet Nation, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes pursuant to Section 106 of the NHPA.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Calanthe Wilson-Pant [kaalipant@gmail.com]
Posted At: Monday, April 30, 2007 10:44 PM
Conversation: Montana-Alberta Line
Posted To: MATL
Subject: RE: Montana-Alberta Line

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

Comments 383 through 387

383 I am writing in favor of the line to Alberta from Great Falls. Since any electricity developed in the Great Falls area currently is extremely limited to distribution, given the lack of connection to the grid, I feel this is very important for the economic development of the Great Falls area. Especially, I am excited
384 about the development of wind electricity. I am also in favor of the IGCC plant planned for the
385 industrial park north of Great Falls. I feel that this line is important for that plant as well. Montana needs
386 to look more to cooperation with Canada for economic development. I do hope that provisions can be
387 made to minimize the impact on the farmers, such as putting the poles along the field edges as opposed to the middle of the fields. The equipment now used for farming has become so large that I am sure it is very difficult to maneuver around a major obstacle.

Sincerely,

M. Calanthe Wilson-Pant, M.D.
Board Certified Family Physician,
Occupational Physician,
Board Eligible Clinical Geneticist,
Member of Citizens for Clean Energy,
P.O. Box 581
Cascade, MT 59421
406-468-4067
Email: calanthewilson@alumni.bowdoin.edu

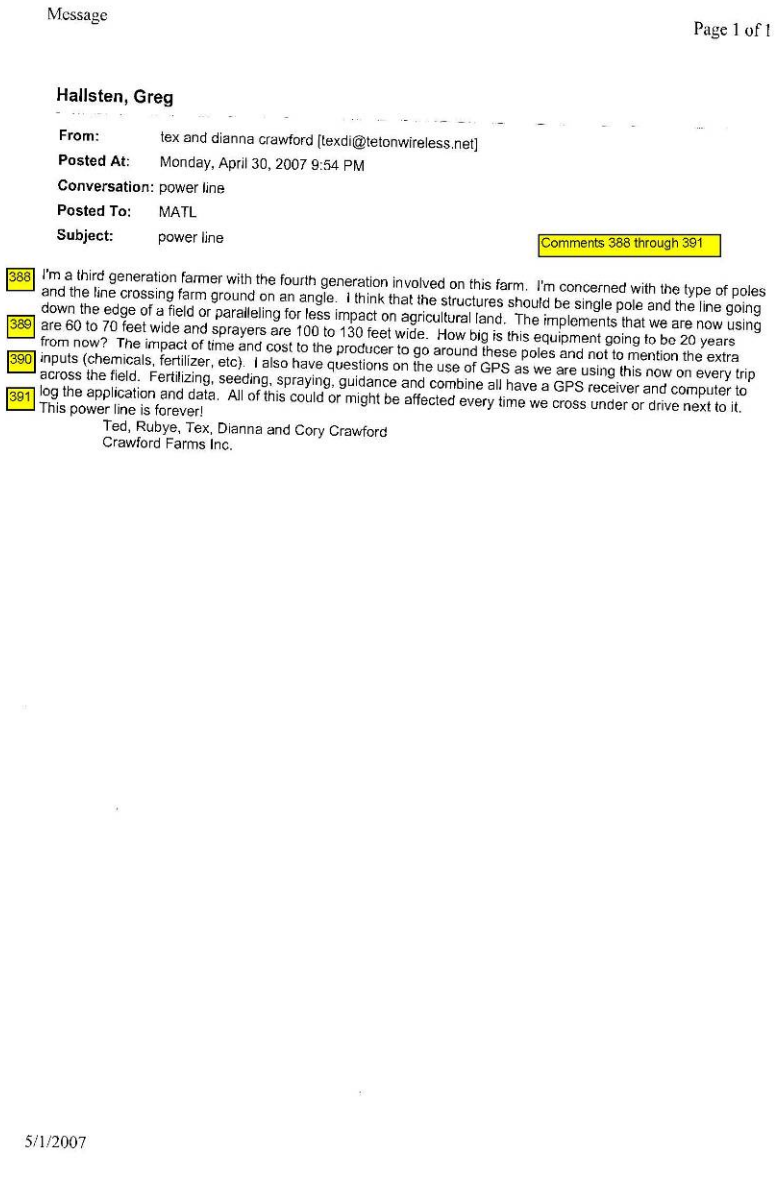
Response 383: Comment noted.

Response 384: Comment noted.

Response 385: Comment noted.

Response 386: Comment noted.

Response 387: Comment noted.



Message

Page 1 of 1

Hallsten, Greg

From: tex and dianna crawford [texdi@tetonwireless.net]
Posted At: Monday, April 30, 2007 9:54 PM
Conversation: power line
Posted To: MATL
Subject: power line

Comments 388 through 391

388 I'm a third generation farmer with the fourth generation involved on this farm. I'm concerned with the type of poles and the line crossing farm ground on an angle. I think that the structures should be single pole and the line going down the edge of a field or paralleling for less impact on agricultural land. The implements that we are now using
389 are 60 to 70 feet wide and sprayers are 100 to 130 feet wide. How big is this equipment going to be 20 years from now? The impact of time and cost to the producer to go around these poles and not to mention the extra
390 inputs (chemicals, fertilizer, etc). I also have questions on the use of GPS as we are using this now on every trip across the field. Fertilizing, seeding, spraying, guidance and combine all have a GPS receiver and computer to
391 log the application and data. All of this could or might be affected every time we cross under or drive next to it. This power line is forever!

Ted, Rubye, Tex, Dianna and Cory Crawford
Crawford Farms Inc.

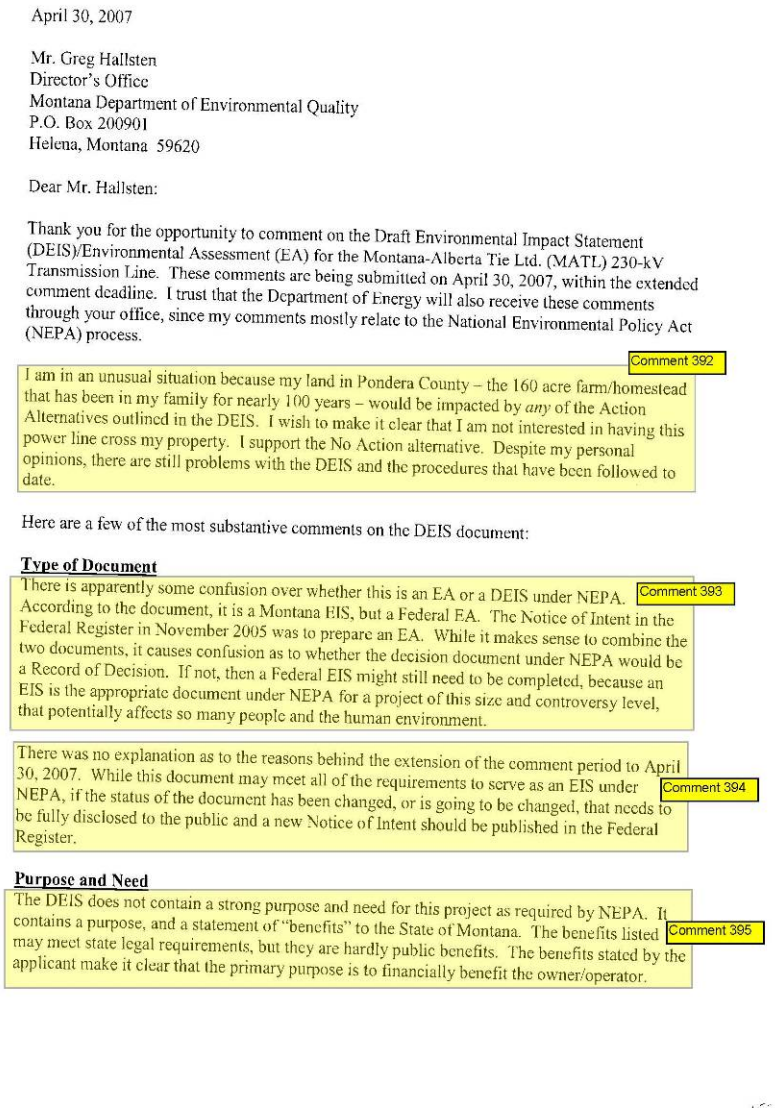
5/1/2007

Response 388: Comment noted.

Response 389: The agencies recognize the trend of increasing size of farming implements but cannot predict with much accuracy future equipment sizes.

Response 390: The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Response 391: See the revised discussion of potential impacts to GPS reception as a result of line construction in response to comment 599 and the discussion of impacts in sections 3.1 and 3.4.



April 30, 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Mr. Hallsten:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)/Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230-kV Transmission Line. These comments are being submitted on April 30, 2007, within the extended comment deadline. I trust that the Department of Energy will also receive these comments through your office, since my comments mostly relate to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

Comment 392

I am in an unusual situation because my land in Pondera County – the 160 acre farm/homestead that has been in my family for nearly 100 years – would be impacted by *any* of the Action Alternatives outlined in the DEIS. I wish to make it clear that I am not interested in having this power line cross my property. I support the No Action alternative. Despite my personal opinions, there are still problems with the DEIS and the procedures that have been followed to date.

Here are a few of the most substantive comments on the DEIS document:

Type of Document

Comment 393

There is apparently some confusion over whether this is an EA or a DEIS under NEPA. According to the document, it is a Montana EIS, but a Federal EA. The Notice of Intent in the Federal Register in November 2005 was to prepare an EA. While it makes sense to combine the two documents, it causes confusion as to whether the decision document under NEPA would be a Record of Decision. If not, then a Federal EIS might still need to be completed, because an EIS is the appropriate document under NEPA for a project of this size and controversy level, that potentially affects so many people and the human environment.

Comment 394

There was no explanation as to the reasons behind the extension of the comment period to April 30, 2007. While this document may meet all of the requirements to serve as an EIS under NEPA, if the status of the document has been changed, or is going to be changed, that needs to be fully disclosed to the public and a new Notice of Intent should be published in the Federal Register.

Purpose and Need

Comment 395

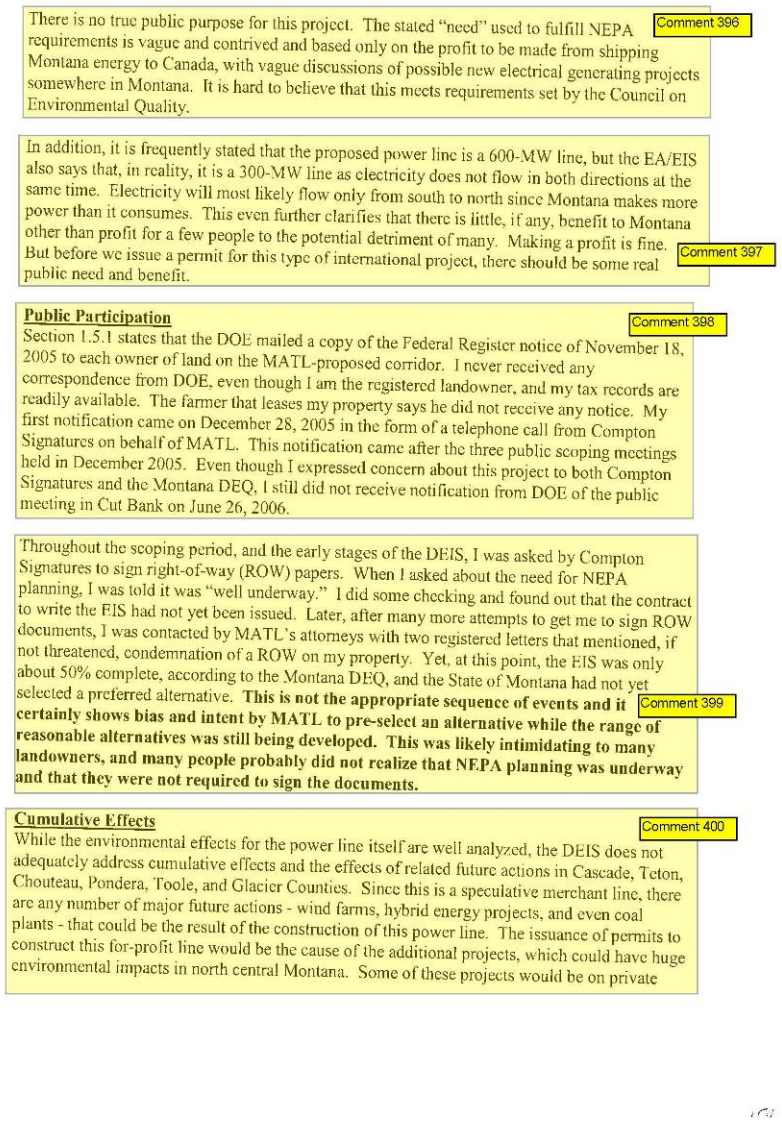
The DEIS does not contain a strong purpose and need for this project as required by NEPA. It contains a purpose, and a statement of "benefits" to the State of Montana. The benefits listed may meet state legal requirements, but they are hardly public benefits. The benefits stated by the applicant make it clear that the primary purpose is to financially benefit the owner/operator.

Response 392: Comment noted.

Response 393: Based in part on comments received on the joint March 2007 document, DOE has decided to prepare this EIS. To clarify, this document is a Federal draft EIS and State supplemental draft EIS published jointly by the DEQ and DOE.

Response 394: DOE published a Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in the Federal Register on June 7, 2007 (72 FR 31569).

Response 395: An expanded discussion of DOE's purpose and need and the criteria used by DOE in granting or denying a Presidential permit is provided in Chapter 1.



There is no true public purpose for this project. The stated "need" used to fulfill NEPA requirements is vague and contrived and based only on the profit to be made from shipping Montana energy to Canada, with vague discussions of possible new electrical generating projects somewhere in Montana. It is hard to believe that this meets requirements set by the Council on Environmental Quality.

Comment 396

In addition, it is frequently stated that the proposed power line is a 600-MW line, but the EA/EIS also says that, in reality, it is a 300-MW line as electricity does not flow in both directions at the same time. Electricity will most likely flow only from south to north since Montana makes more power than it consumes. This even further clarifies that there is little, if any, benefit to Montana other than profit for a few people to the potential detriment of many. Making a profit is fine. But before we issue a permit for this type of international project, there should be some real public need and benefit.

Comment 397

Public Participation

Section 1.5.1 states that the DOE mailed a copy of the Federal Register notice of November 18, 2005 to each owner of land on the MATL-proposed corridor. I never received any correspondence from DOE, even though I am the registered landowner, and my tax records are readily available. The farmer that leases my property says he did not receive any notice. My first notification came on December 28, 2005 in the form of a telephone call from Compton Signatures on behalf of MATL. This notification came after the three public scoping meetings held in December 2005. Even though I expressed concern about this project to both Compton Signatures and the Montana DEQ, I still did not receive notification from DOE of the public meeting in Cut Bank on June 26, 2006.

Comment 398

Throughout the scoping period, and the early stages of the DEIS, I was asked by Compton Signatures to sign right-of-way (ROW) papers. When I asked about the need for NEPA planning, I was told it was "well underway." I did some checking and found out that the contract to write the EIS had not yet been issued. Later, after many more attempts to get me to sign ROW documents, I was contacted by MATL's attorneys with two registered letters that mentioned, if not threatened, condemnation of a ROW on my property. Yet, at this point, the EIS was only about 50% complete, according to the Montana DEQ, and the State of Montana had not yet selected a preferred alternative. **This is not the appropriate sequence of events and it certainly shows bias and intent by MATL to pre-select an alternative while the range of reasonable alternatives was still being developed. This was likely intimidating to many landowners, and many people probably did not realize that NEPA planning was underway and that they were not required to sign the documents.**

Comment 399

Cumulative Effects

While the environmental effects for the power line itself are well analyzed, the DEIS does not adequately address cumulative effects and the effects of related future actions in Cascade, Teton, Chouteau, Pondera, Toole, and Glacier Counties. Since this is a speculative merchant line, there are any number of major future actions - wind farms, hybrid energy projects, and even coal plants - that could be the result of the construction of this power line. The issuance of permits to construct this for-profit line would be the cause of the additional projects, which could have huge environmental impacts in north central Montana. Some of these projects would be on private

Comment 400

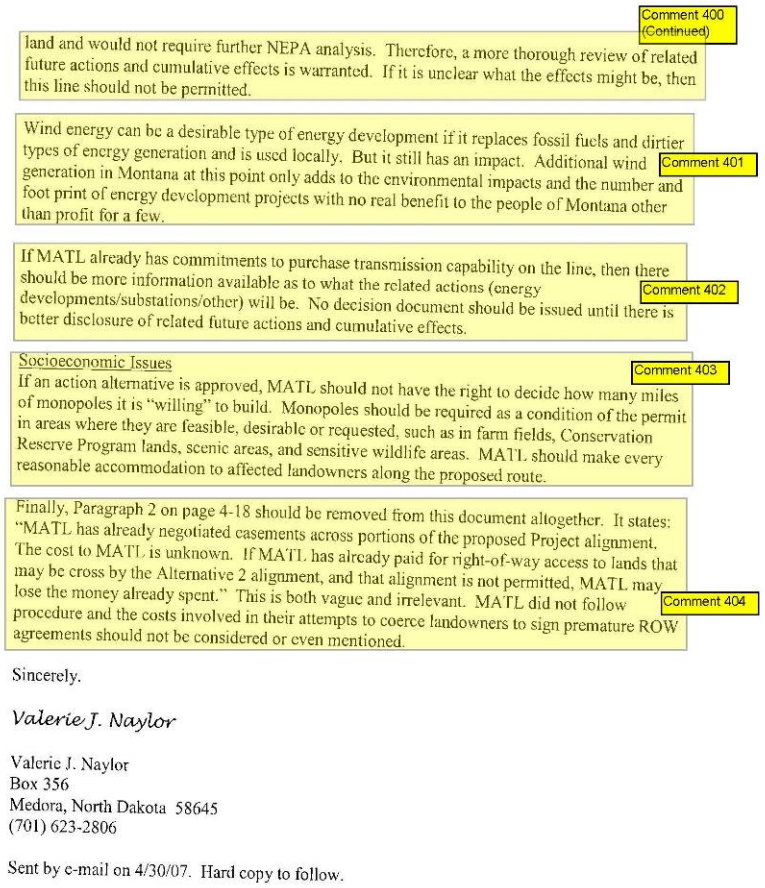
Response 396: As noted in response to comment 395, an expanded discussion of DOE's purpose and need and the criteria used by DOE in granting or denying a Presidential permit has been added to Section 1.2.

Response 397: As proposed the MATL line has a capacity of 300 MW in both directions. Also see response to comment 346 for further discussion of line capacity. Public need and benefits are discussed in sections 1.2 and 3.13 of this document.

Response 398: The commenter's property may have been inadvertently omitted from the original public notification in December 2005. DOE directly mailed the commenter a copy of the June 7, 2007, Notice of Intent to prepare this EIS and to conduct public scoping and will retain her address on the mailing list for all future notifications on this project.

Response 399: Comment noted. MATL is not prohibited from seeking easements in advance of obtaining approval from DEQ.

Response 400: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 and responses to comments 93b, 216, and 283. The agencies have assumed that wind farms are reasonably foreseeable as a result of construction of the transmission line, but it is not possible to anticipate any other form of energy development. Many of the generation projects referred to by the commenter are not yet well defined; however, DOE has determined their probability of development to be reasonably foreseeable and they are therefore considered in the cumulative effects section. The agencies are not aware of future potential plans for energy development projects that would be dependent upon the MATL line.



land and would not require further NEPA analysis. Therefore, a more thorough review of related future actions and cumulative effects is warranted. If it is unclear what the effects might be, then this line should not be permitted.

Comment 400 (Continued)

Wind energy can be a desirable type of energy development if it replaces fossil fuels and dirtier types of energy generation and is used locally. But it still has an impact. Additional wind generation in Montana at this point only adds to the environmental impacts and the number and foot print of energy development projects with no real benefit to the people of Montana other than profit for a few.

Comment 401

If MATL already has commitments to purchase transmission capability on the line, then there should be more information available as to what the related actions (energy developments/substations/other) will be. No decision document should be issued until there is better disclosure of related future actions and cumulative effects.

Comment 402

Socioeconomic Issues

If an action alternative is approved, MATL should not have the right to decide how many miles of monopoles it is "willing" to build. Monopoles should be required as a condition of the permit in areas where they are feasible, desirable or requested, such as in farm fields, Conservation Reserve Program lands, scenic areas, and sensitive wildlife areas. MATL should make every reasonable accommodation to affected landowners along the proposed route.

Comment 403

Finally, Paragraph 2 on page 4-18 should be removed from this document altogether. It states: "MATL has already negotiated easements across portions of the proposed Project alignment. The cost to MATL is unknown. If MATL has already paid for right-of-way access to lands that may be cross by the Alternative 2 alignment, and that alignment is not permitted, MATL may lose the money already spent." This is both vague and irrelevant. MATL did not follow procedure and the costs involved in their attempts to coerce landowners to sign premature ROW agreements should not be considered or even mentioned.

Comment 404

Sincerely.

Valerie J. Naylor

Valerie J. Naylor
Box 356
Medora, North Dakota 58645
(701) 623-2806

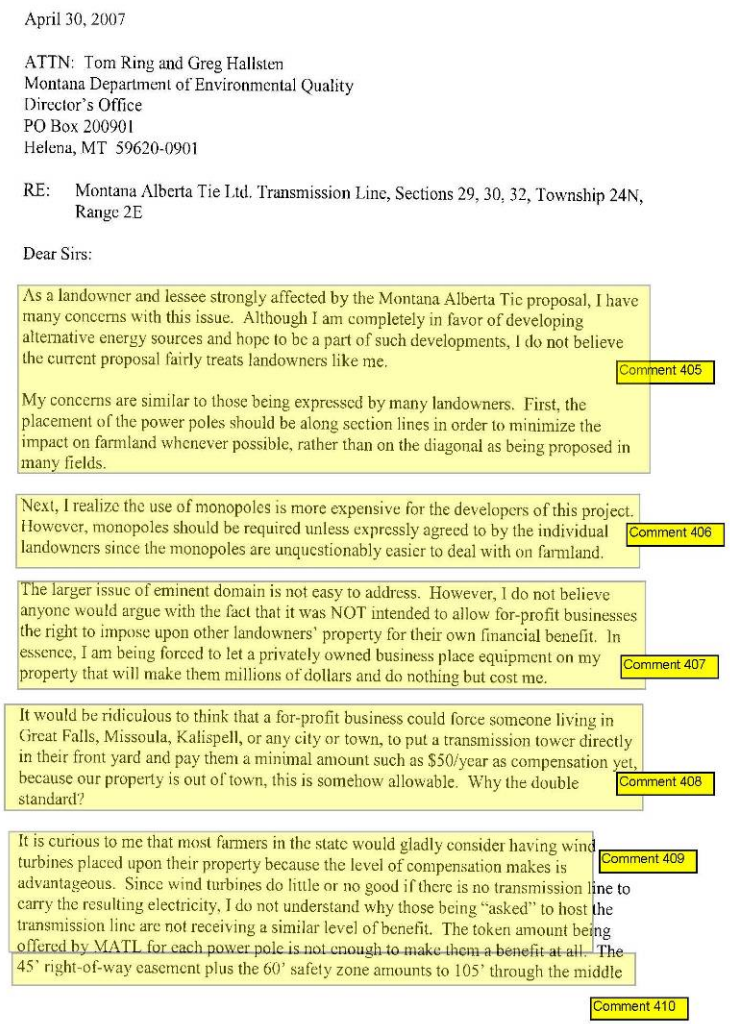
Sent by e-mail on 4/30/07. Hard copy to follow.

Response 401: Comment noted.

Response 402: Although the capacity of the proposed transmission line has been fully subscribed, there is a degree of uncertainty regarding the exact design and location of energy projects that would connect to the proposed line. Chapter 4 contains a discussion of the general impacts associated with wind farm development and operation.

Response 403: Comment noted.

Response 404: Comment noted. The statement in Section 4.5 of the March 2007 document (now in Section 4.20), is simply a statement of fact of the regulatory restrictions analysis required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The legal requirement to disclose the regulatory impact on the applicant's private property rights applies only to the applicant and not to other people who might be affected by the permitting action. This is a matter of law, not DEQ's choice. The cost to the applicant may be a factor in the permitting decision, but it is not the only factor. MATL is not prohibited from seeking easements in advance of obtaining approval from DEQ.



April 30, 2007

ATTN: Tom Ring and Greg Hallsten
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. Transmission Line, Sections 29, 30, 32, Township 24N, Range 2E

Dear Sirs:

As a landowner and lessee strongly affected by the Montana Alberta Tie proposal, I have many concerns with this issue. Although I am completely in favor of developing alternative energy sources and hope to be a part of such developments, I do not believe the current proposal fairly treats landowners like me.

Comment 405

My concerns are similar to those being expressed by many landowners. First, the placement of the power poles should be along section lines in order to minimize the impact on farmland whenever possible, rather than on the diagonal as being proposed in many fields.

Next, I realize the use of monopoles is more expensive for the developers of this project. However, monopoles should be required unless expressly agreed to by the individual landowners since the monopoles are unquestionably easier to deal with on farmland.

Comment 406

The larger issue of eminent domain is not easy to address. However, I do not believe anyone would argue with the fact that it was NOT intended to allow for-profit businesses the right to impose upon other landowners' property for their own financial benefit. In essence, I am being forced to let a privately owned business place equipment on my property that will make them millions of dollars and do nothing but cost me.

Comment 407

It would be ridiculous to think that a for-profit business could force someone living in Great Falls, Missoula, Kalispell, or any city or town, to put a transmission tower directly in their front yard and pay them a minimal amount such as $50/year as compensation yet, because our property is out of town, this is somehow allowable. Why the double standard?

Comment 408

It is curious to me that most farmers in the state would gladly consider having wind turbines placed upon their property because the level of compensation makes is advantageous. Since wind turbines do little or no good if there is no transmission line to carry the resulting electricity, I do not understand why those being "asked" to host the transmission line are not receiving a similar level of benefit. The token amount being offered by MATL for each power pole is not enough to make them a benefit at all. The 45' right-of-way easement plus the 60' safety zone amounts to 105' through the middle

Comment 409

Comment 410

Response 405: Comment noted.

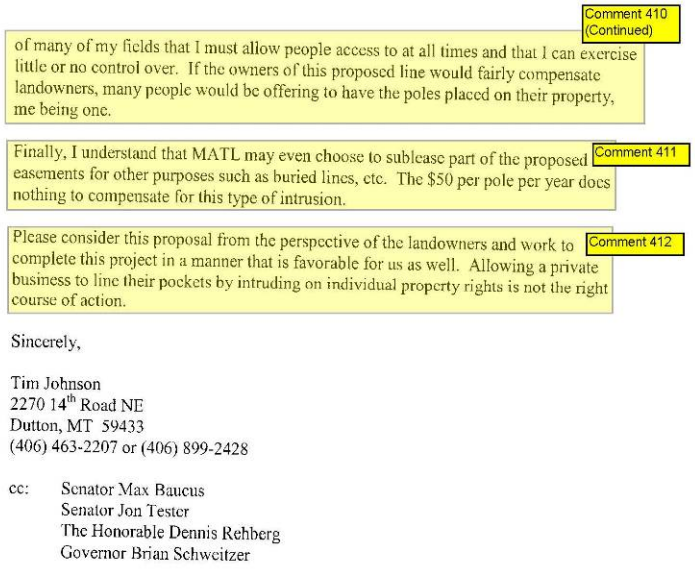
Response 406: Comment noted.

Response 407: See response to comment 8.

Response 408: Comment noted. See response to comment 8.

Response 409: Comment noted. This EIS does not deal with compensation to farmers from wind farms. See Chapters 3 and 4 for discussions of the impacts to the local area from wind farms. The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Response 410: Comment noted.



of many of my fields that I must allow people access to at all times and that I can exercise little or no control over. If the owners of this proposed line would fairly compensate landowners, many people would be offering to have the poles placed on their property, me being one.

Comment 410 (Continued)

Finally, I understand that MATL may even choose to sublease part of the proposed easements for other purposes such as buried lines, etc. The $50 per pole per year does nothing to compensate for this type of intrusion.

Comment 411

Please consider this proposal from the perspective of the landowners and work to complete this project in a manner that is favorable for us as well. Allowing a private business to line their pockets by intruding on individual property rights is not the right course of action.

Comment 412

Sincerely,

Tim Johnson
2270 14th Road NE
Dutton, MT 59433
(406) 463-2207 or (406) 899-2428

cc: Senator Max Baucus
Senator Jon Tester
The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
Governor Brian Schweitzer

Response 411: MATL's proposal does not include subleasing the easement for buried lines.

Response 412: Comment noted.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Brace_Hayden@nps.gov
Posted At: Monday, April 30, 2007 4:55 PM
Conversation: Draft EIS for the proposed MATL transmission line
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Draft EIS for the proposed MATL transmission line

MATL EIS comments - Glacier Na...

Attn: Greg Hallsten
Montana Dept of Environmetal Quality

Attached are Glacier National Park's comments on the Draft EIS for the proposed MATL transmission line. A hard copy of these comments were mailed today

(See attached file: MATL EIS comments - Glacier National Park.doc)

Brace Hayden
Regional Issues Specialist
Glacier National Park
West Glacier MT 59936
(406) 888-7913
brace_hayden@nps.gov

1

(note a signed copy of this letter on park letterhead mailed on August 30, 2007)

April 30, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
Attn: Greg Hallsten

Re: Draft EIS for the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd Transmission Line (MATL)

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

Glacier National Park has reviewed the Draft EIS for the proposed MATL transmission line and clearly understands that one of the benefits of this line would be alternative energy production in the form of wind farms on lands east of the park's boundary. We are supportive of alternative energy development, including wind energy, as a national goal.

While construction of the proposed line would have little, if any, direct impacts upon Glacier National Park, we strongly recommend that the final EIS provide more detailed evaluation of the lines cumulative impacts including wind farm development. The description of impacts to migrating raptors and other wildlife found in chapter 4 is cursory and should be expanded upon to include a description of the anticipated severity of wind farm impacts and the ways in which such impacts could be mitigated.

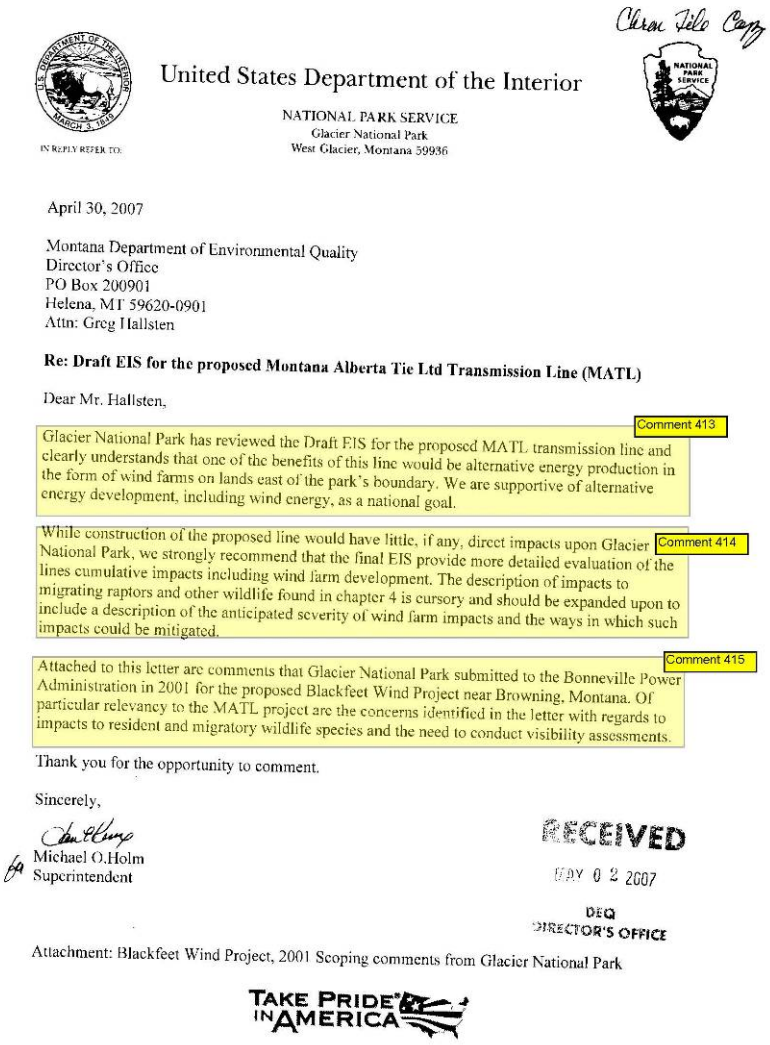
Attached to this letter are comments that Glacier National Park submitted to the Bonneville Power Administration in 2001 for the proposed Blackfeet Wind Project near Browning, Montana. Of particular relevancy to the MATL project are the concerns identified in the letter with regards to impacts to resident and migratory wildlife species and the need to conduct visibility assessments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Michael O.Holm
Superintendent

Attachment: Blackfeet Wind Project, 2001 Scoping comments from Glacier National Park



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Glacier National Park
West Glacier, Montana 59936

IN REPLY REFER TO:

April 30, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
Attn: Greg Hallsten

Re: Draft EIS for the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd Transmission Line (MATL)

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

Comment 413

Glacier National Park has reviewed the Draft EIS for the proposed MATL transmission line and clearly understands that one of the benefits of this line would be alternative energy production in the form of wind farms on lands east of the park's boundary. We are supportive of alternative energy development, including wind energy, as a national goal.

Comment 414

While construction of the proposed line would have little, if any, direct impacts upon Glacier National Park, we strongly recommend that the final EIS provide more detailed evaluation of the lines cumulative impacts including wind farm development. The description of impacts to migrating raptors and other wildlife found in chapter 4 is cursory and should be expanded upon to include a description of the anticipated severity of wind farm impacts and the ways in which such impacts could be mitigated.

Comment 415

Attached to this letter are comments that Glacier National Park submitted to the Bonneville Power Administration in 2001 for the proposed Blackfeet Wind Project near Browning, Montana. Of particular relevancy to the MATL project are the concerns identified in the letter with regards to impacts to resident and migratory wildlife species and the need to conduct visibility assessments.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Michael O.Holm
Superintendent

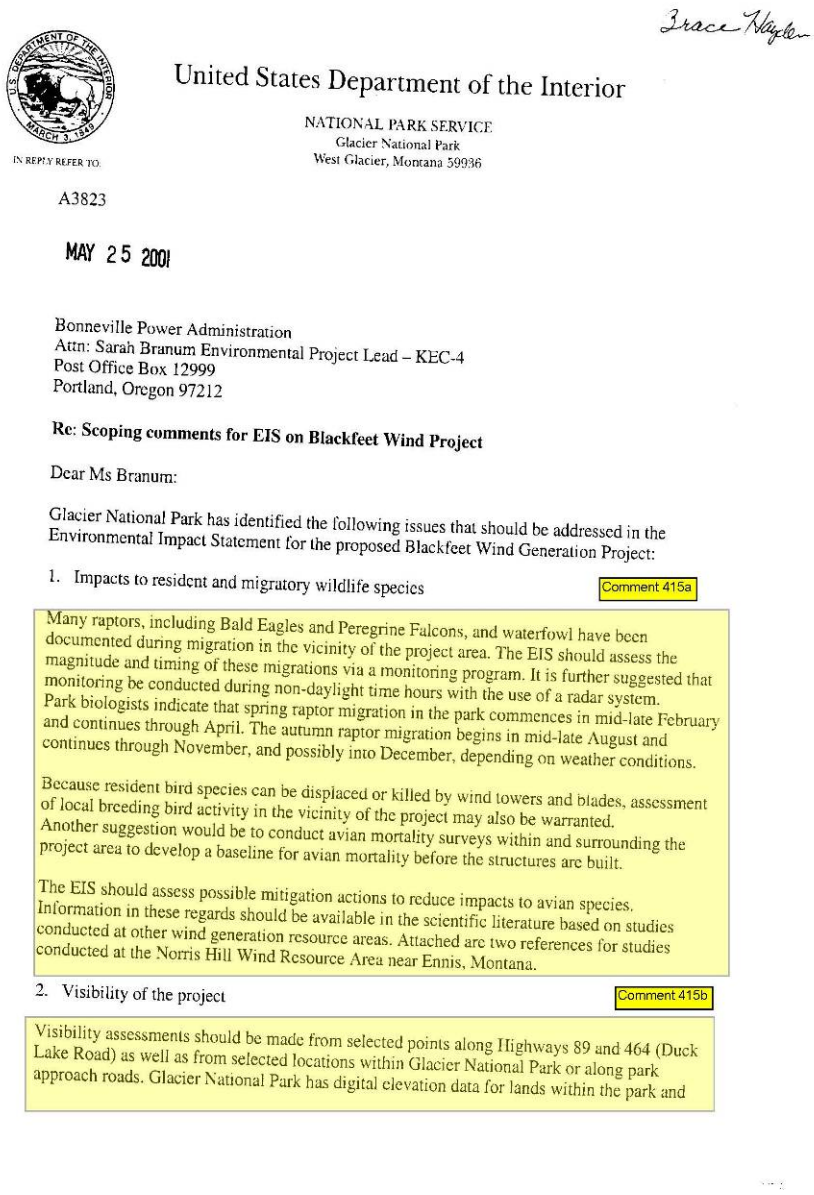
RECEIVED
MAY 0 2 2007
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Attachment: Blackfeet Wind Project, 2001 Scoping comments from Glacier National Park

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

Response 413: Comment noted.

Response 414: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 and the response to comment 20. The impacts of wind farm development on wildlife are also described in Chapter 4. No wind farm monitoring program is proposed as a result of the agency actions proposed.



Grace Naylor

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Glacier National Park
West Glacier, Montana 59936

IN REPLY REFER TO:

A3823

MAY 25 2001

Bonneville Power Administration
Attn: Sarah Branum Environmental Project Lead – KEC-4
Post Office Box 12999
Portland, Oregon 97212

Re: Scoping comments for EIS on Blackfeet Wind Project

Dear Ms Branum:

Glacier National Park has identified the following issues that should be addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Blackfeet Wind Generation Project:

1. Impacts to resident and migratory wildlife species

Comment 415a

Many raptors, including Bald Eagles and Peregrine Falcons, and waterfowl have been documented during migration in the vicinity of the project area. The EIS should assess the magnitude and timing of these migrations via a monitoring program. It is further suggested that monitoring be conducted during non-daylight time hours with the use of a radar system. Park biologists indicate that spring raptor migration in the park commences in mid-late February and continues through April. The autumn raptor migration begins in mid-late August and continues through November, and possibly into December, depending on weather conditions.

Because resident bird species can be displaced or killed by wind towers and blades, assessment of local breeding bird activity in the vicinity of the project may also be warranted. Another suggestion would be to conduct avian mortality surveys within and surrounding the project area to develop a baseline for avian mortality before the structures are built.

The EIS should assess possible mitigation actions to reduce impacts to avian species. Information in these regards should be available in the scientific literature based on studies conducted at other wind generation resource areas. Attached are two references for studies conducted at the Norris Hill Wind Resource Area near Ennis, Montana.

2. Visibility of the project

Comment 415b

Visibility assessments should be made from selected points along Highways 89 and 464 (Duck Lake Road) as well as from selected locations within Glacier National Park or along park approach roads. Glacier National Park has digital elevation data for lands within the park and

Response 415: Comment noted. The letter written to BPA concerns a specific wind farm project proposed not far from the eastern border of Glacier National Park. It raises issues about potential impacts that might occur if the MATL line is constructed.

Response 415a: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 415b: Visibility assessments are typically completed when detailed information is available for both viewer locations and project components. Although the comment identifies viewer locations (Highways 89 and 464 on the Blackfeet Reservation, locations within Glacier National Park, and along park approach roads), detailed information is lacking on the location and design of individual wind farms. Therefore, it is not possible to complete visibility assessments for most wind farms at this time.

A general location is known for the proposed McCormick Ranch wind farm, southeast of Cut Bank, north of the Marias River and east of the Sullivan Bridge Road. Applying the Sinclair-Thomas matrix to this wind farm, limits of visibility could be expected to extend up to 18 miles beyond the wind farm. Portions of this wind farm would be visible from viewpoints along US Highway 2 east of Cut Bank (4-6 miles distant) and potentially some portions of Highway 89 as it leaves the Blackfeet Reservation (15 miles distant), but visibility would not be expected to extend to more distant segments of Highway 89 or to Highway 464. Viewpoints within Glacier National Park more than 50 miles to the west would be beyond the range of visibility for the McCormick Ranch wind farm. Individual developers of wind farms could consider mitigation for turbine siting, height, or color as desired.

Response 415c: This comment refers to the wind farm being considered at that time and does not address the proposed transmission line.

Comment 415b (Continued)

similar information for the Blackfeet Indian Reservation should be available from the Blackfeet Tribe. Mitigation measures such as siting, height, and color of the towers should be considered.

3. Assessment of new transmission lines

The project description available at the BPA's recent Scoping Meeting states that power generated at the facility would travel 1-2 miles via underground line or overhead cables to a new 1-2 acre substation. The impacts of such related structures, including visibility, should also be evaluated in the EIS.

4. Importance of the project to the meeting energy needs and to protecting air quality.

Comment 415c

The EIS should discuss the project's role in meeting national electricity needs as well as the project's importance to the regional needs of BPA. Similarly, the EIS should discuss benefits of producing electricity by such clean sources as wind power. This is an especially important issue to Glacier National Park, which is classified as a Class 1 Air Quality Area under the Clean Air Act.

The principal park contacts for this project are Brace Hayden (406-888-7913) and Jack Potter (404-888-7821). Please feel free to contact them regarding any help you might need from the Glacier National Park's staff on this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Lewis
Superintendent

Enclosure

Hallsten, Greg

From: Eric & Amanda Doheny [eadoheny@tetonwireless.net]
Posted At: Monday, April 30, 2007 4:31 PM
Conversation: power lines
Posted To: MATL
Subject: power lines

Comments 416 through 419

416 Hello I am a farmer from Dutton, Mt and have land near the Collins exit. We feel that this power line is a positive asset to the stat of MT, but since it is a for profit power line it should not be at the expense of the farmer. It is not
417 like the power line is coming in to help out a new community or to help farmers live on the land and allow a safe stable food supply for the U.S. it is being put in so people can make money. We do not like the idea of double H
418 poles angling across farm land. It should follow section lines and be single poles. Lastly, they are not making the power capacity large enough, I would like to see a power line large enough for a whole lot of expansion for
419 power and not have to see another private power line running across a farmers land in 10 years for some company to make money at our expense.

Eric Doheny
C&E Farms
2490 22nd lane NE
Dutton, Mt 59433

406-627-2286

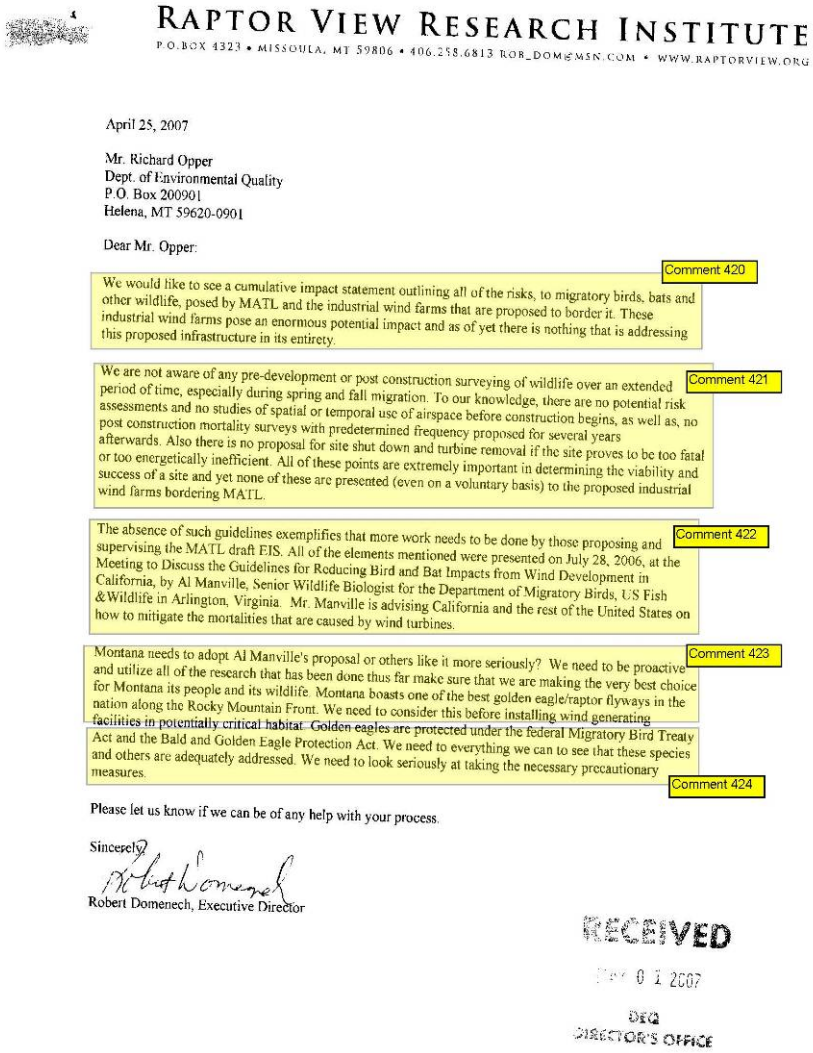
5/1/2007

Response 416: Comment noted.

Response 417: Comment noted.

Response 418: Comment noted.

Response 419: See response to comment 346.



RAPTOR VIEW RESEARCH INSTITUTE
P.O.BOX 4323 • MISSOULA, MT 59806 • 406.258.6813 ROB_DOM@MSN.COM • WWW.RAPTORVIEW.ORG

April 25, 2007

Mr. Richard Opper
Dept. of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Opper:

Comment 420

We would like to see a cumulative impact statement outlining all of the risks, to migratory birds, bats and other wildlife, posed by MATL and the industrial wind farms that are proposed to border it. These industrial wind farms pose an enormous potential impact and as of yet there is nothing that is addressing this proposed infrastructure in its entirety.

Comment 421

We are not aware of any pre-development or post construction surveying of wildlife over an extended period of time, especially during spring and fall migration. To our knowledge, there are no potential risk assessments and no studies of spatial or temporal use of airspace before construction begins, as well as, no post construction mortality surveys with predetermined frequency proposed for several years afterwards. Also there is no proposal for site shut down and turbine removal if the site proves to be too fatal or too energetically inefficient. All of these points are extremely important in determining the viability and success of a site and yet none of these are presented (even on a voluntary basis) to the proposed industrial wind farms bordering MATL.

Comment 422

The absence of such guidelines exemplifies that more work needs to be done by those proposing and supervising the MATL draft EIS. All of the elements mentioned were presented on July 28, 2006, at the Meeting to Discuss the Guidelines for Reducing Bird and Bat Impacts from Wind Development in California, by Al Manville, Senior Wildlife Biologist for the Department of Migratory Birds, US Fish &Wildlife in Arlington, Virginia. Mr. Manville is advising California and the rest of the United States on how to mitigate the mortalities that are caused by wind turbines.

Comment 423

Montana needs to adopt Al Manville's proposal or others like it more seriously? We need to be proactive and utilize all of the research that has been done thus far make sure that we are making the very best choice for Montana its people and its wildlife. Montana boasts one of the best golden eagle/raptor flyways in the nation along the Rocky Mountain Front. We need to consider this before installing wind generating facilities in potentially critical habitat. Golden eagles are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. We need to everything we can to see that these species and others are adequately addressed. We need to look seriously at taking the necessary precautionary measures.

Comment 424

Please let us know if we can be of any help with your process.

Sincerely,

Robert Domenech, Executive Director

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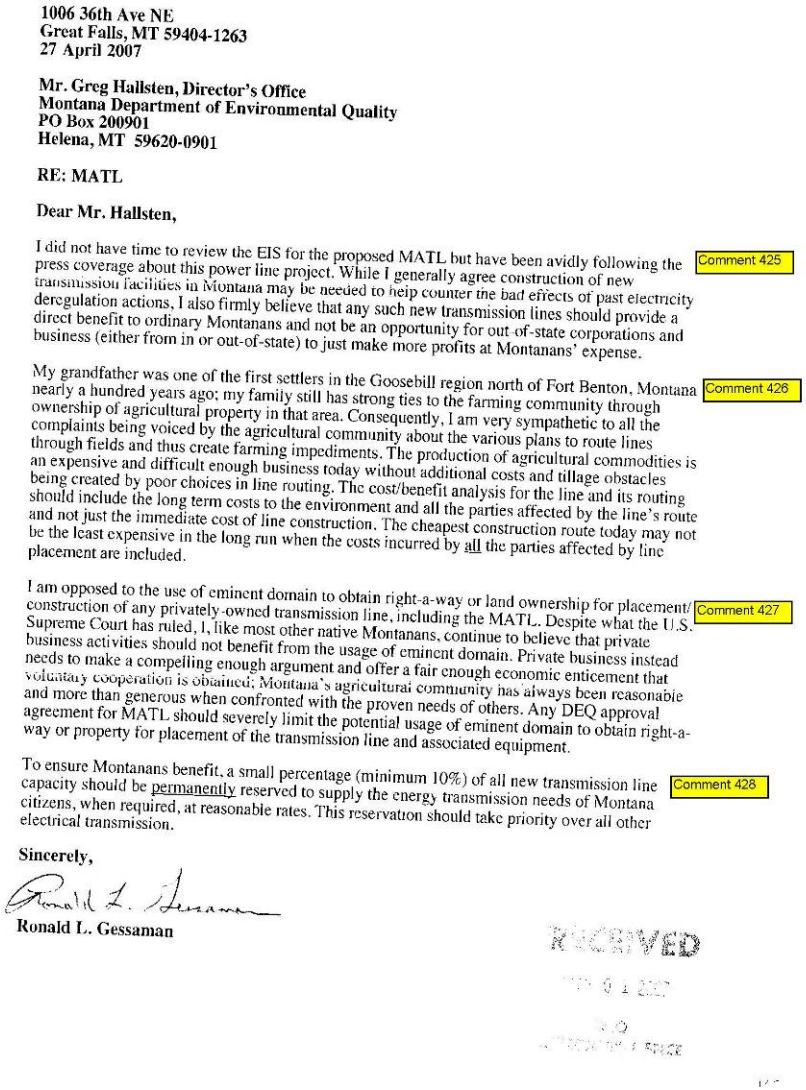
Response 420: See responses to comments 20 and 22 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 421: Preliminary avian studies have been completed for the planned Naturener USA wind farm south of Ethridge and north of the Marias River. Invenergy plans on conducting recommended avian studies but is not yet far enough along in project development of two projects in the Conrad and Cut Bank areas to have completed such studies. The status of Wind Hunter's avian study is not known. See responses to comments 22 and 238 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 for additional information.

Response 422: Potential mitigating measures to reduce impacts from wind farm development are indicated in the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4. and Appendix O. .

Response 423: See response to comment 239.

Response 424: Comment noted.



1006 36th Ave NE
Great Falls, MT 59404-1263
27 April 2007

Mr. Greg Hallsten, Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: MATL

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

I did not have time to review the EIS for the proposed MATL but have been avidly following the press coverage about this power line project. While I generally agree construction of new transmission facilities in Montana may be needed to help counter the bad effects of past electricity deregulation actions, I also firmly believe that any such new transmission lines should provide a direct benefit to ordinary Montanans and not be an opportunity for out-of-state corporations and business (either from in or out-of-state) to just make more profits at Montanans' expense.

Comment 425

My grandfather was one of the first settlers in the Goosebill region north of Fort Benton, Montana nearly a hundred years ago; my family still has strong ties to the farming community through ownership of agricultural property in that area. Consequently, I am very sympathetic to all the complaints being voiced by the agricultural community about the various plans to route lines through fields and thus create farming impediments. The production of agricultural commodities is an expensive and difficult enough business today without additional costs and tillage obstacles being created by poor choices in line routing. The cost/benefit analysis for the line and its routing should include the long term costs to the environment and all the parties affected by the line's route and not just the immediate cost of line construction. The cheapest construction route today may not be the least expensive in the long run when the costs incurred by all the parties affected by line placement are included.

Comment 426

I am opposed to the use of eminent domain to obtain right-a-way or land ownership for placement/ construction of any privately-owned transmission line, including the MATL. Despite what the U.S. Supreme Court has ruled, I, like most other native Montanans, continue to believe that private business activities should not benefit from the usage of eminent domain. Private business instead needs to make a compelling enough argument and offer a fair enough economic enticement that voluntary cooperation is obtained; Montana's agricultural community has always been reasonable and more than generous when confronted with the proven needs of others. Any DEQ approval agreement for MATL should severely limit the potential usage of eminent domain to obtain right-a-way or property for placement of the transmission line and associated equipment.

Comment 427

To ensure Montanans benefit, a small percentage (minimum 10%) of all new transmission line capacity should be permanently reserved to supply the energy transmission needs of Montana citizens, when required, at reasonable rates. This reservation should take priority over all other electrical transmission.

Comment 428

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Gessaman

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Response 425: Comment noted.

Response 426: The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Response 427: Comment noted. See response to comment 8.

Response 428: See response to comment 334. There is no law requiring that a portion of transmission lines must supply the energy transmission needs of Montana citizens.

April 29, 2007

Dear Mr. Halisten:

I would like to submit these comments on the Draft EIS on the MATL transmission line.

First, I would like to acknowledge all the work and study that went into this document. The Agency listened to the concerns of the landowners and with Alternative 4 made a great effort to correct MATL's ill designed line. Comment 429

I am in favor of Alternative 4 (the Agency Alternative) as the best route. The Agency Alternative best addresses impacts for the landowners and interrupts least with current land uses. This alternative uses monopoles and eliminates much of the diagonal line. If MATL will build Alternative 4 (the Agency Alternative) then I am in favor of this project. If MATL will not build Alternative 4, then I am in favor of Alternative 1-NO Action. Comment 430

The DEQ has done its job and I can see no reason to set aside its' work product. Chapter 2 is a remarkable wealth of information and the Agency very clearly states why Alternative 4 is the best. Comment 431

I see very little factual reasoning in the Director's setting aside the Agency Alternative and adopting Alternative 2-the Proposed Action. The 24 miles of monopoles for mitigation is largely where MATL lacks easements. We are not fooled that this in not a political decision. MATL has said they have been in continuing discussion with the Governor's office and the Proposed Action makes that very clear. Comment 432

It is not a coincidence that the discontent with this line begins when it hits Conrad and starts its diagonal crossing of farm ground. North of Conrad and in Canada the line is mostly north-south and on section lines. If this line had been designed that way south of Conrad, the farmer's would have grumbled, but they wouldn't have opposed it like we are now. Comment 433

MATL started this process by choosing the oldest corridor in this area. They chose a power line that hadn't had an EIS done or met any modern design concerns or land impacts. MATL chose this over the WAPA line an example. The WAPA did go through a modern EIS and was changed from a diagonal line to a mostly north-south line running on field borders and section lines. MATL's only concern is cost. Comment 434

MATL's application was completed at the same time as the Draft EIS was completed. A complete and proper application wasn't available to the public before the DEQ started on the EIS. This lack of a complete application has hindered the public from being able to properly review the validity of the costs that MATL is presenting to the DEQ. Comment 435

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DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Response 429: Comment noted.

Response 430: Comment noted.

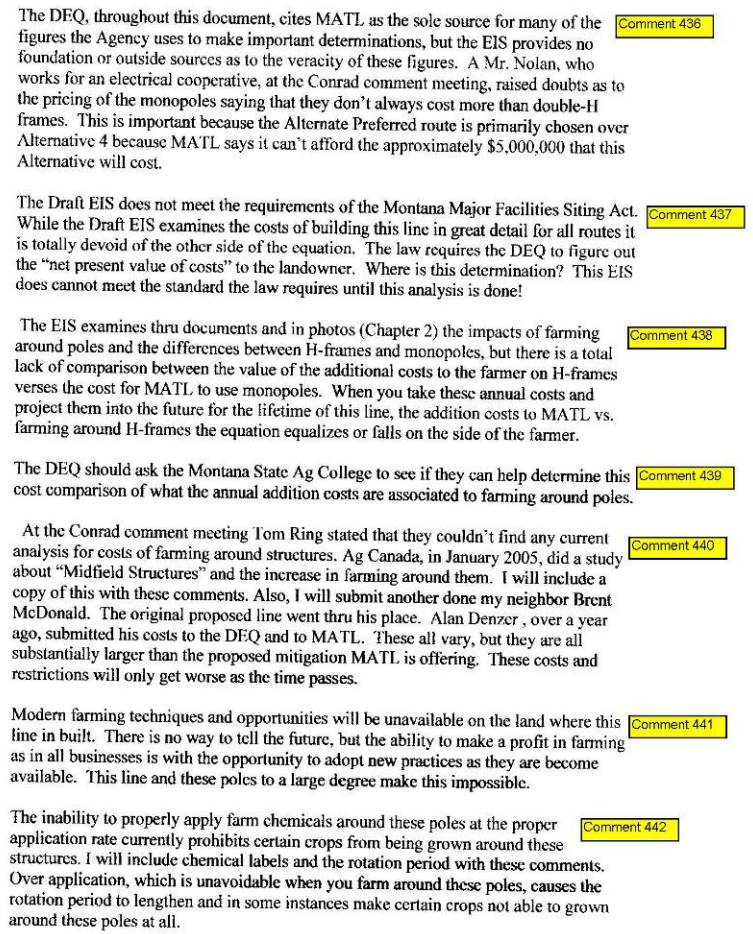
Response 431: Comment noted.

Response 432: Comment noted. The areas where monopoles were recommended were selected based on reducing impacts, not with regard to the status of easements. During preparation of this document MATL committed to use of monopoles on 53 miles of line that would cross farmland diagonally (MATL 2007).

Response 433: Comment noted.

Response 434: Comment noted.

Response 435: The estimated cost per mile of construction of the transmission line using H-frame and long-span monopole structures is presented in Table 2.3-1.



The DEQ, throughout this document, cites MATL as the sole source for many of the figures the Agency uses to make important determinations, but the EIS provides no foundation or outside sources as to the veracity of these figures. A Mr. Nolan, who works for an electrical cooperative, at the Conrad comment meeting, raised doubts as to the pricing of the monopoles saying that they don't always cost more than double-H frames. This is important because the Alternate Preferred route is primarily chosen over Alternative 4 because MATL says it can't afford the approximately $5,000,000 that this Alternative will cost.

Comment 436

The Draft EIS does not meet the requirements of the Montana Major Facilities Siting Act. While the Draft EIS examines the costs of building this line in great detail for all routes it is totally devoid of the other side of the equation. The law requires the DEQ to figure out the "net present value of costs" to the landowner. Where is this determination? This EIS does cannot meet the standard the law requires until this analysis is done!

Comment 437

The EIS examines thru documents and in photos (Chapter 2) the impacts of farming around poles and the differences between H-frames and monopoles, but there is a total lack of comparison between the value of the additional costs to the farmer on H-frames verses the cost for MATL to use monopoles. When you take these annual costs and project them into the future for the lifetime of this line, the addition costs to MATL vs. farming around H-frames the equation equalizes or falls on the side of the farmer.

Comment 438

The DEQ should ask the Montana State Ag College to see if they can help determine this cost comparison of what the annual addition costs are associated to farming around poles.

Comment 439

At the Conrad comment meeting Tom Ring stated that they couldn't find any current analysis for costs of farming around structures. Ag Canada, in January 2005, did a study about "Midfield Structures" and the increase in farming around them. I will include a copy of this with these comments. Also, I will submit another done my neighbor Brent McDonald. The original proposed line went thru his place. Alan Denzer , over a year ago, submitted his costs to the DEQ and to MATL. These all vary, but they are all substantially larger than the proposed mitigation MATL is offering. These costs and restrictions will only get worse as the time passes.

Comment 440

Modern farming techniques and opportunities will be unavailable on the land where this line in built. There is no way to tell the future, but the ability to make a profit in farming as in all businesses is with the opportunity to adopt new practices as they are become available. This line and these poles to a large degree make this impossible.

Comment 441

The inability to properly apply farm chemicals around these poles at the proper application rate currently prohibits certain crops from being grown around these structures. I will include chemical labels and the rotation period with these comments. Over application, which is unavoidable when you farm around these poles, causes the rotation period to lengthen and in some instances make certain crops not able to grown around these poles at all.

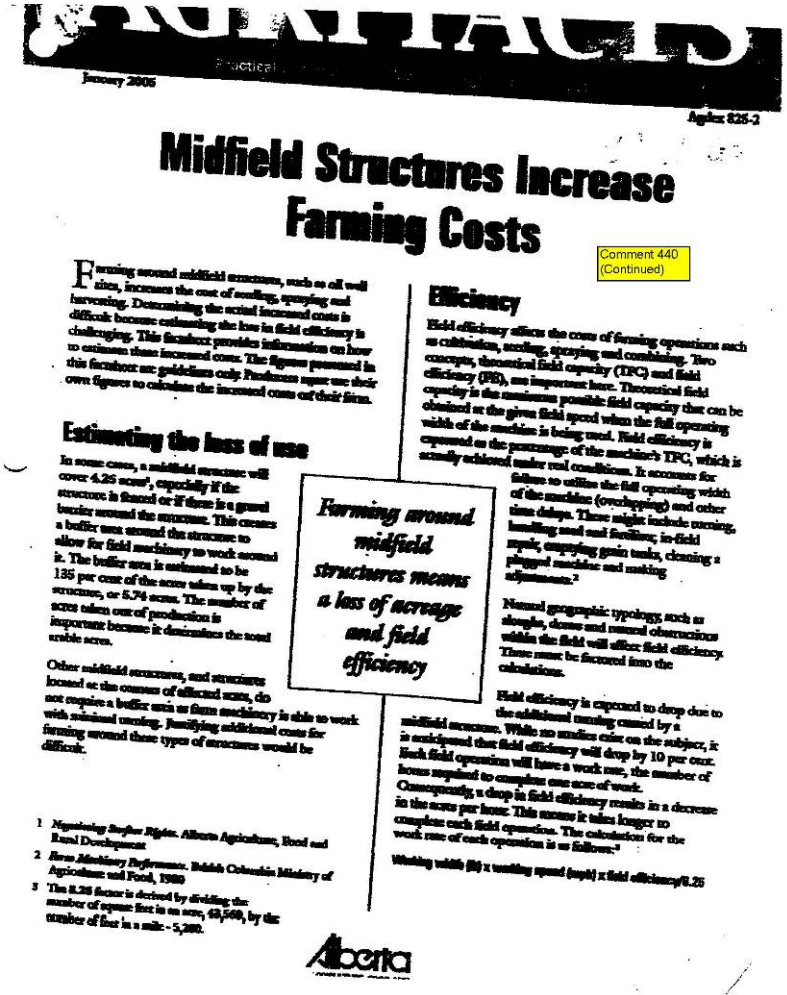
Comment 442

Response 436: See response to comment 358 and Table 2.3-1.

Response 437: See the revised discussion of potential costs of farming around structures and a comparison of cost to farm around structures to the additional costs of Alternative 4 in Section 3.13.

Response 438: DEQ has worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Response 439: DEQ retained the services of an agronomist and an engineer to independently examine the increased costs of farming around transmission line structures. Farming cost estimates provided by MATL and two commentors on the draft EIS were reviewed. The results of this review are presented in 3.13.



January 2005

Agdex 825-2

Midfield Structures Increase Farming Costs

Comment 440 (Continued)

Farming around midfield structures, such as oil well sites, increases the cost of seeding, spraying and harvesting. Determining the actual increased costs is difficult because estimating the loss in field efficiency is challenging. This factsheet provides information on how to estimate these increased costs. The figures presented in this factsheet are guidelines only. Producers input their own figures to calculate the increased costs on their farm.

Estimating the loss of use

In some cases, a midfield structure will cover 4.25 acres[1], especially if the structure is fenced or if there is a guard barrier around the structure. This creates a buffer area around the structure to allow for field machinery to work around it. The buffer area is estimated to be 135 per cent of the acres taken up by the structure, or 5.74 acres. The number of acres taken out of production is important because it determines the total arable acres.

Farming around midfield structures means a loss of acreage and field efficiency

Other midfield structures, and structures located at the corners of affected areas, do not require a buffer area as farm machinery is able to work with minimal turning. Justifying additional costs for farming around these types of structures would be difficult.

1 *Negotiating Surface Rights*. Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development

2 *Farm Machinery Performance*. Bulletin Columbia Ministry of Agriculture and Food, 1980

3 The 8.25 factor is derived by dividing the number of square feet in an acre, 43,560, by the number of feet in a mile - 5,280.

Efficiency

Field efficiency affects the costs of farming operations such as cultivation, seeding, spraying and combining. Two concepts, theoretical field capacity (TFC) and field efficiency (FE), are important here. Theoretical field capacity is the maximum possible field capacity that can be obtained at the given field speed when the full operating width of the machine is being used. Field efficiency is expressed as the percentage of the machine's TFC, which is actually achieved under real conditions. It accounts for failure to utilize the full operating width of the machine (overlapping) and other time delays. These might include turning, handling seed and fertilizer, in-field repair, emptying grain tanks, cleaning a plugged machine and making adjustments.[2]

Natural geographic typology such as sloughs, draws and natural obstructions within the field will affect field efficiency. These must be factored into the calculations.

Field efficiency is expected to drop due to the additional turning caused by a midfield structure. While no studies exist on the subject, it is anticipated that field efficiency will drop by 10 per cent. Each field operation will have a work rate, the number of hours required to complete one acre of work. Consequently, a drop in field efficiency results in a decrease in the acres per hour. This means it takes longer to complete each field operation. The calculation for the work rate of each operation is as follows:[3]

Working width (ft) x working speed (mph) x field efficiency/8.25

Alberta

Estimating increased farming costs

There are two separate calculations that must be performed. The first is the total cost prior to harvest. The second is the harvest costs. According to information provided by the Surface Rights Board, harvest rates are reduced by 50 per cent. In addition, a report prepared by Robert Berries for the Surface Rights Board concluded that farming costs increase by 150 per cent when a midfield structure is in place. In our example, the increased farming costs would be as follows:

	Variable costs
	per acre
Sub total before harvest	$10.00
Harvest rate @ 50%	$8.97
Total	$17.77
Factored	150%
Increased farming costs	$26.65

Costs of farming around a midfield structure

Once the increased farming cost per acre is known, the total increased farming cost can be calculated. The number of arable acres should account for sloughs, draws, trees and other obstructions, as well as the acres lost with the midfield structure. Our example assumes a full quarter section with no obstructions except for the midfield structure:

	Variable costs
Arable acres	160
Less midfield structure	5.74
Total arable acres	154.26
Total increased farming costs	$4,111

Conclusion

The additional cost of farming around a midfield structure is dependent on the additional time required to manoeuver around the structure. This reduces the field efficiency and increases costs. In this analysis, a 10 per cent decrease in field efficiency is assumed. Additional studies are needed to measure these factors to provide conclusive cost estimates.

Prepared by:
Dean Dyck, P. Ag.
Financial Business Analyst
Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
Red Deer

Funding provided by:
Canada
The Agricultural Policy Framework (APF)
An Agricultural Policy for the 21st Century
A FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL-TERRITORIAL INITIATIVE
Alberta

Comment 440 (Continued)

3

Response 440: See responses to comments 437 and 439.

For example, the field efficiency for a 32 ft cultivator pulled by a 275 hp 4wd tractor at 5 1/2 miles per hour is normally 80 per cent, giving a calculated work rate of 17 acres per hour (32 x 5.5 x 80 = 140.8 ÷ 8.25 = 17.07). A 10 per cent drop in field efficiency to 72 per cent decreases the work rate to 15 acres per hour.

This would be completed for each field operation, as in the following example:

Comment 440 (Continued)

Example

			Normal	Adjusted	
Operation	Working width	Working speed	Field efficiency	Field efficiency	Acres
	feet	mph			per hour
275 hp 4wd tractor					
Cultivation (32' wing)	32	5.5	80%	72%	15.36
Seeding/fert (40' air seeder)	40	4.5	60%	54%	11.78
Spraying (70' boom)	70	6.5	60%	54%	29.78
Swathing (30' SP)	30	5.5	70%	63%	12.60
Combine (30' 60")	30	3	70%	63%	6.87

Estimating expenses

There are two costs that must be covered in field operations. The first, variable costs, are those that can be varied in the short run. These include fuel, oil and repairs. The second, total costs, includes fixed costs which are paid even if production does not occur. These include depreciation, investment and insurance. These figures can be found in the *Farm Machinery Cost Guide*, published yearly by Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. When production occurs, variable costs are expected to be covered first. While it is desirable to cover fixed costs, it is unrealistic to expect compensatory payment for such costs.

For each field operation, variable costs and fixed costs per acre are calculated as follows:

- Add the variable costs per hour of the power unit and drawn implement
- Divide the total by the adjusted acres per hour

Using our field operations in the above example, the variable and fixed costs would be calculated as follows:

Example

Operation	Acres	Variable costs	Power unit + Implement	
	per hour	$/hour	$/hour	$/acre
275 hp 4wd tractor		$43.54		
Cultivation (32' wing)	15.36	$8.30	$49.84	$3.24
Seeding/fert (40' air seeder)	11.78	$21.82	$65.36	$5.55
Spraying (70' boom)	29.78	$18.14	[illegible]	$2.09
Swathing (30' SP)	12.60	$43.67		$3.78
Combine (30' 60")	6.87	$69.81		$10.16
Total				$24.74

2

Actual costs of farming around a double pole utility set

16.5 feet x 2640 ft. = 1 acre or 43560 square ft.

Spraying with a 120 ft sprayer: 160 ft. diameter circle (leaving 20 ft around poles) 160 x 3.1416 = 502 ft. x 1.5 = 753.9 linear ft.

120 ft./ 16.5 = 7.272727 acres/ 2640 ft. = .002755 acres per ft. x 753.9 ft = 2.0768 acres per pole set.

application costs: $3.75/ acre
chemical costs: $6.00/ acre (Roundup)
$9.75 x 2.0768 x 4 = $81.00 (4 applications of Roundup)

Comment 440 (Continued)

Maverick costs: $11.00/ acre + $3.75 app. = 14.75 x 2.0768 acres = $30.63
Total cost of going around a pole 1.5 times = $101.63
If we have to go around a pole an additional time to keep the GPS on track, it will be a 280 ft dia. or an additional 2.42 acres.
$9.75 x 4 x 2.42 = $94.38 (Roundup cost)
$14.75 x 2.42 = $35.70

Heavy harrowing with a 70 ft. tool: 90 ft. dia. (leaving 10 ft. around poles) 90 x 3.1416 = 282.75 ft. x 1.5 = 425 ft.
70/16.5 = 4.25 acres/ 2640 ft. = .001606978(acres per ft.) x 425 ft. = .683 acres at $ 10.00 = $ 6.83 per pole set.
An additional time around poles at 160 ft. dia = 502.66 ft. or .8 acres x $10.00 = $8.00

Seeding with a 60 ft air drill: 80 ft dia x 3.1416 = 251.328 x 1.5 = 377 linear ft.
60/16.5/2640 = .00137741 acre per ft. x 377 ft. = .52 acres
Fertilizer: $36.00/ acre
Seed $7.50 / acre
Application $12.00/ acre
total $ 55.50/ acre x .52 = $28.86 per pole set
An additional time around a pole set at 140 ft. dia. = .6058 acres x $55.50 = $33.62

Combining with a 36 ft. header: 82 ft. dia. x 3.1416 = 257.61 ft. x 1.5 = 386.42 ft.
36/16.5/2640 = .000826446 acres per ft. x 386.42 ft. = .32 acres
$20.00 per acre x .32 = $6.40
Additional costs will be incurred while other combines wait for 1 combine to clean up around a pole set. Also, combines need to be run at capacity and will lose grain out the back of the machine when it is not fully loaded or comes to a stop according to the grain loss monitor.

Approximately 2 acres around each pole set will have a reduction in yield do to over applied spray, fertilizer and compaction from the additional traffic from the equipment. If the reduction is 30% on a 58 bushel per acre proven yield, the results are 17.4 bushels per acre.
17.4 x 2 acres x $4.00 per acre = $139.20 per pole set.

There are other factors that enter into farming around an above gound power line such as unlocking and locking the GPS autosteer functions on the equipment when you come to a pole set. There is also difficulty getting back on the pass without the use of a foam marker.
Another will involve the option of arial (sp) spraying when there are two double poled power lines running in parrallel about 200 ft. apart.

brentm@scfast.net

Response 441: Comment noted.

Response 442: Comment noted. DEQ has worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Weed Spectrum

"A SIMPLE SOLUTION FOR YOUR HARD PROBLEMS"

Olympus™

Weeds Controlled	Scientific Name	Fall Application Rates		Spring Application Rates	
		0.6 oz/a	0.9 oz/a	0.6 oz/a	0.9 oz/a
Japanese brome[1]	*Bromus Japonicus*	C	C	C	C
Cheat (true cheatgrass)[2]	*Bromus secalinus*	C	C	C	C
Downy brome[3]	*Bromus tectorum*	S	C	S	S
Wild oat[4]	*Avena fatua*	S	C	S	C
Quackgrass	*Elytrigia repends*	S	S	S	S
Jointed goatgrass[5]	*Aegilops cylindrica*	-	S	-	S
Foxtail barley	*Hordeum pusillum*	C	C	C	C
Shepherspurse	*Capsella bursa-pastoris*	C	C	C	C
Field pennycress	*Thlaspi arvense*	C	C	C	C
Tumble mustard	*Sisymbrium altissimum*	C	C	C	C
Tansy mustard	*Descurania pinnata*	C	C	C	C
Flixweed	*Descurania sophia*	C	C	C	C
Blue mustard	*Chorispora tenella*	C	C	S	C
Black mustard	*Brassica nigra*	C	C	C	C
Wild mustard	*Brassica kaber*	C	C	C	C
Canola or Rape (vol.)	*Brassica sp.*	C	C	C	C
Pigweed	*Amaranthus retroflexus*	-	S	C	C
Mouseear chickweed	*Cerastium vulgatum*	S	C	-	-

1 & 2 = For field infestations of Japanese brome or cheat (true cheat) only, control may be achieved up to a maximum stage of 6 tillers.
3 = Applications should be made to actively growing weeds.
4 = When used according to label directions, wild oat will be controlled in ID, MT, OR, and WA. Suppression outside these four states.
5 = Fall and Spring sequential applications required. See label for application information.

Comment 442 (Continued)

C = Control **S = Suppression**

DOWNY BROME *(Bromus tectorum)*

Life Cycle: Winter annual
Ligule: Membranous, tall, & toothed margin.
Blades: First blade is tall, narrow, and vertical. Long narrow blades. Hairy on upper and lower surface. Prominent midrib below. Prominent veins above on the second and later blades. Leaves twist clockwise.
Sheaths: Hairy, round, closed and split partway; margins do not overlap.
Other: Often reddish-maroon at the base of the plant.
Seed: Lemma 6-13 mm long and awned. Awn 10-18 mm long, as long as lemma and hairy.

JAPANESE BROME *(Bromus japonicus)*

Life Cycle: Winter annual
Ligule: Membranous, tall, & toothed margin.
Blades: First blade is tall, narrow, and vertical. Long narrow blades. Hairy on upper and lower surface. Prominent veins above and midrib below. Leaves twist clockwise.
Sheaths: Hairy, round, closed and split partway; margins do not overlap.
Seed: Lemma 6-9 mm long, margins not rolled in at maturity and awned. Awn 5-8 mm long, about as long as lemma and without hair.

Olympus™

Comment 442 (Continued)

MT & ND Application Guidelines

- ***Rate:*** Fall Application - Olympus 70WG at 0.9 oz/a
- ***Timing:*** Winter wheat = 2-leaf up to jointing.
  Target actively growing weeds = 1-leaf to 2-tiller grasses and 1-2" broadleaves
- ***Varieties:*** No restrictions
- ***Adjuvant:*** A non–ionic surfactant is required. Use **R-11** at 1 - 2 qt/100 gal.
- ***Spray volume:*** Apply 5-**10** GPA by ground and 5 GPA by air.
- ***Rainfast:*** 4 hours
- ***PHI:*** 71 days for grain or straw.

R-11 SPREADER ACTIVATOR NONIONIC SURFACTANT

North Central Plains – MT, ND

Crop	Cumulative Precipitation	+	Rotation Interval (Months)
Wheat	**0**		**0**
Field Peas	**24**		**12**
Sunflower (Conventional)	**24**		**18**
Barley	**24**		**18**
Canola	**24**		**22**
Lentils	**24**		**22**

This is a the proper rate

CropScience

WILBUR-ELLIS

This bulletin is not intended to provide complete information for application. As with any crop-protection product, always read and follow label instructions. For a additional product information call toll-free 1-866-99Bayer or visit our web site at www.cerealexpert.com

Comment 442
(Continued)

Money, money. The EIS discusses the costs MATL has spent getting easements for alternative routes that may not be built. Why is this a concern for the DEQ? The DEQ says that it's only concern is that the easements meet all the proper regulatory standards. Comment 443

MATL is only purchasing a 45 ft. easement and is forcing the landowner to give up his property rights for the safety zone for nothing. IF the safety zone is a requirement, the DEQ should require MATL to purchase the total 105 ft. the easement it requires to meet these standards as a part of the permit process. Does the 45 ft easement that MATL is offering to purchase meet these standards? Comment 444

What size line is the DEQ permitting? The Draft EIS in its Executive Summary says the proposed transmission line could have the capacity to carry 300MW north and 300MW south for a total of 600MW. Tonbridge Power in its annual statement of April 2007 states that the capacity of the line it is building will be 650MW both ways. Tonbridge states that they are building the line for the additional capacity due to the great interest from its shippers. I don't doubt that there is the interest and need for this additional capacity, but again I ask "What size line is the DEQ permitting?" These are public documents and one must assume they are correct. Comment 445

This company has money for its own purposes, but not for monopoles. Where is the proof that MATL can only afford $800,000.00 addition costs for landowner mitigation on Alternative 2, the Proposed Action? The doubling of line capacity doubles the cash flow of this line. MATL can afford these additional costs Comment 446

Revenues: Tonbridge power, Inc. in a document of March 27, 2007 states that annual revenues will approach 28.4 million by mid-2009 and gross close to CDN $900 million over 25 years. That is at the original 300MW. When you double these figures for the line that MATL tells its investors it is actually building and surmise that they will have no trouble applying to ship more power when the line is built, it makes the one time capital expenditure to build Alternative 4 small. Comment 447

I ask again. "What is the foundation for the statement MATL made to DEQ that they can only afford an additional $800,000 for mitigation for the landowners on Alternative 2 when out of the other side of their mouth they are stating the former revenue projections?" The additional costs with using monopoles would extend the payback period only 4-5 months. For that you are asking the farmers to farm around the H-frames for the rest of his farming career. Comment 448

Then there is the additional revenue from selling the excess fiber optic capacity. Tonbridge tells their investors that this will be "substantial", but tells the DEQ it is inconsequential. Comment 449

The Governor of Montana is proposing a tax cut for these types of lines that ship green energy. Well we all know that at this time this proposal is dead, but it is likely it will be part of the final budget when the legislature finally does a budget. While this is Comment 450

Response 443: One finding and determination that DEQ must make before certifying the project is that the facility minimizes adverse environmental impact, considering the state of available technology and the nature and economics of the various alternatives. However, the Montana Environmental Policy Act requires that an EIS disclose the economic impacts of regulations on an applicant. The cost to the applicant may be a factor in the permitting decision, but it is not the only factor.

Response 444: Comment noted. DEQ requires certificate holders to adhere to the National Electric Safety Code which specifies clearances of supporting structures from other objects and vertical clearances above ground, roads, and water. The agencies do not dictate how MATL meets these clearances, just that they must be met.

Response 445: MATL has proposed a line with the capacity to move 300 MW in both directions. Also see response to comment 346.

PROJECTS

Comment 445 (cont.)

.: MATL ECONOMICS
Robust Revenue Model

• Based on the results of the June 2006 capacity auction, combined with the awarded capacity of the initial FER approved open season, annual revenues should approach $28.4 million by mid-2009 and increase at a contract inflator rate of 2.5% per annum thereafter. Over the life of the project, gross revenue from these new twenty fi year contracts and existing long term contracts should total close to CDN$900 million. MATL has now sold out it 600MWs of "rated" capacity.

• In the June 2006 capacity auction, for the first time ever, an Open Access Same time Information System ("O auction module was used to allocate electric transmission capacity in a competitive environment. The OASIS sy was developed for MATL by Open Access Technology International and is the first of its kind anywhere in the w Using this system, MATL received thirty-seven bids from four different companies. The total amount of capacity was requested was in excess of 2000MWs, or approximately 5x the available capacity up for bid. Capacity was awarded to the bidders based on 1) the conditions placed on the bids and, 2) the present value of the bids. The of the auction were that 180MWs was awarded to Energy Logics, Inc. for a twenty-four year term starting in Q1 MATL also awarded 120MWs of capacity to Wind Hunter LLC for an approximate twenty-five year term starting 2007, and 180MWs of capacity to Invenergy Wind Montana LLC for the same term. The remaining capacity cont to be held by Great Plains Wind and Energy LLC, a successful bidder in MATL's initial open season held in 2005.

Summary Points of Revenue Model:

• Annual revenues should approach $28.4 million by mid-2009

• Over the life of the project, gross aggregate revenues should total close to CDN $900 million.

• Counterparties are required to be credit worthy.

• EBITDA is driven by low O&M / SGA, staffing and property taxes.

• Revenues from future capacity re-sales are almost without incremental cost.

• Contracts are "take or pay" capacity agreements.

• Contracts are subject to conditions precedent including completion of the line, receipt of regulatory approvals, board approval and the wind farms being developed.

• 20% of the contracts are for fifteen year terms, the remaining 80% for twenty-five year terms.

• Short term re-sales will be auctioned through OATT's OASIS system by MATL.

de file="shadowRightBottom.asp" -->

Comment 445 (cont.)

design engineering is being undertaken on a time and materials basis and forms a small part of the overall cost. To date the Corporation has paid SNC $3,007,251 for design work.

Detailed design on the actual line route has commenced, involving the placement of poles on three dimensional computer assisted design – computer assisted manufacture ("CAD-CAM") to ensure hill and crossing clearances, since an updated aerial survey was undertaken last fall on the new route. As part of this design, the size and rating of conductor and the impact on weight on pole requirements has been decided, including the weight effects of ice loading on the conductor and wind shears up to 165 kilometers per hour. The Corporation has selected the steel reinforced aluminum conductor "Falcon" which has a diameter of 1590 kcmls, and has a theoretical thermal rated capacity of 658 MWs. At high ambient temperatures and limited wind conditions such conductor may not meet industry standards of acceptable line loss performance criteria of 10% or less. The Corporation has been advised the range of thermal capacity of the selected conductor, at acceptable line loss performance in the most adverse wind and temperature conditions, is at least likely to be 450 to 500 MWs or higher.

This additional capacity can only be sold at a future date if and when the two electricity systems, with which the transmission line interconnects, are able to import and export such additional capacity without adverse effect. Further permitting will be required, including an upgrade in the WECC path rating. At present the Corporation has only applied for a rating of 300 MWs rating in both directions, and will only be able to sell firm capacity to such levels until further applications are made and approved. However, both system operators will be able to use the line in emergency situations at a higher rating for emergencies of short duration, such as occurred in July, 2006 when Calgary was subjected to load shedding for several hours due to an operational problem with the British Columbia inter-tie.

The Corporation is aware that the Project is being constructed in a wind corridor, and accordingly has confirmed with SNC a design parameter of tolerating 165 km/h high winds and designated amounts of ice loading without adverse effect. Tender packages have been sent out by SNCto solicit bids from suppliers. Finally, the Corporation has committed to use a certain number of monopoles to diminish the impact on farming activities for certain landowners, where the route contemplates a diagonal crossing. These impacts include loss of production, increased cost of weed control and diminished access for aerial spraying.

Contracts have been awarded to SNC ATP and Power Engineers for the Lethbridge 120S and Marias substations respectively. The Lethbridge station work has been added as an annex to the existing SNC EPC Agreement and thus incorporates all of the terms and conditions embedded therein. The Power Engineers contract provides for a fixed price in respect of engineering and construction management and a flow-through (with an agreed mark-up) of materials and subcontractor services. Work is already well advanced with both companies with the focus now on identifying the necessary long lead-time items and the timeline through regulatory approvals to construction, testing, commissioning and the in-service date.

While quotes are not in hand to confirm final cost amounts, the Corporation believes that the combined cost of the line and stations will come in at $123 million. Including insurance and contingencies the capital construction cost is estimated at $129 million, of which various amounts have already been paid such as the phase shifting transformer. These costs will become increasingly certain as tenders are received and bids accepted for equipment and material supply.

Construction Budget

MATL received initial construction budgets from its proposed EPC contractors during 2005, which were known to be preliminary in nature due to the fact that the design and routing were not as yet set. The preferred route has now been selected, in part to minimize landowner impact and environmental impact,

Comment 445 (Continued)

and is 36 kilometers longer than originally estimated. In addition, design considerations have dictated an increase in capacity of the conductor from 300 MWs to over 650 MWs each way, with concurrent increases in size and cost of poles to meet greater load and weight requirements. Until the final design is set, and construction drawings are completed and procurement bids received, the Corporation has no way of knowing the precise construction budget. Given current discussions with SNC the Corporation expects that the construction budget should not exceed a total of $129 million (not including Project soft or development costs) which is $30 million higher than the preliminary estimates received in 2005, due to two major factors, increased thermal capacity and therefore increased pole size, as well as series capacitors placed in the Marias substation. The Corporation considered this cost increase to be considered prudent since it involves the doubling in thermal transmission capacity, while the increase in capacitors reduces impedance and hence increase emergency ratings, both of which increase revenue potential that may be afforded to the Corporation.

Financing Activities

The Corporation has financed all of its activities with common share equity to date. Management expects that with the cost increases coming from line lengthening and additions of series capacitors needed to increase emergency ratings, future construction financing requirements will total approximately $115 million depending on the length of the final routing, construction elements chosen in pole construction, substation design requirements, and the final contracts signed with the contractors, which may be undertaken in two phases as well as any finance related requirements. To date four financings have taken place, all of which were equity, which have raised total proceeds of $24,990,345 before costs of issue and exercise of options.

On April 27, 2006, the Corporation completed the offering of 41,072,250 units for aggregate gross proceeds of $17,250,345, each unit comprising one common share and one half purchase warrant, where each purchase warrant entitles the holder to purchase an additional common share for $0.55. These funds were applied to construction deposits, design costs, and advancement of the permitting and development process.

In addition, the Corporation acquired 100% of the outstanding shares of Rocky Mountain Power Limited and LECTRIX Limited on April 27, 2007 for share consideration totaling 35,929,000 common shares of the Corporation. These corporations each held a 17.5% interest in MATL, and by virtue of the two acquisitions, the Corporation now has a 100% direct and indirect interest in MATL.

Further financings are dependent on the total cost of construction elements, when such costs are due, and the timing of regulatory approvals. Until the procurement process is completed under the EPC agreement, the Corporation will not know with certainty the amount of total construction elements nor the amount of any deposits on construction elements that will be required in advance of Notice to Proceed. Recent negotiations with EPC contractors have allowed the Corporation to begin to quantify the deposits required for long lead-time material orders, many of which are strongly influenced by commodity prices (for copper, steel, aluminum, etc.).

The Corporation has made efforts to push the requirement for advance payments out to the date of the Notice to Proceed in order to diminish the effect on financial resources prior to availability of the senior financing on Notice to Proceed. For example, the Corporation's order with ABB, Inc. for the 330 megavoltampere phase shifting transformer for $10.956 million has been restructured such that the required payments, which to date have aggregated $8.5 million, will be completed on the date of the Notice to Proceed and paid from the funds available out of the senior project finance debt. Secondly, the Corporation has made arrangements for alternate secured debt financing for any other long lead items,

Comment 445 (Continued)

Response 446: Comment noted. Please see response to comment 448.

Response 447: Comment noted.

Response 448: MATL explained the foundation for this statement as follows: "All of the company's financial resources are directed to the goals of permitting and building the MATL project and therefore the company does not have "Money for its own purposes." Further, the company's financial resources are the debt and equity financing provided by bankers and shareholders. These bankers and shareholders have many other alternatives to the MATL project to consider for potential investment. The MATL project must provide a competitive return relative to other investment alternatives to secure the necessary financing.

The $800,000 amount is not "cast in stone" due to factors such as the appreciation on the Canadian currency, however, the amount of this additional expenditure needs to be balanced against the widely accepted business practice to build the lowest cost transmission system that meets all applicable environmental, safety and reliability standards. This widely accepted business practice is a key factor that MATL must keep in mind to ensure that its project remains competitive." MATL's economic analysis determined that the project is feasible on the basis of commitments from shippers for long term firm contracts for 300 MW northbound. Although MATL's 300 MW s of southbound capacity is also underpinned by long term contracts, these contracts continue to be subject to the shipper's confirmation of acceptance and hence MATL cannot rely on the attendant revenue to underpin is project." To the extent that MATL lowers property values, this would be a cost to Montana. See the revised discussion on land values in Section 3.13.

Response 449: Comment noted. However, as indicated in Section 2.3, no plans have been made to use the excess fiber capacity for commercial purposes.

Comment 451

conjecture at this time, the governors' office estimates that this will provide MATL with an annual tax relief of $5,000,000.00.

The opportunities for the company to enhance its cash flow keep coming. If MATL can't afford to build this powerline right, with monopoles, it should not be built. Comment 452

While reading the Draft EIS it was clear how much work and effort the DEQ put into this document. Comment 453

The DEQ took the horrendous proposed routes that MATL submitted and tried very hard to lessen the impacts of a diagonal powerline. The documents main deficit is the lack of the other side of the equation; the costs of farming around the poles to the farmer. This still needs to be done. If MATL is going to make an annual payment of offset these costs then it should be part of the certificate. Once the certificate is issued I don't see that the DEQ has any authority beyond that time to force MATL to do anything. Comment 454

Sincerely,

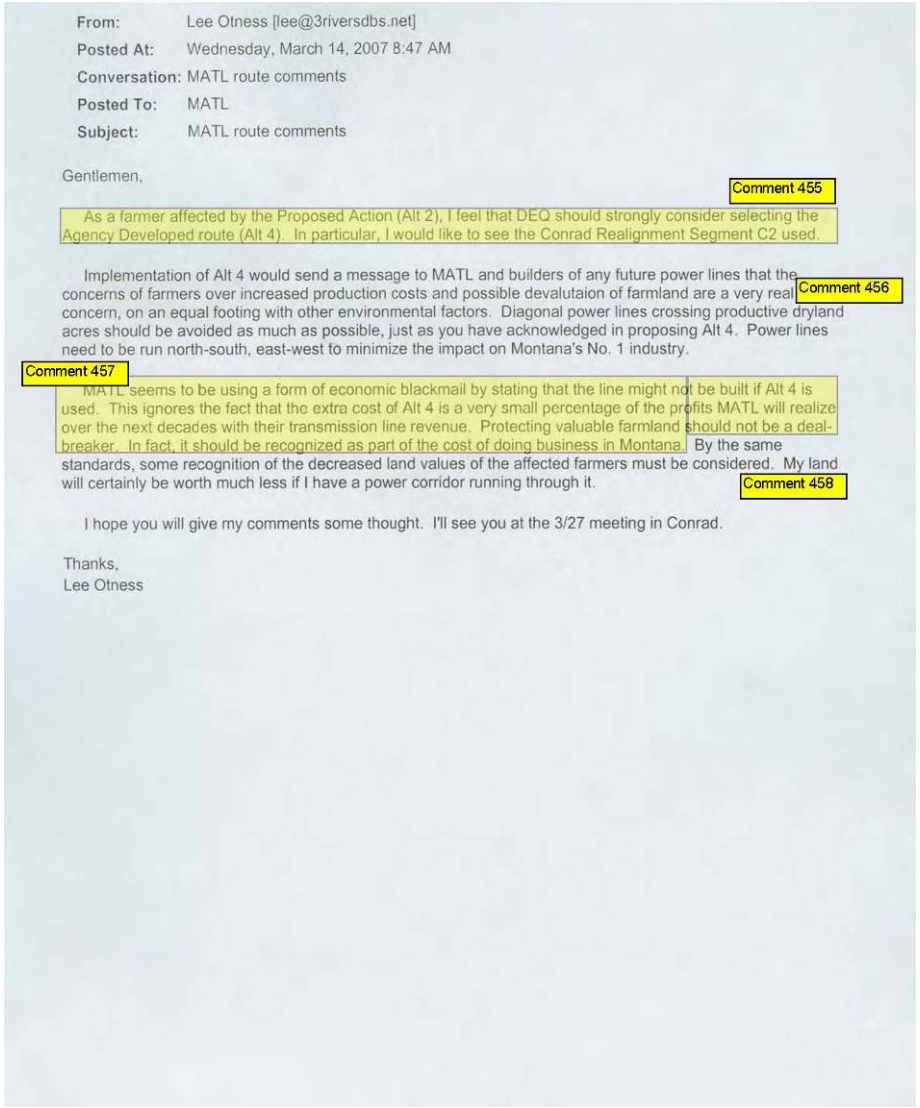
Chris Stephens

Response 450 and 451: See revised Section 3.13 for estimates on property tax savings to MATL from recent changes in the law.

Response 452: Comment noted.

Response 453: Comment noted.

Response 454: Comment noted.



From: Lee Otness [lee@3riversdbs.net]
Posted At: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 8:47 AM
Conversation: MATL route comments
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL route comments

Gentlemen,

Comment 455

As a farmer affected by the Proposed Action (Alt 2), I feel that DEQ should strongly consider selecting the Agency Developed route (Alt 4). In particular, I would like to see the Conrad Realignment Segment C2 used.

Implementation of Alt 4 would send a message to MATL and builders of any future power lines that the concerns of farmers over increased production costs and possible devalutaion of farmland are a very real concern, on an equal footing with other environmental factors. Diagonal power lines crossing productive dryland acres should be avoided as much as possible, just as you have acknowledged in proposing Alt 4. Power lines need to be run north-south, east-west to minimize the impact on Montana's No. 1 industry.

Comment 456

Comment 457

MATL seems to be using a form of economic blackmail by stating that the line might not be built if Alt 4 is used. This ignores the fact that the extra cost of Alt 4 is a very small percentage of the profits MATL will realize over the next decades with their transmission line revenue. Protecting valuable farmland should not be a deal-breaker. In fact, it should be recognized as part of the cost of doing business in Montana. By the same standards, some recognition of the decreased land values of the affected farmers must be considered. My land will certainly be worth much less if I have a power corridor running through it.

Comment 458

I hope you will give my comments some thought. I'll see you at the 3/27 meeting in Conrad.

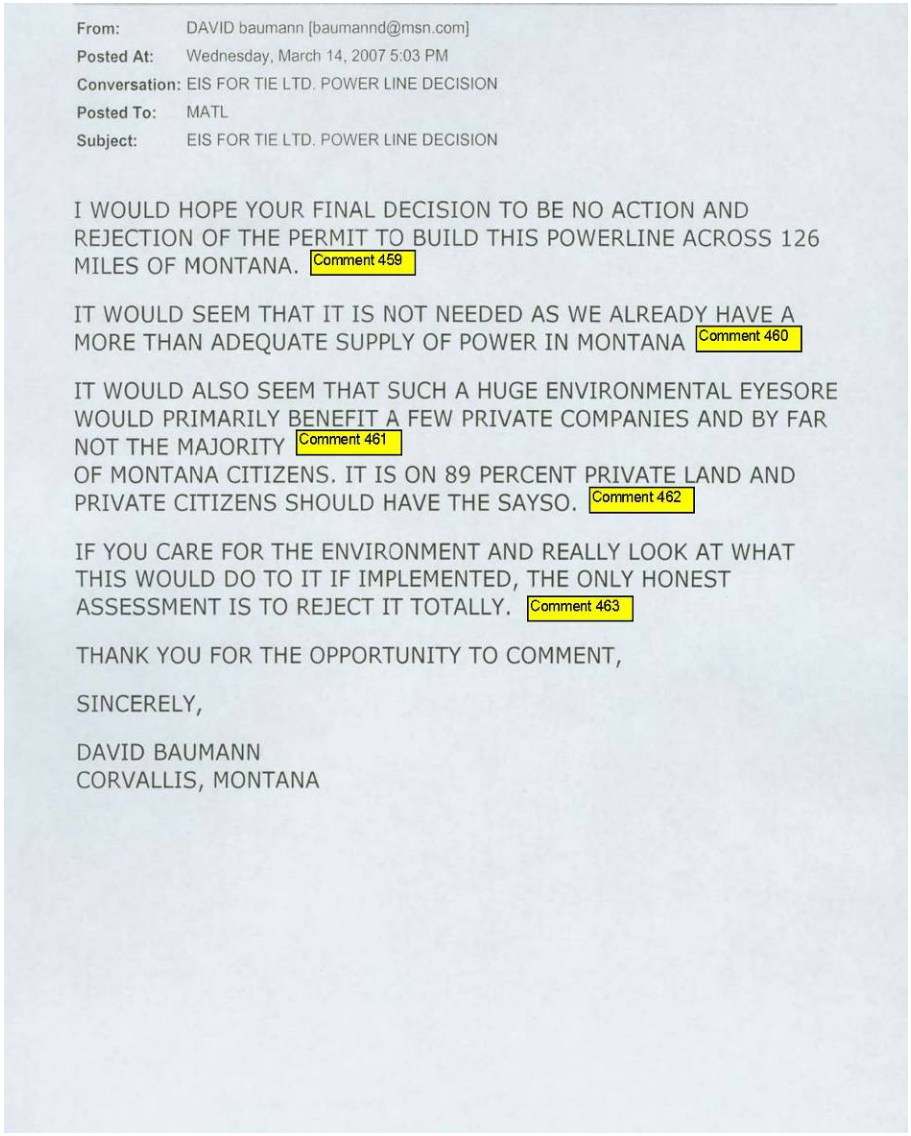
Thanks,
Lee Otness

Response 455: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of potential costs of farming around structures and a comparison of the costs of farming around structures to the additional costs associated with Alternative 4 in Section 3.13.

Response 456: Comment noted. See response to comment 247.

Response 457: Comment noted.

Response 458: Comment noted.



From: DAVID baumann [baumannd@msn.com]
Posted At: Wednesday, March 14, 2007 5:03 PM
Conversation: EIS FOR TIE LTD. POWER LINE DECISION
Posted To: MATL
Subject: EIS FOR TIE LTD. POWER LINE DECISION

I WOULD HOPE YOUR FINAL DECISION TO BE NO ACTION AND REJECTION OF THE PERMIT TO BUILD THIS POWERLINE ACROSS 126 MILES OF MONTANA. Comment 459

IT WOULD SEEM THAT IT IS NOT NEEDED AS WE ALREADY HAVE A MORE THAN ADEQUATE SUPPLY OF POWER IN MONTANA Comment 460

IT WOULD ALSO SEEM THAT SUCH A HUGE ENVIRONMENTAL EYESORE WOULD PRIMARILY BENEFIT A FEW PRIVATE COMPANIES AND BY FAR NOT THE MAJORITY Comment 461
OF MONTANA CITIZENS. IT IS ON 89 PERCENT PRIVATE LAND AND PRIVATE CITIZENS SHOULD HAVE THE SAYSO. Comment 462

IF YOU CARE FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AND REALLY LOOK AT WHAT THIS WOULD DO TO IT IF IMPLEMENTED, THE ONLY HONEST ASSESSMENT IS TO REJECT IT TOTALLY. Comment 463

THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT,

SINCERELY,

DAVID BAUMANN
CORVALLIS, MONTANA

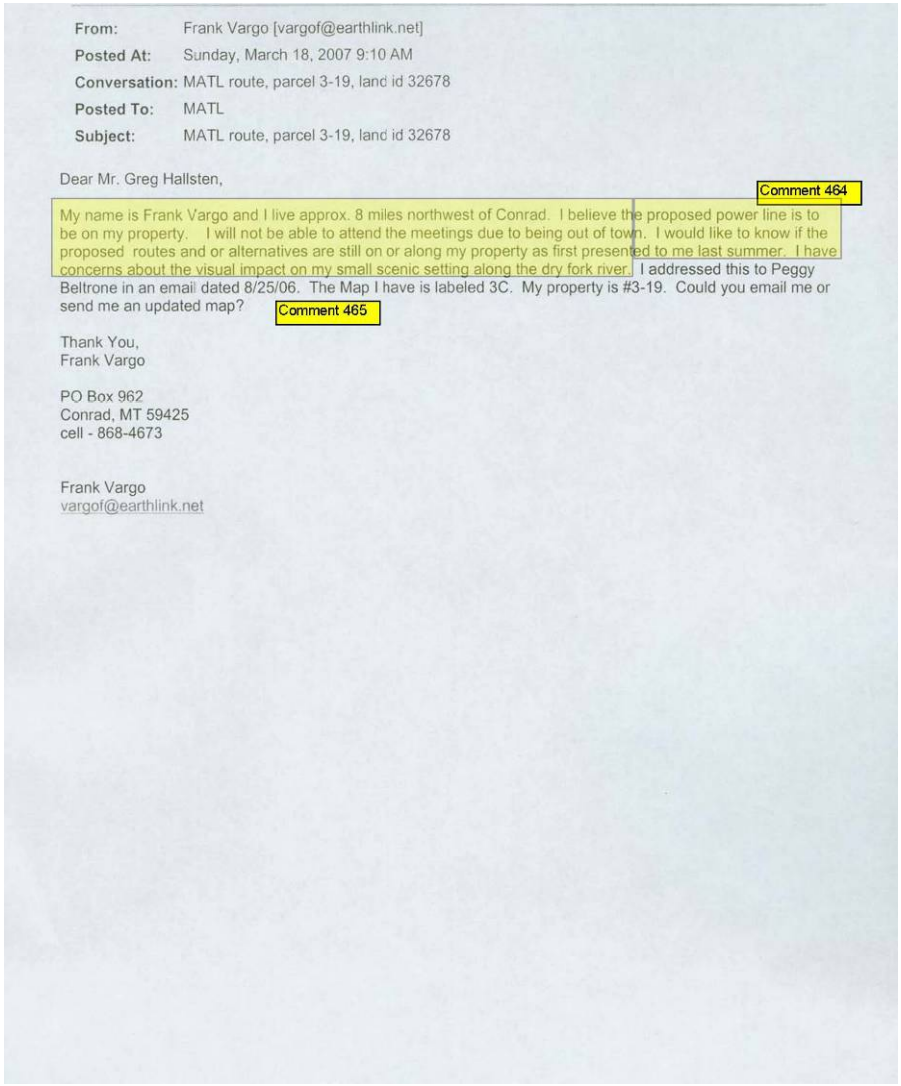
Response 459: Comment noted.

Response 460: Comment noted.

Response 461: Montana does produce more electricity than it consumes. The need for this line as stated in Section 1.2.1 is "to connect the Montana electrical transmission grid with the Alberta electrical transmission grid (no direct connection currently exists), provide access to potential markets for new and existing power generation facilities in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line, and improve transmission access to markets seeking new energy resources."

Response 462: Comment noted. As with many businesses, the owner of the business potentially benefits or is hurt from any profits or losses, and society as a whole does not directly reap the profits or incur the losses from that business. The state and counties would gain tax revenues as indicated in Section 3.13.

Response 463: Under the Major Facility Siting Act, the decision to approve, approve with conditions, or disapprove rests with DEQ's director.



From: Frank Vargo [vargof@earthlink.net]
Posted At: Sunday, March 18, 2007 9:10 AM
Conversation: MATL route, parcel 3-19, land id 32678
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL route, parcel 3-19, land id 32678

Dear Mr. Greg Hallsten,

Comment 464

My name is Frank Vargo and I live approx. 8 miles northwest of Conrad. I believe the proposed power line is to be on my property. I will not be able to attend the meetings due to being out of town. I would like to know if the proposed routes and or alternatives are still on or along my property as first presented to me last summer. I have concerns about the visual impact on my small scenic setting along the dry fork river. I addressed this to Peggy Beltrone in an email dated 8/25/06. The Map I have is labeled 3C. My property is #3-19. Could you email me or send me an updated map?

Comment 465

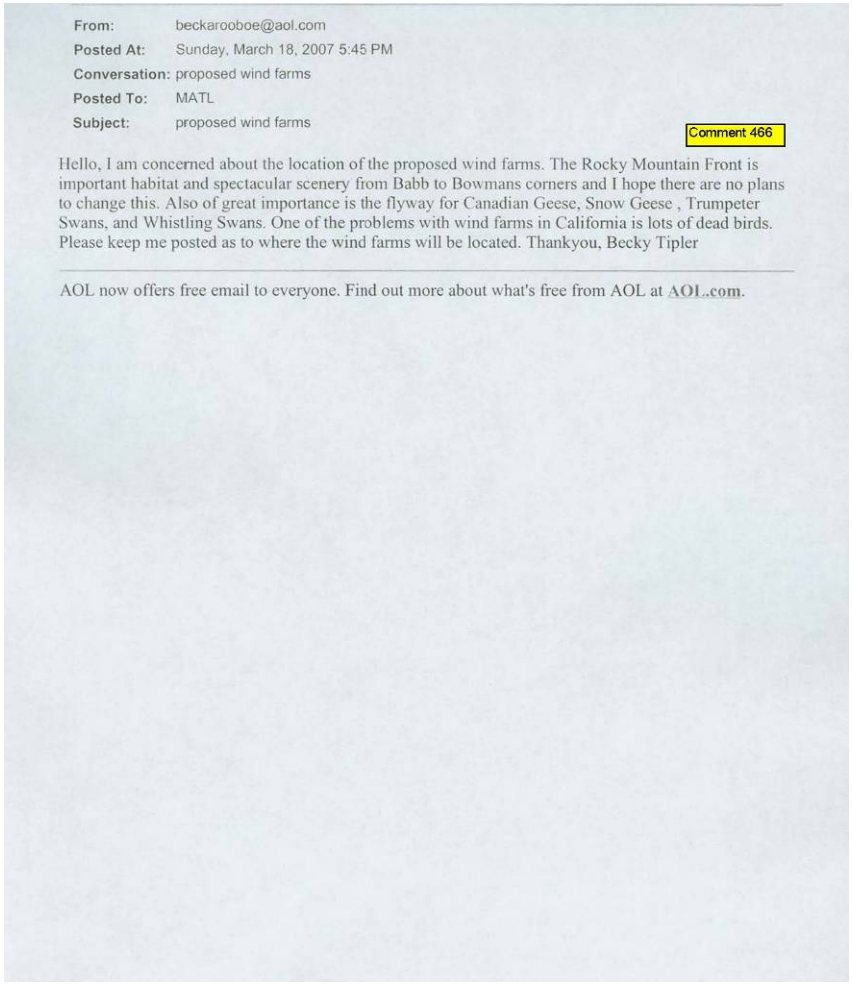
Thank You,
Frank Vargo

PO Box 962
Conrad, MT 59425
cell - 868-4673

Frank Vargo
vargof@earthlink.net

Response 464: Comment noted.

Response 465: Updated maps have been provided to Mr. Vargo. Your property northwest of Conrad would not be crossed by any alternative. Alternative 3 would parallel the existing NorthWestern Energy Great Falls to Cut Bank line about 1/10 mile west of your property. If a residence were located at the western edge of your property, it would have to be impacted due to the proximity of the line. Alternative 2 would be located approximately ½ mile to the west of your property, while Alternative 4 would be located about 4 miles to the east.

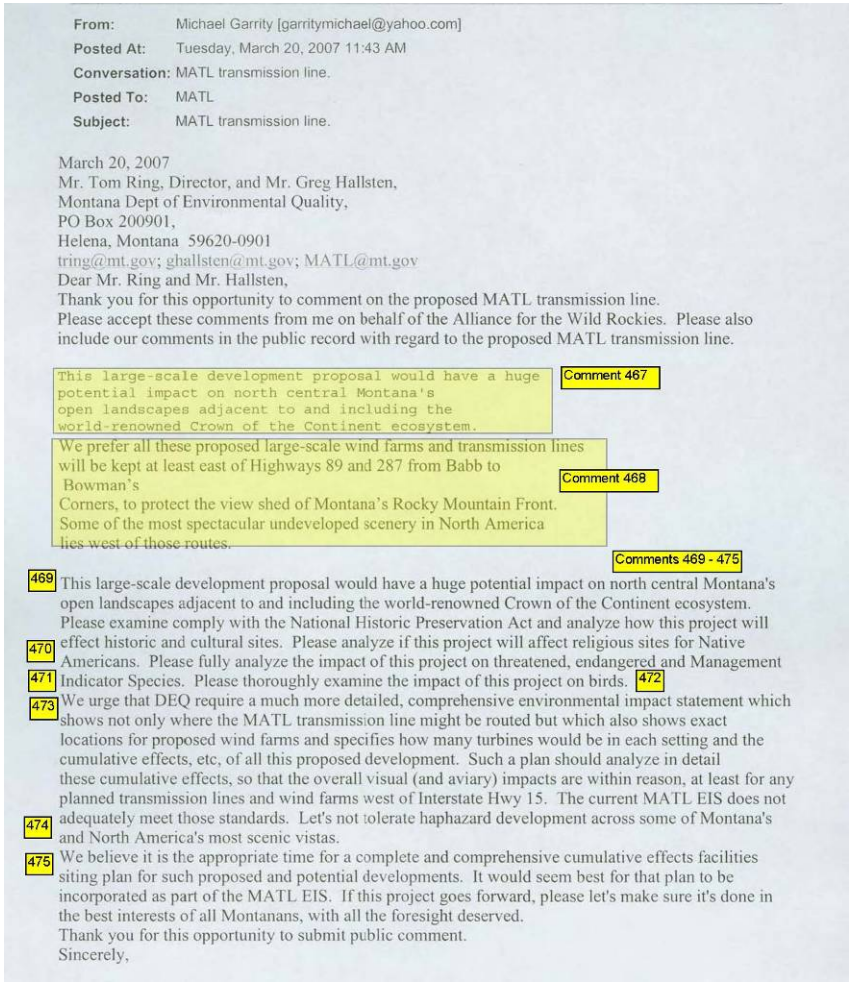


From: beckarooboe@aol.com
Posted At: Sunday, March 18, 2007 5:45 PM
Conversation: proposed wind farms
Posted To: MATL
Subject: proposed wind farms

Comment 466

Hello, I am concerned about the location of the proposed wind farms. The Rocky Mountain Front is important habitat and spectacular scenery from Babb to Bowmans corners and I hope there are no plans to change this. Also of great importance is the flyway for Canadian Geese, Snow Geese , Trumpeter Swans, and Whistling Swans. One of the problems with wind farms in California is lots of dead birds. Please keep me posted as to where the wind farms will be located. Thankyou, Becky Tipler

Response 466: See response to comment 464.



From: Michael Garrity [garritymichael@yahoo.com]
Posted At: Tuesday, March 20, 2007 11:43 AM
Conversation: MATL transmission line.
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL transmission line.

March 20, 2007
Mr. Tom Ring, Director, and Mr. Greg Hallsten,
Montana Dept of Environmental Quality,
PO Box 200901,
Helena, Montana 59620-0901
tring@mt.gov; ghallsten@mt.gov; MATL@mt.gov
Dear Mr. Ring and Mr. Hallsten,
Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the proposed MATL transmission line.
Please accept these comments from me on behalf of the Alliance for the Wild Rockies. Please also include our comments in the public record with regard to the proposed MATL transmission line.

This large-scale development proposal would have a huge potential impact on north central Montana's open landscapes adjacent to and including the world-renowned Crown of the Continent ecosystem.

Comment 467

We prefer all these proposed large-scale wind farms and transmission lines will be kept at least east of Highways 89 and 287 from Babb to Bowman's Corners, to protect the view shed of Montana's Rocky Mountain Front. Some of the most spectacular undeveloped scenery in North America lies west of those routes.

Comment 468

Comments 469 - 475

469 This large-scale development proposal would have a huge potential impact on north central Montana's open landscapes adjacent to and including the world-renowned Crown of the Continent ecosystem. Please examine comply with the National Historic Preservation Act and analyze how this project will
470 effect historic and cultural sites. Please analyze if this project will affect religious sites for Native Americans. Please fully analyze the impact of this project on threatened, endangered and Management
471 Indicator Species. Please thoroughly examine the impact of this project on birds. 472
473 We urge that DEQ require a much more detailed, comprehensive environmental impact statement which shows not only where the MATL transmission line might be routed but which also shows exact locations for proposed wind farms and specifies how many turbines would be in each setting and the cumulative effects, etc, of all this proposed development. Such a plan should analyze in detail these cumulative effects, so that the overall visual (and aviary) impacts are within reason, at least for any planned transmission lines and wind farms west of Interstate Hwy 15. The current MATL EIS does not
474 adequately meet those standards. Let's not tolerate haphazard development across some of Montana's and North America's most scenic vistas.
475 We believe it is the appropriate time for a complete and comprehensive cumulative effects facilities siting plan for such proposed and potential developments. It would seem best for that plan to be incorporated as part of the MATL EIS. If this project goes forward, please let's make sure it's done in the best interests of all Montanans, with all the foresight deserved.
Thank you for this opportunity to submit public comment.
Sincerely,

Response 467: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4. The transmission line and planned wind farms would be located well east of the Crown of the Continent ecosystem as indicated in the attached figure.

Response 468: Comment noted. The potential wind farms which are known by the agencies and that would potentially connect to the MATL transmission line would all be located east of highways 89 and 287. The proposed transmission line also would be located east of these highways. Also see the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 469: A thorough cultural resource investigation designed to meet all data requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act has been conducted. The investigation included pedestrian inventory of the proposed action and analysis of historic/prehistoric context; historic, prehistoric and rural districts; landscape issues; traditional cultural properties and landscapes; and individual site significance. See Section 3.14 for additional information.

Response 470: DOE initiated formal consultation with the Blackfeet Nation and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes in July 2007 to identify and evaluate historic properties, including those of traditional religious and cultural importance. DOE also has initiated consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.

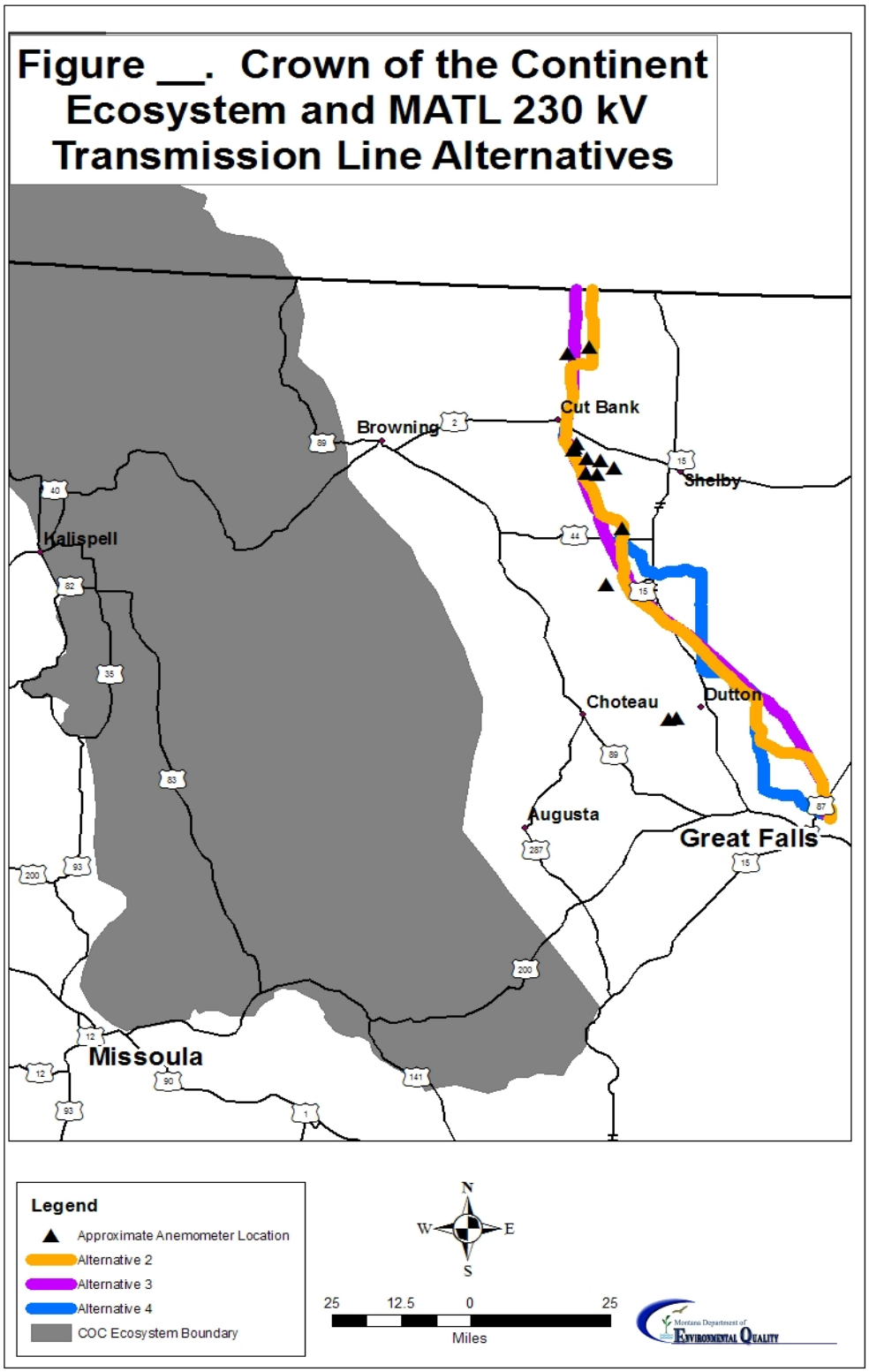


Figure __. Crown of the Continent Ecosystem and MATL 230 kV Transmission Line Alternatives
Cut Bank
Browning
Shelby
Kalispell
Choteau
Dutton
Augusta
Great Falls
Missoula
Legend
Approximate Anemometer Location
Alternative 2
Alternative 3
Alternative 4
COC Ecosystem Boundary
N
W
E
S
25
12.5
0
25
Miles
Montana Department of Environmental Quality

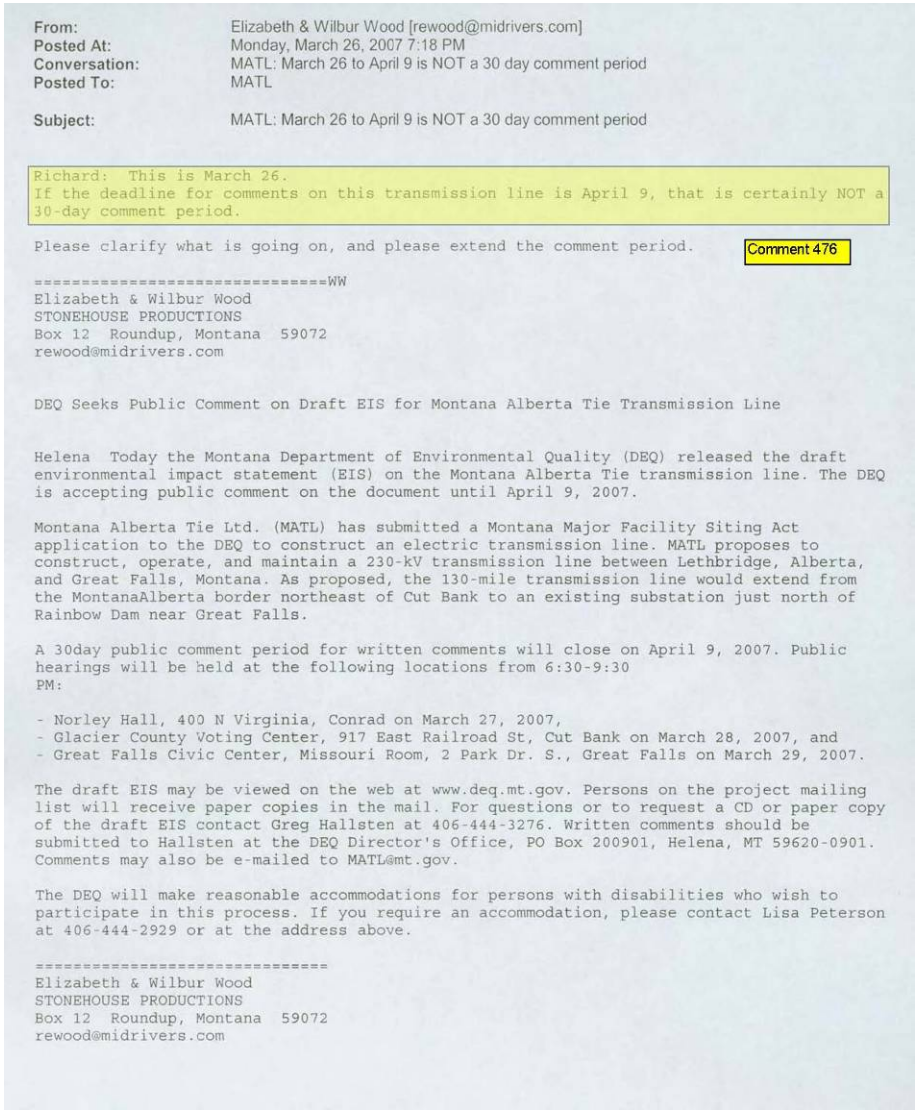
Response 471: The potential effects of the transmission line on threatened and endangered species is indicated in Section 3.10. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Section 4.14.

Response 472: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Section 4.9 for more information about potential impacts to birds from wind farm development.

Response 473: Comment noted. Exact locations of wind farms and/or individual wind turbines are not known at this time. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 474: Comment noted. The discussion of cumulative impacts for the proposed MATL transmission line has been expanded in Chapter 4.

Response 475: A revised discussion of cumulative impacts can be found in Chapter 4. The agencies do not have the regulatory authority to require siting plans for wind generators.



From: Elizabeth & Wilbur Wood [rewood@midrivers.com]
Posted At: Monday, March 26, 2007 7:18 PM
Conversation: MATL: March 26 to April 9 is NOT a 30 day comment period
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL: March 26 to April 9 is NOT a 30 day comment period

Richard: This is March 26.
If the deadline for comments on this transmission line is April 9, that is certainly NOT a 30-day comment period.

Please clarify what is going on, and please extend the comment period. Comment 476

==========WW
Elizabeth & Wilbur Wood
STONEHOUSE PRODUCTIONS
Box 12 Roundup, Montana 59072
rewood@midrivers.com

DEQ Seeks Public Comment on Draft EIS for Montana Alberta Tie Transmission Line

Helena Today the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) released the draft environmental impact statement (EIS) on the Montana Alberta Tie transmission line. The DEQ is accepting public comment on the document until April 9, 2007.

Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) has submitted a Montana Major Facility Siting Act application to the DEQ to construct an electric transmission line. MATL proposes to construct, operate, and maintain a 230-kV transmission line between Lethbridge, Alberta, and Great Falls, Montana. As proposed, the 130-mile transmission line would extend from the MontanaAlberta border northeast of Cut Bank to an existing substation just north of Rainbow Dam near Great Falls.

A 30day public comment period for written comments will close on April 9, 2007. Public hearings will be held at the following locations from 6:30-9:30 PM:

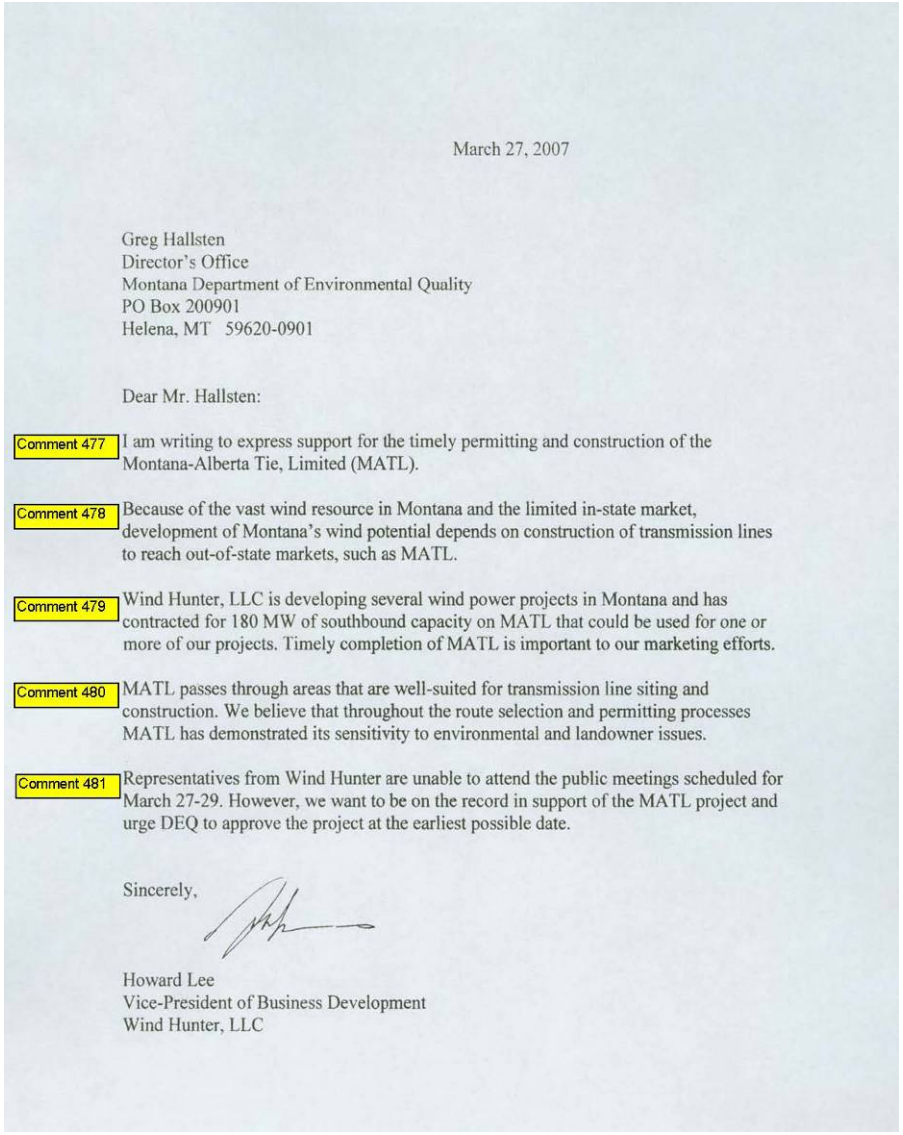
- Norley Hall, 400 N Virginia, Conrad on March 27, 2007,
- Glacier County Voting Center, 917 East Railroad St, Cut Bank on March 28, 2007, and
- Great Falls Civic Center, Missouri Room, 2 Park Dr. S., Great Falls on March 29, 2007.

The draft EIS may be viewed on the web at www.deq.mt.gov. Persons on the project mailing list will receive paper copies in the mail. For questions or to request a CD or paper copy of the draft EIS contact Greg Hallsten at 406-444-3276. Written comments should be submitted to Hallsten at the DEQ Director's Office, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620-0901. Comments may also be e-mailed to MATL@mt.gov.

The DEQ will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in this process. If you require an accommodation, please contact Lisa Peterson at 406-444-2929 or at the address above.

==========
Elizabeth & Wilbur Wood
STONEHOUSE PRODUCTIONS
Box 12 Roundup, Montana 59072
rewood@midrivers.com

Response 476: DEQ's draft EIS (DOE's draft EA) was published on March 9, 2007. In addition, the comment period was extended an additional three weeks.



March 27, 2007

Greg Hallsten
Director's Office
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Hallsten:

Comment 477 I am writing to express support for the timely permitting and construction of the Montana-Alberta Tie, Limited (MATL).

Comment 478 Because of the vast wind resource in Montana and the limited in-state market, development of Montana's wind potential depends on construction of transmission lines to reach out-of-state markets, such as MATL.

Comment 479 Wind Hunter, LLC is developing several wind power projects in Montana and has contracted for 180 MW of southbound capacity on MATL that could be used for one or more of our projects. Timely completion of MATL is important to our marketing efforts.

Comment 480 MATL passes through areas that are well-suited for transmission line siting and construction. We believe that throughout the route selection and permitting processes MATL has demonstrated its sensitivity to environmental and landowner issues.

Comment 481 Representatives from Wind Hunter are unable to attend the public meetings scheduled for March 27-29. However, we want to be on the record in support of the MATL project and urge DEQ to approve the project at the earliest possible date.

Sincerely,

Howard Lee
Vice-President of Business Development
Wind Hunter, LLC

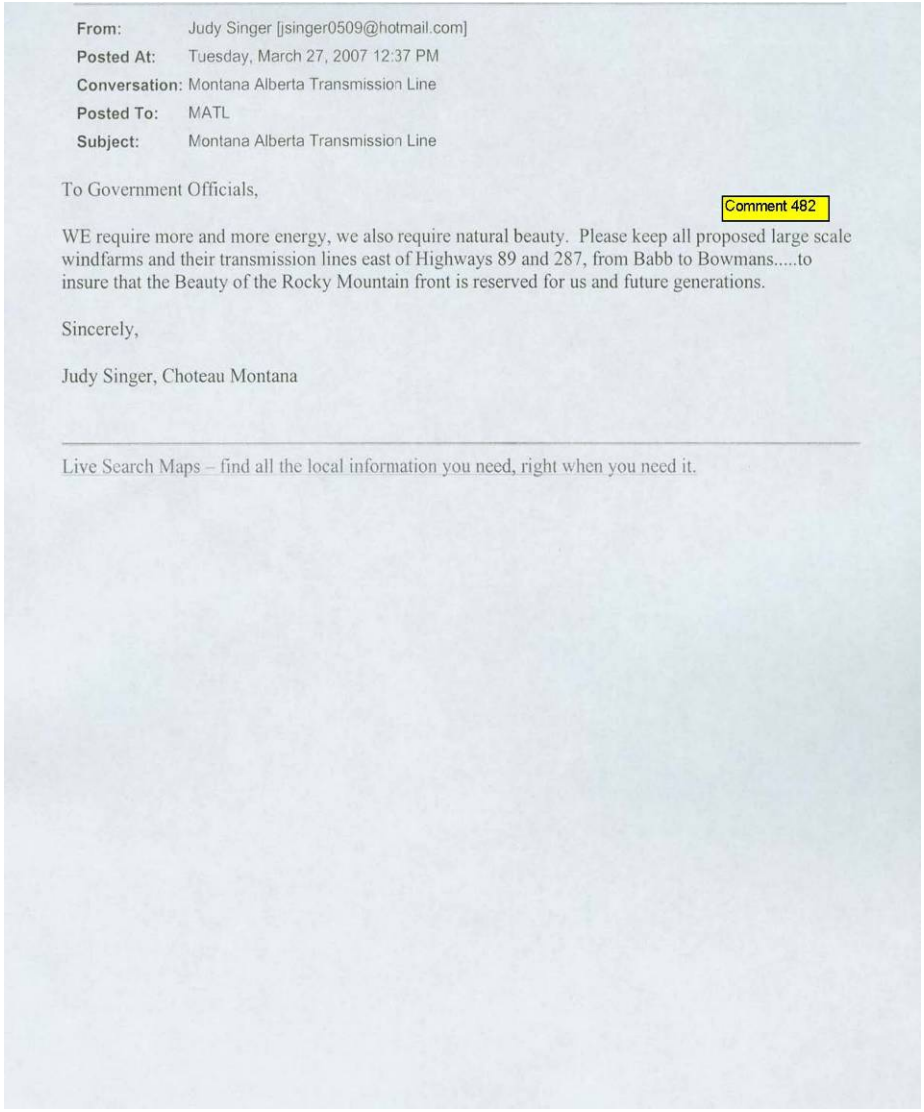
Response 477: Comment noted.

Response 478: Comment noted. The proposed line would potentially serve proposed wind farms and would serve as a link between the Alberta and Montana power grids allowing power to be shipped in both directions. In addition to the firm contracts with wind farm developers, when wind generators are not fully using their contracted capacity, the MATL line would be available for non-firm transactions allowing power from other sources of generation to be imported to or exported from Montana.

Response 479: Comment noted.

Response 480: Comment noted.

Response 481: Comment noted.



From: Judy Singer [jsinger0509@hotmail.com]
Posted At: Tuesday, March 27, 2007 12:37 PM
Conversation: Montana Alberta Transmission Line
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Montana Alberta Transmission Line

To Government Officials,

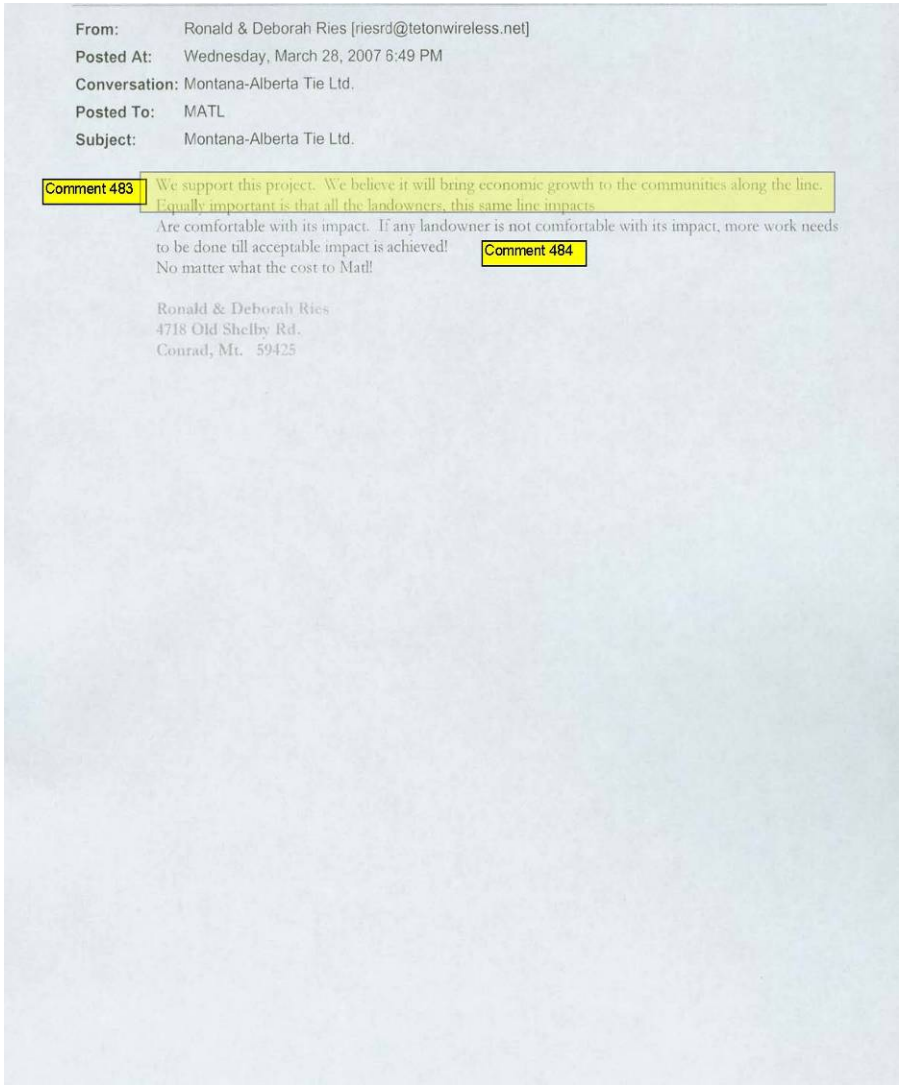
Comment 482

WE require more and more energy, we also require natural beauty. Please keep all proposed large scale windfarms and their transmission lines east of Highways 89 and 287, from Babb to Bowmans.....to insure that the Beauty of the Rocky Mountain front is reserved for us and future generations.

Sincerely,

Judy Singer, Choteau Montana

Response 482: See response to comment 468.



From: Ronald & Deborah Ries [riesrd@tetonwireless.net]
Posted At: Wednesday, March 28, 2007 6:49 PM
Conversation: Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd.

Comment 483

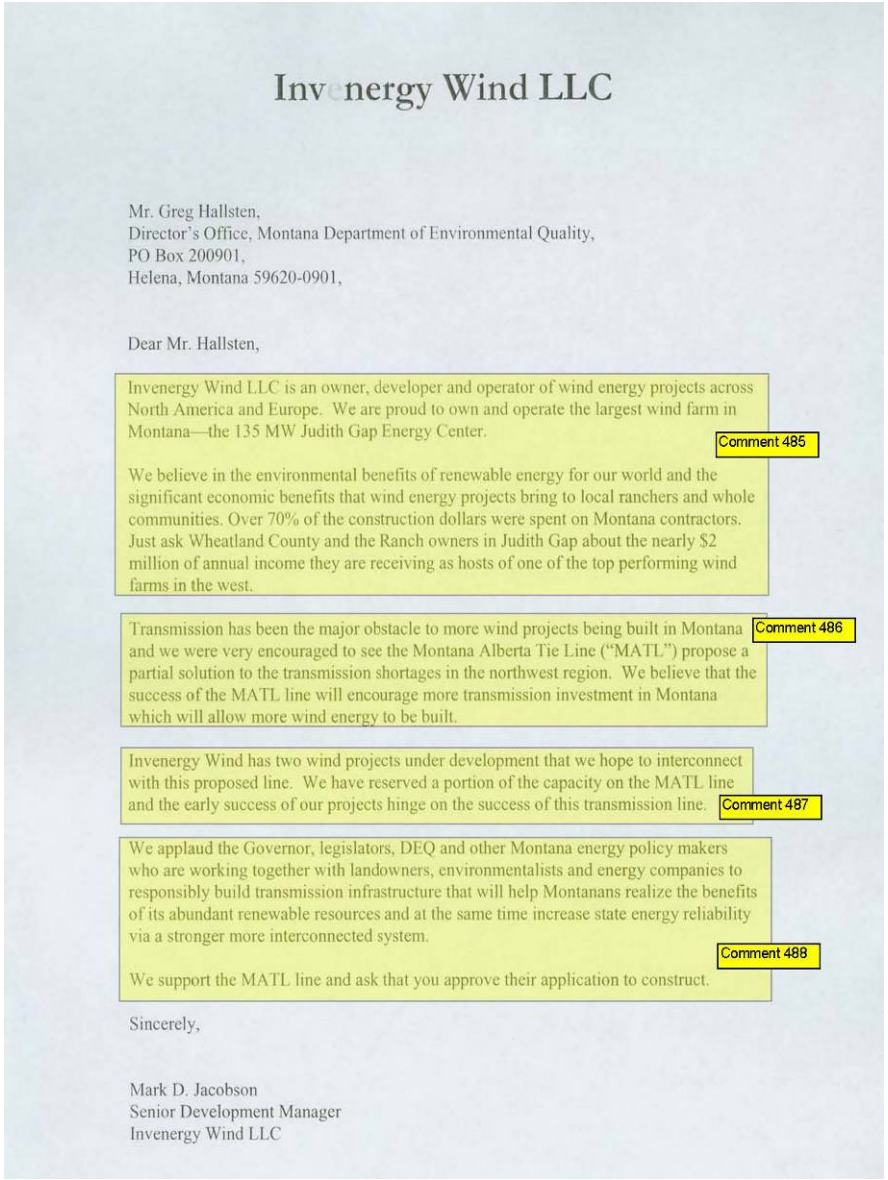
We support this project. We believe it will bring economic growth to the communities along the line. Equally important is that all the landowners, this same line impacts
Are comfortable with its impact. If any landowner is not comfortable with its impact, more work needs to be done till acceptable impact is achieved!
No matter what the cost to Matl!

Comment 484

Ronald & Deborah Ries
4718 Old Shelby Rd.
Conrad, Mt. 59425

Response 483: Comment noted.

Response 484: Comment noted.



Invenergy Wind LLC

Mr. Greg Hallsten,
Director's Office, Montana Department of Environmental Quality,
PO Box 200901,
Helena, Montana 59620-0901,

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

Invenergy Wind LLC is an owner, developer and operator of wind energy projects across North America and Europe. We are proud to own and operate the largest wind farm in Montana—the 135 MW Judith Gap Energy Center.

Comment 485

We believe in the environmental benefits of renewable energy for our world and the significant economic benefits that wind energy projects bring to local ranchers and whole communities. Over 70% of the construction dollars were spent on Montana contractors. Just ask Wheatland County and the Ranch owners in Judith Gap about the nearly $2 million of annual income they are receiving as hosts of one of the top performing wind farms in the west.

Transmission has been the major obstacle to more wind projects being built in Montana and we were very encouraged to see the Montana Alberta Tie Line ("MATL") propose a partial solution to the transmission shortages in the northwest region. We believe that the success of the MATL line will encourage more transmission investment in Montana which will allow more wind energy to be built.

Comment 486

Invenergy Wind has two wind projects under development that we hope to interconnect with this proposed line. We have reserved a portion of the capacity on the MATL line and the early success of our projects hinge on the success of this transmission line.

Comment 487

We applaud the Governor, legislators, DEQ and other Montana energy policy makers who are working together with landowners, environmentalists and energy companies to responsibly build transmission infrastructure that will help Montanans realize the benefits of its abundant renewable resources and at the same time increase state energy reliability via a stronger more interconnected system.

Comment 488

We support the MATL line and ask that you approve their application to construct.

Sincerely,

Mark D. Jacobson
Senior Development Manager
Invenergy Wind LLC

Response 485: Comment noted.

Response 486: Comment noted. The agencies are not aware of any other plans for transmission lines in the immediate vicinity of MATL's proposed line.

Response 487: Comment noted.

Response 488: Comment noted.

From: Mark Jacobson [MJacobson@invenergyllc.com]
Posted At: Thursday, March 29, 2007 3:43 PM
Conversation: MDEQ public hearings
Posted To: MATL
Subject: FW: MDEQ public hearings

Please include this letter from Invenergy as support for the proposed MATL line.

Mark Jacobson

From: Ches Maciorowski [mailto:ches.maciorowski@matl.ca]
Sent: Friday, March 23, 2007 9:48 AM
To: Bill Alexander; Mark Jacobson; pascoeenergy@aol.com
Cc: Bob Williams
Subject: RE: MDEQ public hearings

Gents, if you are unable to show up in person to the hearing you may submit comments to:

Mr. Greg Hallsten,
Director's Office, Montana Department of Environmental Quality,
PO Box 200901, Helena, Montana 59620-0901,
or e-mail to MATL@mt.gov.

here is an excerpt from the MDEQ posting:

A 30–day public comment period for written comments will close on April 9, 2007.

Public hearings will be held at the following locations from 6:30-9:30 PM:
Norley Hall, 400 N Virginia, Conrad on March 27, 2007,
Glacier County Voting Center, 917 East Railroad St, Cut Bank on March 28, 2007, and
Great Falls Civic Center, Missouri Room, 2 Park Dr. S., Great Falls on March, 29, 2007

Ches

From: Ches Maciorowski
Sent: Monday, March 19, 2007 6:44 PM
To: 'Bill Alexander'; Mark Jacobson; Bill Pascoe (pascoeenergy@aol.com)
Cc: Bob Williams
Subject: MDEQ public hearings

Bill A., Bill P., Mark,

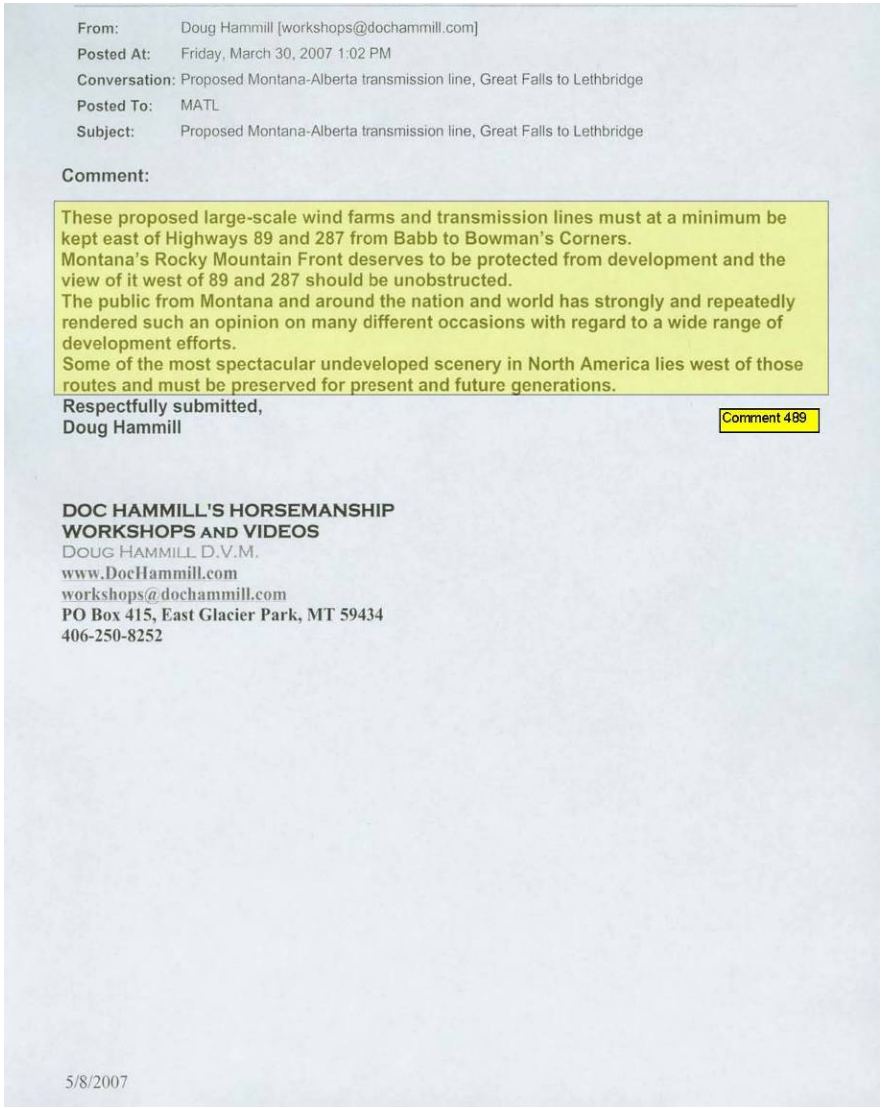
The MDEQ has issued its final draft report for public comment and has scheduled hearings in a number of Montana locations next week. It would be beneficial to our and your project(s) to make a presentation of support at the hearing. An appearance in person would carry more weight however; it may be possible to submit a submission in writing if a personal appearance from your organization is simply not possible. Bob can you please confirm whether the latter method is an acceptable alternative. Thanks.

5/8/2007

MDEQ web site: http://www.deq.state.mt.us/MFS/MATL.asp

Ches

Ches Maciorowski
Vice President, Marketing
Montana Alberta Tie Ltd.
Ph. (403) 264-4465 Ext. 235
Mobile: (403) 660-1100
Fax: (403) 265-1299



From: Doug Hammill [workshops@dochammill.com]
Posted At: Friday, March 30, 2007 1:02 PM
Conversation: Proposed Montana-Alberta transmission line, Great Falls to Lethbridge
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Proposed Montana-Alberta transmission line, Great Falls to Lethbridge

Comment:

These proposed large-scale wind farms and transmission lines must at a minimum be kept east of Highways 89 and 287 from Babb to Bowman's Corners.
Montana's Rocky Mountain Front deserves to be protected from development and the view of it west of 89 and 287 should be unobstructed.
The public from Montana and around the nation and world has strongly and repeatedly rendered such an opinion on many different occasions with regard to a wide range of development efforts.
Some of the most spectacular undeveloped scenery in North America lies west of those routes and must be preserved for present and future generations.

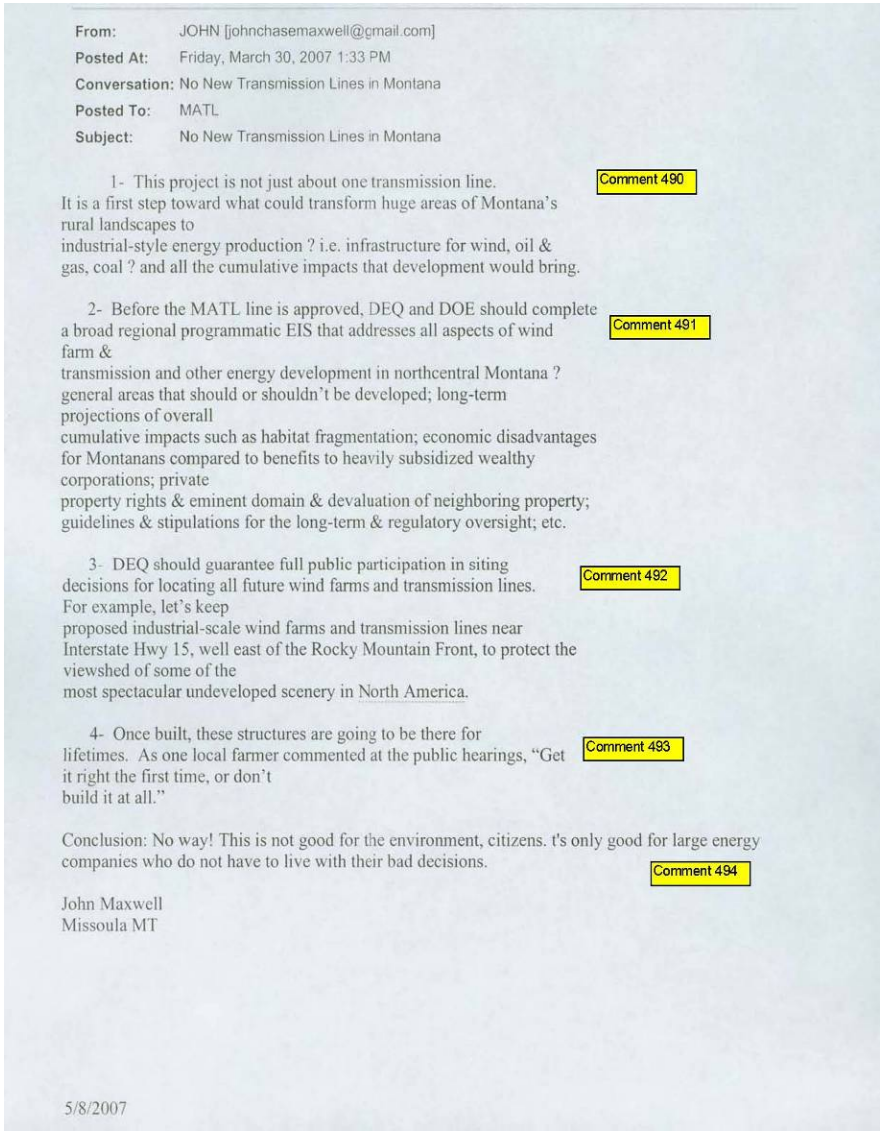
Respectfully submitted,
Doug Hammill

Comment 489

DOC HAMMILL'S HORSEMANSHIP
WORKSHOPS AND VIDEOS
DOUG HAMMILL D.V.M.
www.DocHammill.com
workshops@dochammill.com
PO Box 415, East Glacier Park, MT 59434
406-250-8252

5/8/2007

Response 489: Comment noted. See response to comment 468.



From: JOHN [johnchasemaxwell@gmail.com]
Posted At: Friday, March 30, 2007 1:33 PM
Conversation: No New Transmission Lines in Montana
Posted To: MATL
Subject: No New Transmission Lines in Montana

1- This project is not just about one transmission line. Comment 490
It is a first step toward what could transform huge areas of Montana's rural landscapes to
industrial-style energy production ? i.e. infrastructure for wind, oil & gas, coal ? and all the cumulative impacts that development would bring.

2- Before the MATL line is approved, DEQ and DOE should complete a broad regional programmatic EIS that addresses all aspects of wind farm & Comment 491
transmission and other energy development in northcentral Montana ? general areas that should or shouldn't be developed; long-term projections of overall
cumulative impacts such as habitat fragmentation; economic disadvantages for Montanans compared to benefits to heavily subsidized wealthy corporations; private
property rights & eminent domain & devaluation of neighboring property; guidelines & stipulations for the long-term & regulatory oversight; etc.

3- DEQ should guarantee full public participation in siting decisions for locating all future wind farms and transmission lines. Comment 492
For example, let's keep
proposed industrial-scale wind farms and transmission lines near Interstate Hwy 15, well east of the Rocky Mountain Front, to protect the viewshed of some of the
most spectacular undeveloped scenery in North America.

4- Once built, these structures are going to be there for lifetimes. As one local farmer commented at the public hearings, "Get Comment 493
it right the first time, or don't
build it at all."

Conclusion: No way! This is not good for the environment, citizens. t's only good for large energy companies who do not have to live with their bad decisions. Comment 494

John Maxwell
Missoula MT

5/8/2007

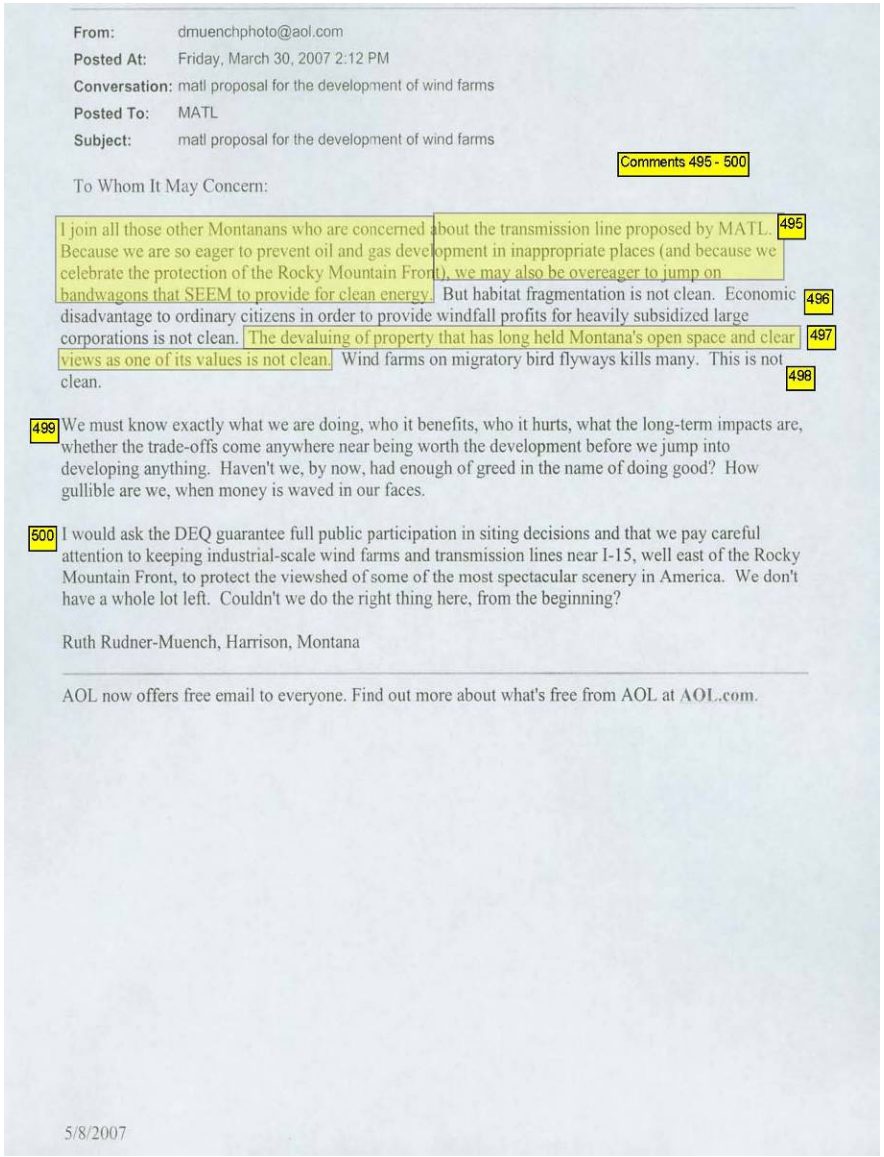
Response 490: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4. The agencies are not aware of any plans for oil and gas well development that would be dependent on the MATL line. As indicated in response to comment 478, the MATL line would be available for short-term transactions from other forms of generation.

Response 491: See response to comment 24.

Response 492: The agencies do not have regulatory authority to guarantee full public participation in decisions for locating wind farms. The MATL line would be located east of Interstate 15 south of Brady but remains west of the interstate north of Brady in order to cross the international boundary and align with the rest of the project in Canada.

Response 493: Comment noted. The agencies are aware of a wood pole line built in the 1930s between Great Falls and Havre that is still being used today as a result of ongoing maintenance of the line.

Response 494: Comment noted.



From: dmuenchphoto@aol.com
Posted At: Friday, March 30, 2007 2:12 PM
Conversation: matl proposal for the development of wind farms
Posted To: MATL
Subject: matl proposal for the development of wind farms

Comments 495 - 500

To Whom It May Concern:

I join all those other Montanans who are concerned about the transmission line proposed by MATL. 495
Because we are so eager to prevent oil and gas development in inappropriate places (and because we celebrate the protection of the Rocky Mountain Front), we may also be overeager to jump on bandwagons that SEEM to provide for clean energy. But habitat fragmentation is not clean. Economic 496
disadvantage to ordinary citizens in order to provide windfall profits for heavily subsidized large corporations is not clean. The devaluing of property that has long held Montana's open space and clear 497
views as one of its values is not clean. Wind farms on migratory bird flyways kills many. This is not 498
clean.

499 We must know exactly what we are doing, who it benefits, who it hurts, what the long-term impacts are, whether the trade-offs come anywhere near being worth the development before we jump into developing anything. Haven't we, by now, had enough of greed in the name of doing good? How gullible are we, when money is waved in our faces.

500 I would ask the DEQ guarantee full public participation in siting decisions and that we pay careful attention to keeping industrial-scale wind farms and transmission lines near I-15, well east of the Rocky Mountain Front, to protect the viewshed of some of the most spectacular scenery in America. We don't have a whole lot left. Couldn't we do the right thing here, from the beginning?

Ruth Rudner-Muench, Harrison, Montana

AOL now offers free email to everyone. Find out more about what's free from AOL at AOL.com.

5/8/2007

Response 495: Comment noted.

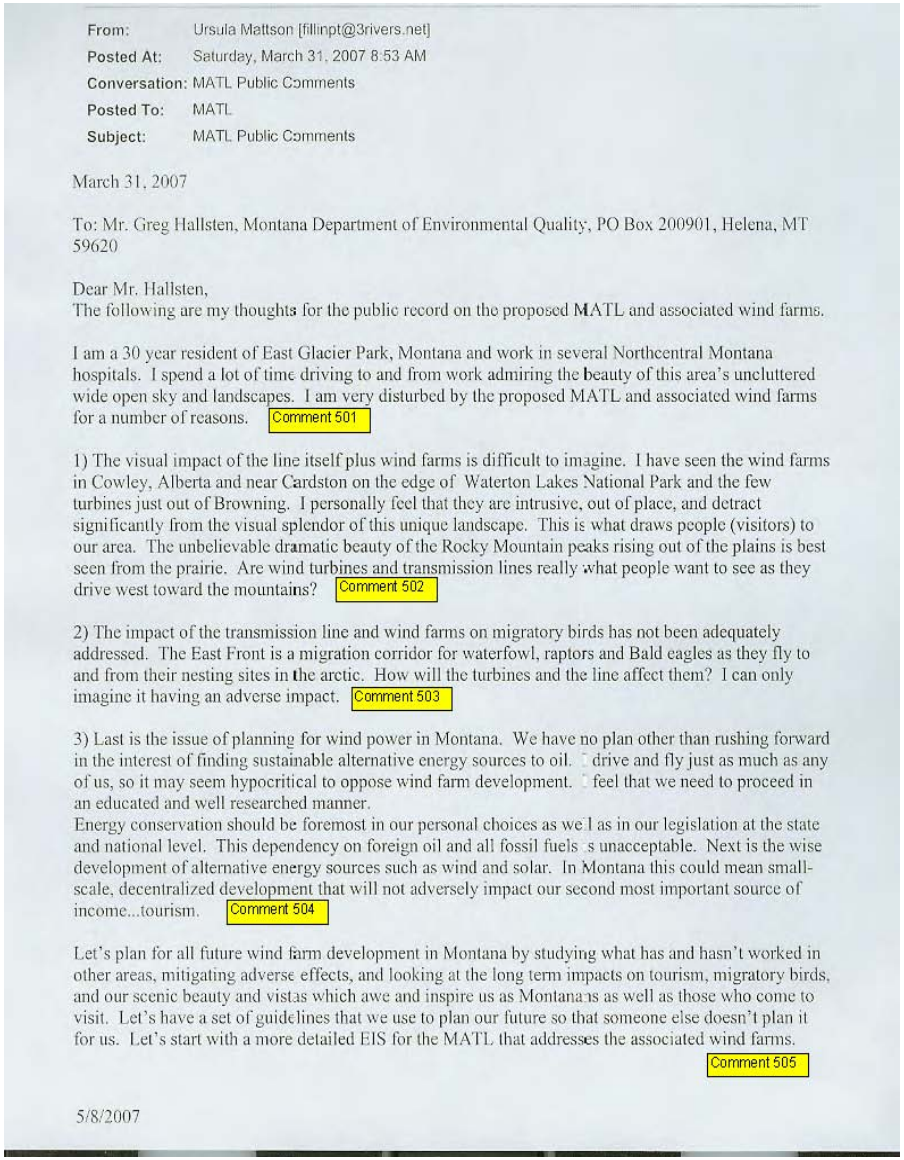
Response 496: Comment noted.

Response 497: Comment noted.

Response 498: The range of bird mortalities associated with wind farm development is indicated in the revised discussion of cumulative impacts (see Section 4.9).

Response 499: Costs and risks of the proposed MATL line to Montana are discussed in the draft EIS. The benefits and costs of the project to Montana are discussed in Sections 1.2 and 3.13. Potential impacts to Montana customers are discussed in Section 3.13.

Response 500: See response to comment 492.



From: Ursula Mattson [fillinpt@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Saturday, March 31, 2007 8:53 AM
Conversation: MATL Public Comments
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL Public Comments

March 31, 2007

To: Mr. Greg Hallsten, Montana Department of Environmental Quality, PO Box 200901, Helena, MT 59620

Dear Mr. Hallsten,
The following are my thoughts for the public record on the proposed MATL and associated wind farms.

I am a 30 year resident of East Glacier Park, Montana and work in several Northcentral Montana hospitals. I spend a lot of time driving to and from work admiring the beauty of this area's uncluttered wide open sky and landscapes. I am very disturbed by the proposed MATL and associated wind farms for a number of reasons. Comment 501

1) The visual impact of the line itself plus wind farms is difficult to imagine. I have seen the wind farms in Cowley, Alberta and near Cardston on the edge of Waterton Lakes National Park and the few turbines just out of Browning. I personally feel that they are intrusive, out of place, and detract significantly from the visual splendor of this unique landscape. This is what draws people (visitors) to our area. The unbelievable dramatic beauty of the Rocky Mountain peaks rising out of the plains is best seen from the prairie. Are wind turbines and transmission lines really what people want to see as they drive west toward the mountains? Comment 502

2) The impact of the transmission line and wind farms on migratory birds has not been adequately addressed. The East Front is a migration corridor for waterfowl, raptors and Bald eagles as they fly to and from their nesting sites in the arctic. How will the turbines and the line affect them? I can only imagine it having an adverse impact. Comment 503

3) Last is the issue of planning for wind power in Montana. We have no plan other than rushing forward in the interest of finding sustainable alternative energy sources to oil. I drive and fly just as much as any of us, so it may seem hypocritical to oppose wind farm development. I feel that we need to proceed in an educated and well researched manner.
Energy conservation should be foremost in our personal choices as well as in our legislation at the state and national level. This dependency on foreign oil and all fossil fuels is unacceptable. Next is the wise development of alternative energy sources such as wind and solar. In Montana this could mean small-scale, decentralized development that will not adversely impact our second most important source of income...tourism. Comment 504

Let's plan for all future wind farm development in Montana by studying what has and hasn't worked in other areas, mitigating adverse effects, and looking at the long term impacts on tourism, migratory birds, and our scenic beauty and vistas which awe and inspire us as Montanans as well as those who come to visit. Let's have a set of guidelines that we use to plan our future so that someone else doesn't plan it for us. Let's start with a more detailed EIS for the MATL that addresses the associated wind farms.
Comment 505

5/8/2007

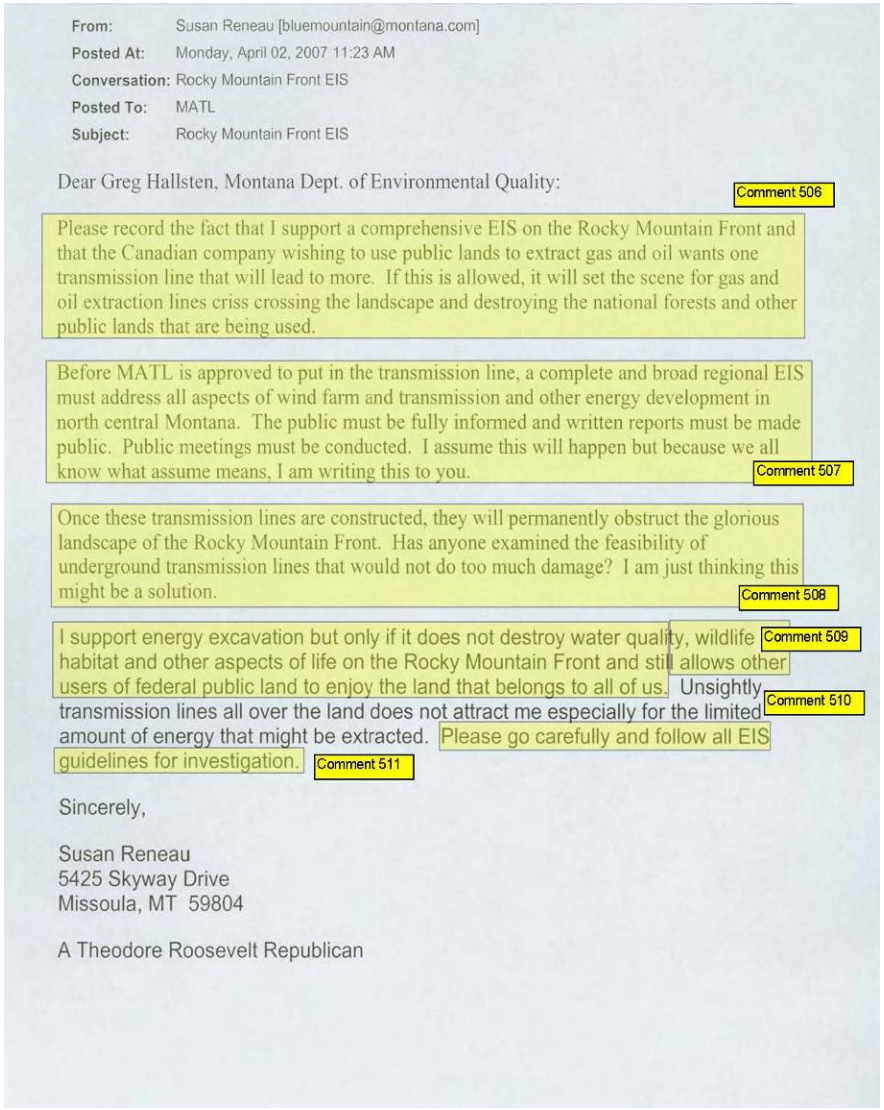
Response 501: Comment noted.

Response 502: Comment noted. The discussion of cumulative impacts for the proposed MATL transmission line has been expanded in Chapter 4 of this document.

Response 503: The range of bird mortalities associated with wind farm development is indicated in the revised discussion of cumulative impacts (see Section 4.9).

Response 504: Comment noted.

Response 505: Comment noted. Guidelines are addressed in response to comments 239 to 241.



From: Susan Reneau [bluemountain@montana.com]
Posted At: Monday, April 02, 2007 11:23 AM
Conversation: Rocky Mountain Front EIS
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Rocky Mountain Front EIS

Dear Greg Hallsten, Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality:

Comment 506

Please record the fact that I support a comprehensive EIS on the Rocky Mountain Front and that the Canadian company wishing to use public lands to extract gas and oil wants one transmission line that will lead to more. If this is allowed, it will set the scene for gas and oil extraction lines criss crossing the landscape and destroying the national forests and other public lands that are being used.

Before MATL is approved to put in the transmission line, a complete and broad regional EIS must address all aspects of wind farm and transmission and other energy development in north central Montana. The public must be fully informed and written reports must be made public. Public meetings must be conducted. I assume this will happen but because we all know what assume means, I am writing this to you.

Comment 507

Once these transmission lines are constructed, they will permanently obstruct the glorious landscape of the Rocky Mountain Front. Has anyone examined the feasibility of underground transmission lines that would not do too much damage? I am just thinking this might be a solution.

Comment 508

I support energy excavation but only if it does not destroy water quality, wildlife habitat and other aspects of life on the Rocky Mountain Front and still allows other users of federal public land to enjoy the land that belongs to all of us. Unsightly transmission lines all over the land does not attract me especially for the limited amount of energy that might be extracted. Please go carefully and follow all EIS guidelines for investigation.

Comment 509

Comment 510

Comment 511

Sincerely,

Susan Reneau
5425 Skyway Drive
Missoula, MT 59804

A Theodore Roosevelt Republican

Response 506: MATL has proposed to build a transmission line, not to develop oil and gas. The agencies do not have regulatory authority over oil and gas development and cannot speculate on future development or prepare the EIS requested in the comment.

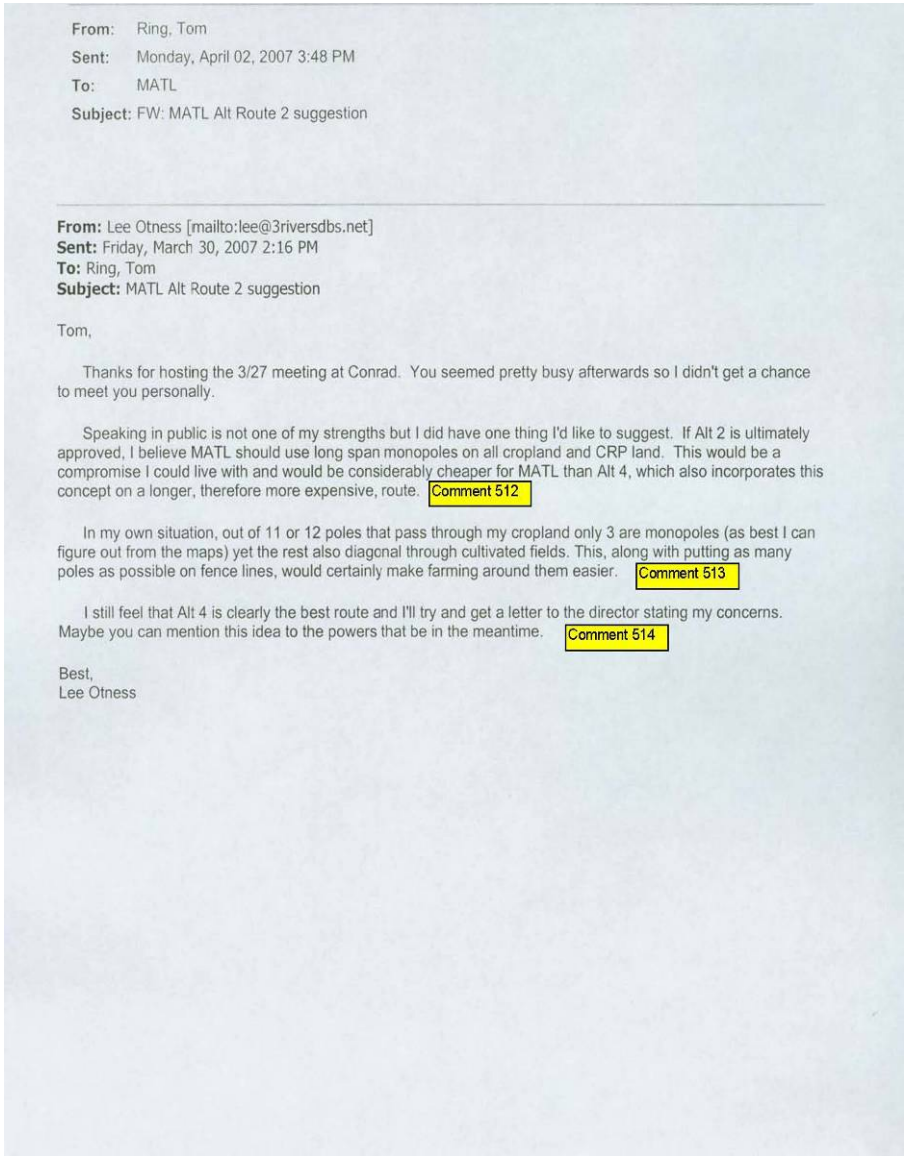
Response 507: See response to comment 24.

Response 508: See Section 2.7 for discussion on building the MATL line underground. This alternative was considered but dismissed.

Response 509: Comment noted. Water quality should be protected with implementation of storm water controls required by DEQ. Wildlife and wildlife habitat could be adversely affected by construction of the transmission line and wind farms. See the discussion of wildlife impacts in sections 3.8, 3.10, and the expanded cumulative impacts analysis in Sections 4.9 and 4.11.

Response 510: Comment noted.

Response 511: The agencies have followed the requirements of the Montana Environmental Policy Act and the National Environmental Policy Act in preparing this EIS.



From: Ring, Tom
Sent: Monday, April 02, 2007 3:48 PM
To: MATL
Subject: FW: MATL Alt Route 2 suggestion

From: Lee Otness [mailto:lee@3riversdbs.net]
Sent: Friday, March 30, 2007 2:16 PM
To: Ring, Tom
Subject: MATL Alt Route 2 suggestion

Tom,

Thanks for hosting the 3/27 meeting at Conrad. You seemed pretty busy afterwards so I didn't get a chance to meet you personally.

Speaking in public is not one of my strengths but I did have one thing I'd like to suggest. If Alt 2 is ultimately approved, I believe MATL should use long span monopoles on all cropland and CRP land. This would be a compromise I could live with and would be considerably cheaper for MATL than Alt 4, which also incorporates this concept on a longer, therefore more expensive, route. Comment 512

In my own situation, out of 11 or 12 poles that pass through my cropland only 3 are monopoles (as best I can figure out from the maps) yet the rest also diagonal through cultivated fields. This, along with putting as many poles as possible on fence lines, would certainly make farming around them easier. Comment 513

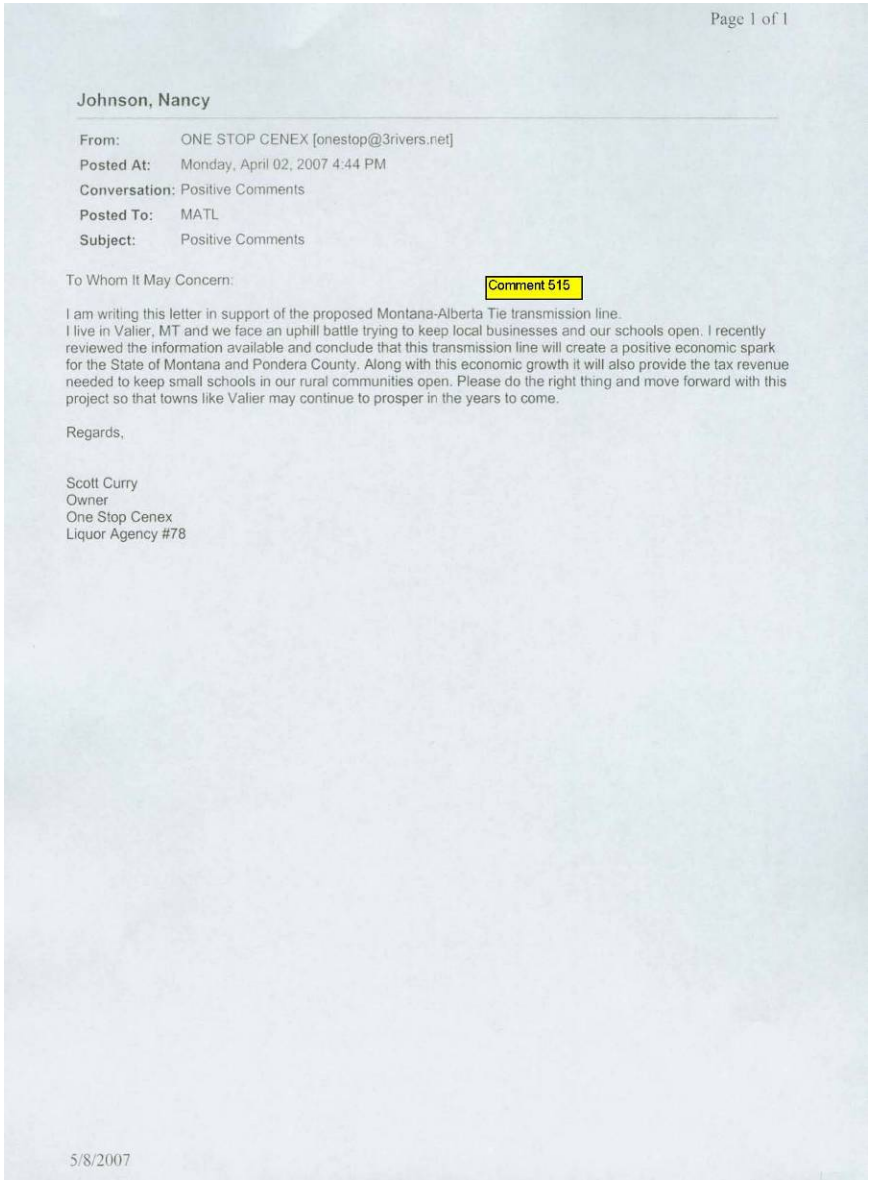
I still feel that Alt 4 is clearly the best route and I'll try and get a letter to the director stating my concerns. Maybe you can mention this idea to the powers that be in the meantime. Comment 514

Best,
Lee Otness

Response 512: Comment noted.

Response 513: Comment noted. A slight realignment has been suggested on Mr. Otness' land and land just to the northwest of his property. See the discussion in Sections 2.6 and 3.16 for more information.

Response 514: Comment noted.



Page 1 of 1

Johnson, Nancy

From: ONE STOP CENEX [onestop@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Monday, April 02, 2007 4:44 PM
Conversation: Positive Comments
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Positive Comments

To Whom It May Concern:

Comment 515

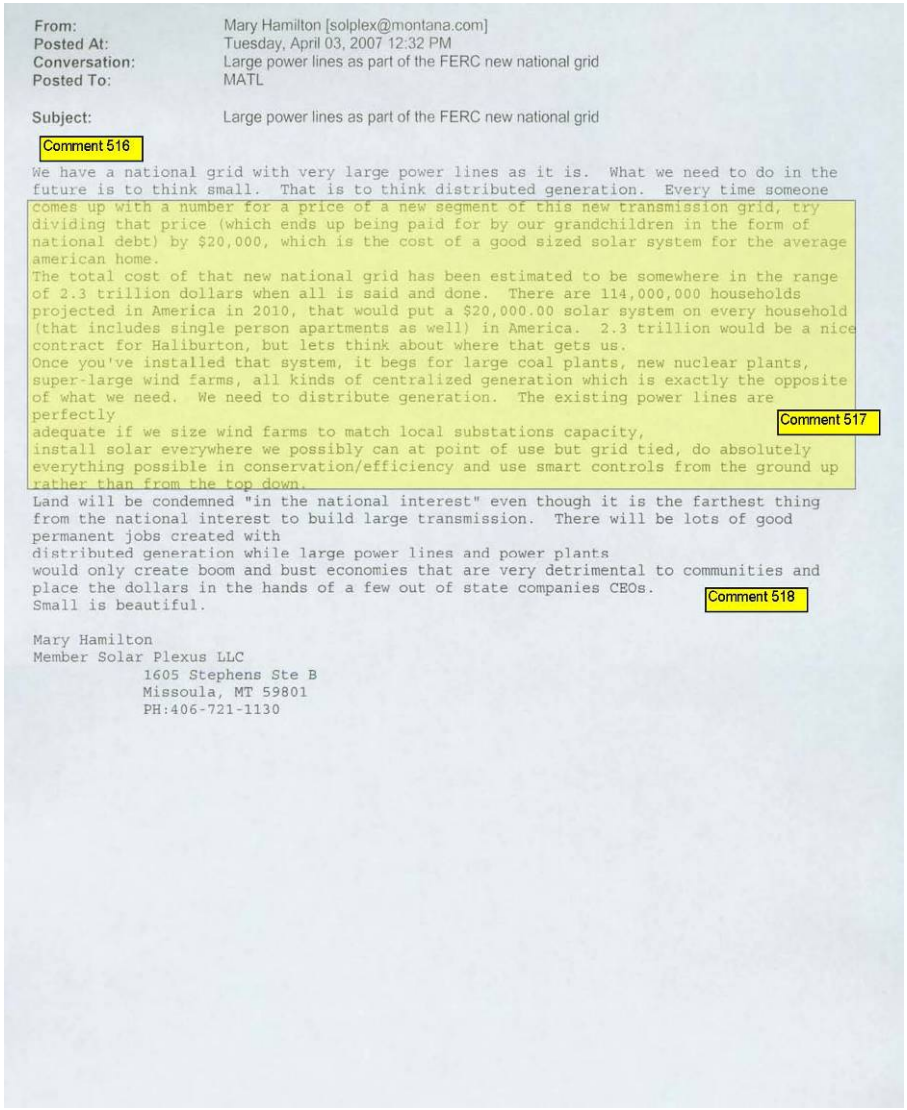
I am writing this letter in support of the proposed Montana-Alberta Tie transmission line.
I live in Valier, MT and we face an uphill battle trying to keep local businesses and our schools open. I recently reviewed the information available and conclude that this transmission line will create a positive economic spark for the State of Montana and Pondera County. Along with this economic growth it will also provide the tax revenue needed to keep small schools in our rural communities open. Please do the right thing and move forward with this project so that towns like Valier may continue to prosper in the years to come.

Regards,

Scott Curry
Owner
One Stop Cenex
Liquor Agency #78

5/8/2007

Response 515: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of socioeconomic impacts in Section 3.13.



From: Mary Hamilton [solplex@montana.com]
Posted At: Tuesday, April 03, 2007 12:32 PM
Conversation: Large power lines as part of the FERC new national grid
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Large power lines as part of the FERC new national grid

Comment 516

We have a national grid with very large power lines as it is. What we need to do in the future is to think small. That is to think distributed generation. Every time someone comes up with a number for a price of a new segment of this new transmission grid, try dividing that price (which ends up being paid for by our grandchildren in the form of national debt) by $20,000, which is the cost of a good sized solar system for the average american home.
The total cost of that new national grid has been estimated to be somewhere in the range of 2.3 trillion dollars when all is said and done. There are 114,000,000 households projected in America in 2010, that would put a $20,000.00 solar system on every household (that includes single person apartments as well) in America. 2.3 trillion would be a nice contract for Haliburton, but lets think about where that gets us.
Once you've installed that system, it begs for large coal plants, new nuclear plants, super-large wind farms, all kinds of centralized generation which is exactly the opposite of what we need. We need to distribute generation. The existing power lines are perfectly
adequate if we size wind farms to match local substations capacity,
install solar everywhere we possibly can at point of use but grid tied, do absolutely everything possible in conservation/efficiency and use smart controls from the ground up rather than from the top down.

Comment 517

Land will be condemned "in the national interest" even though it is the farthest thing from the national interest to build large transmission. There will be lots of good permanent jobs created with
distributed generation while large power lines and power plants
would only create boom and bust economies that are very detrimental to communities and place the dollars in the hands of a few out of state companies CEOs.
Small is beautiful.

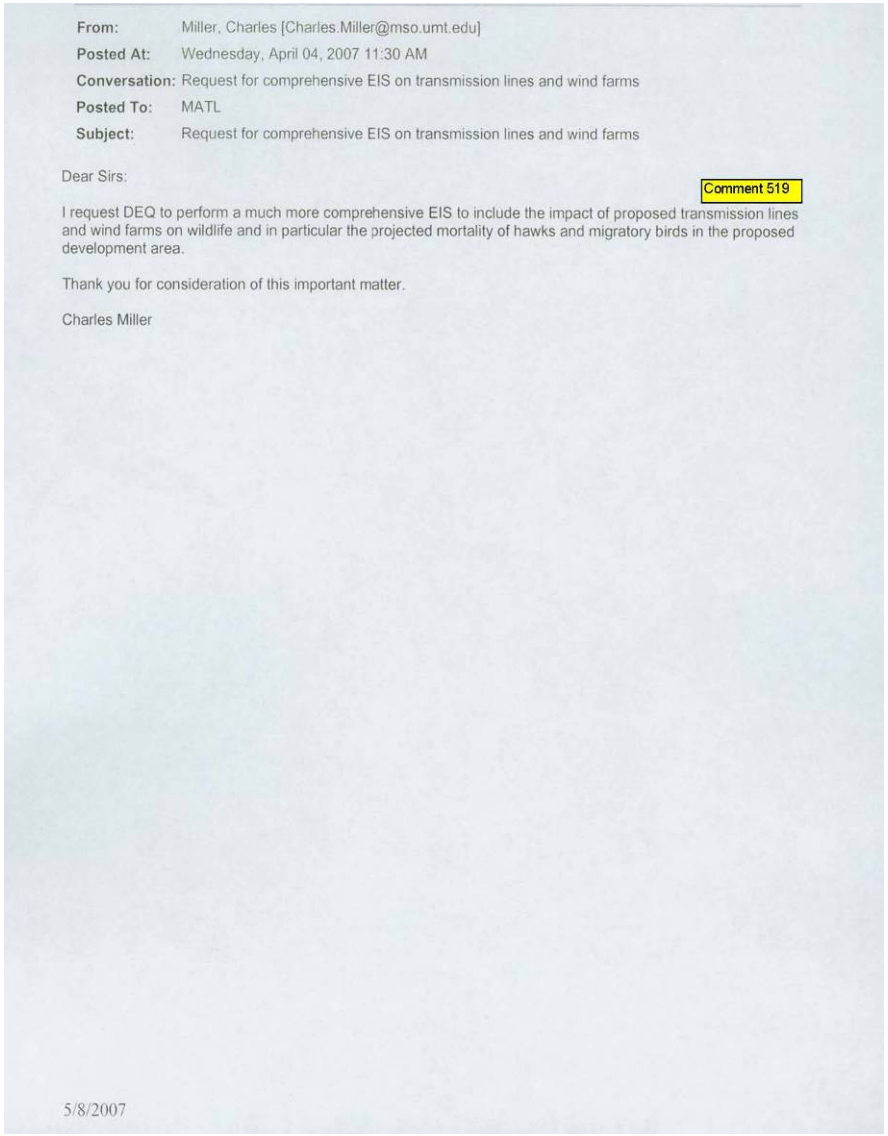
Comment 518

Mary Hamilton
Member Solar Plexus LLC
1605 Stephens Ste B
Missoula, MT 59801
PH:406-721-1130

Response 516: Comment noted. Distributed generation would not meet the needs of the proposed line.

Response 517: Comment noted. The proposed project would be financed privately, and would not contribute to the national debt.

Response 518: Comment noted.



From: Miller, Charles [Charles.Miller@mso.umt.edu]
Posted At: Wednesday, April 04, 2007 11:30 AM
Conversation: Request for comprehensive EIS on transmission lines and wind farms
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Request for comprehensive EIS on transmission lines and wind farms

Dear Sirs:

Comment 519

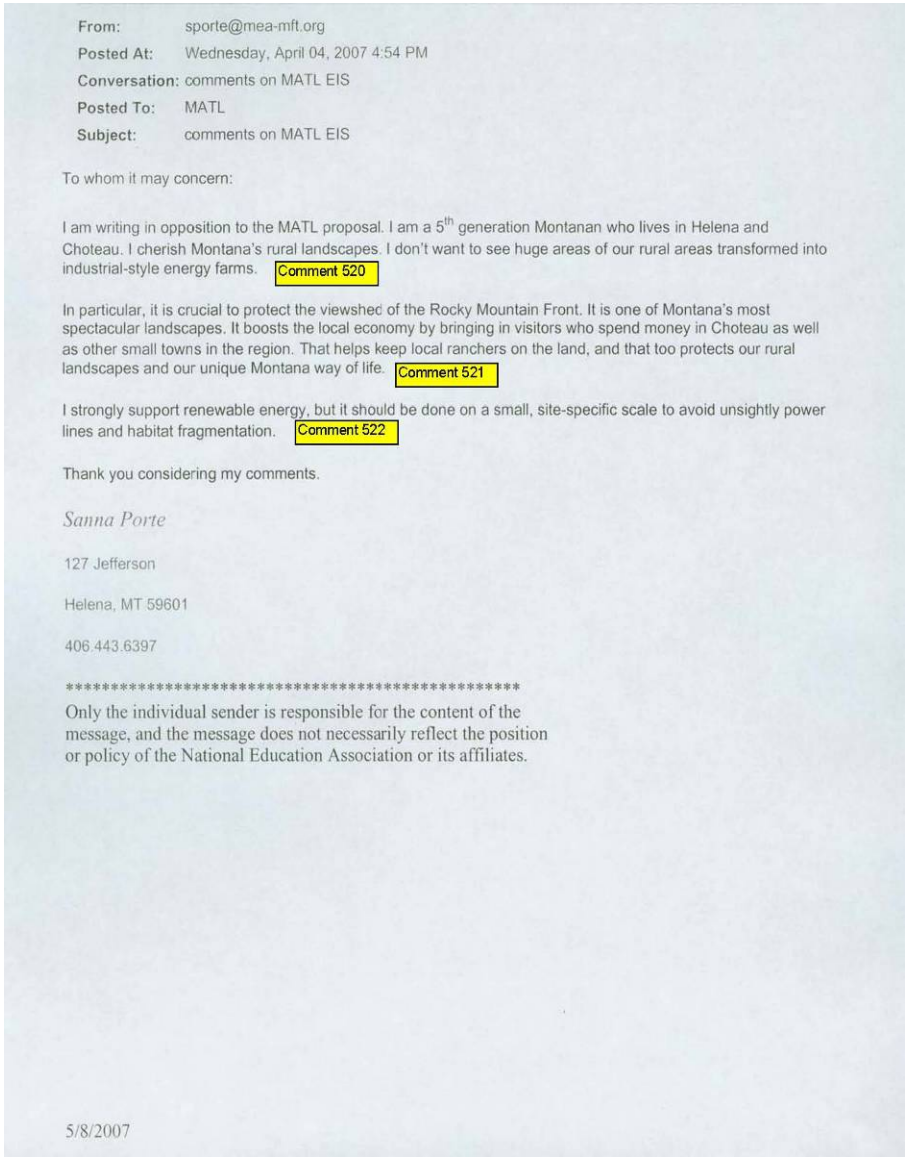
I request DEQ to perform a much more comprehensive EIS to include the impact of proposed transmission lines and wind farms on wildlife and in particular the projected mortality of hawks and migratory birds in the proposed development area.

Thank you for consideration of this important matter.

Charles Miller

5/8/2007

Response 519: The developers of wind farms near the proposed line have not revealed their plans yet. Wildlife and wildlife habitat could be adversely affected by construction of the transmission line and wind farms. DEQ has requested this information, but does not have regulatory authority over wind farms and cannot demand the information. See the discussion of wildlife impacts resulting from the transmission line in sections 3.8, 3.10, and the expanded cumulative impacts analysis in Sections 4.9 and 4.11.



From: sporte@mea-mft.org
Posted At: Wednesday, April 04, 2007 4:54 PM
Conversation: comments on MATL EIS
Posted To: MATL
Subject: comments on MATL EIS

To whom it may concern:

I am writing in opposition to the MATL proposal. I am a 5th generation Montanan who lives in Helena and Choteau. I cherish Montana's rural landscapes. I don't want to see huge areas of our rural areas transformed into industrial-style energy farms. Comment 520

In particular, it is crucial to protect the viewshed of the Rocky Mountain Front. It is one of Montana's most spectacular landscapes. It boosts the local economy by bringing in visitors who spend money in Choteau as well as other small towns in the region. That helps keep local ranchers on the land, and that too protects our rural landscapes and our unique Montana way of life. Comment 521

I strongly support renewable energy, but it should be done on a small, site-specific scale to avoid unsightly power lines and habitat fragmentation. Comment 522

Thank you considering my comments.

Sanna Porte

127 Jefferson

Helena, MT 59601

406.443.6397

****

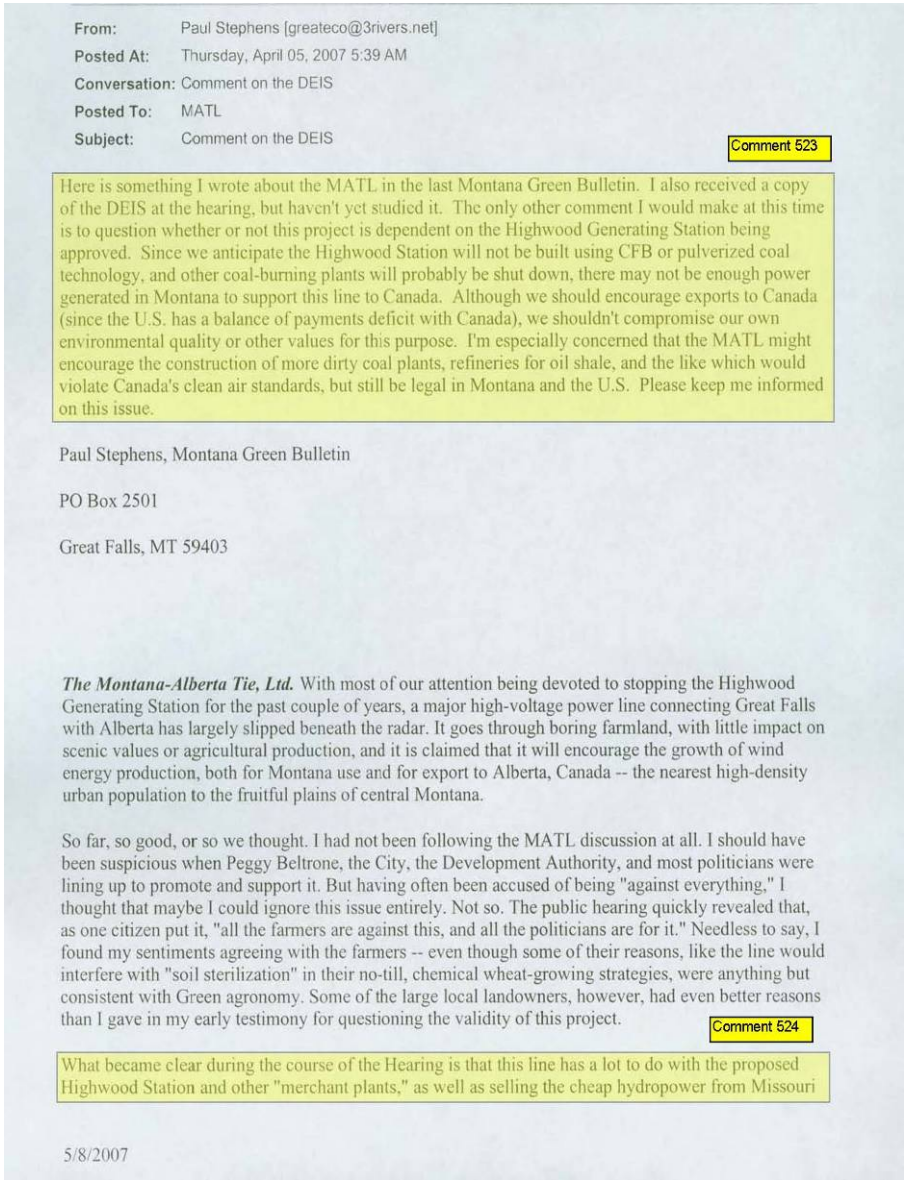
Only the individual sender is responsible for the content of the message, and the message does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the National Education Association or its affiliates.

5/8/2007

Response 520: Comment noted. The agencies have received no applications for other transmission lines near the proposed line and are not aware of any plans for other transmission lines near the proposed line. If other applications are received for transmission lines in the area, the subsequent environmental review will disclose the impacts.

Response 521: Comment noted. See Chapter 4. The agencies administer no permits specifically for wind farms as energy facilities. Persons interested in protecting the viewshed of the Rocky Mountain Front would need to work with individual developers as wind farms are sited and planned.

Response 522: Comment noted. To generate the same amount of power (600 MW that would include 300 MW south to north and 300 MW north to south) as would be shipped on the proposed transmission line would require 9,230 small turbines (65 KW each) as opposed to 400 turbines, each producing 1.5 MW. This would require more disturbance of land, possibly more fragmentation of habitat and potentially have greater visual impacts as the faster turning small turbines would have to be more widely distributed. In addition, if the same amount of power would be generated, there would still need to be additional transmission lines constructed to handle the additional generation even if smaller turbines would be built.



From: Paul Stephens [greateco@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Thursday, April 05, 2007 5:39 AM
Conversation: Comment on the DEIS
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Comment on the DEIS

Comment 523

Here is something I wrote about the MATL in the last Montana Green Bulletin. I also received a copy of the DEIS at the hearing, but haven't yet studied it. The only other comment I would make at this time is to question whether or not this project is dependent on the Highwood Generating Station being approved. Since we anticipate the Highwood Station will not be built using CFB or pulverized coal technology, and other coal-burning plants will probably be shut down, there may not be enough power generated in Montana to support this line to Canada. Although we should encourage exports to Canada (since the U.S. has a balance of payments deficit with Canada), we shouldn't compromise our own environmental quality or other values for this purpose. I'm especially concerned that the MATL might encourage the construction of more dirty coal plants, refineries for oil shale, and the like which would violate Canada's clean air standards, but still be legal in Montana and the U.S. Please keep me informed on this issue.

Paul Stephens, Montana Green Bulletin

PO Box 2501

Great Falls, MT 59403

The Montana-Alberta Tie, Ltd. With most of our attention being devoted to stopping the Highwood Generating Station for the past couple of years, a major high-voltage power line connecting Great Falls with Alberta has largely slipped beneath the radar. It goes through boring farmland, with little impact on scenic values or agricultural production, and it is claimed that it will encourage the growth of wind energy production, both for Montana use and for export to Alberta, Canada -- the nearest high-density urban population to the fruitful plains of central Montana.

So far, so good, or so we thought. I had not been following the MATL discussion at all. I should have been suspicious when Peggy Beltrone, the City, the Development Authority, and most politicians were lining up to promote and support it. But having often been accused of being "against everything," I thought that maybe I could ignore this issue entirely. Not so. The public hearing quickly revealed that, as one citizen put it, "all the farmers are against this, and all the politicians are for it." Needless to say, I found my sentiments agreeing with the farmers -- even though some of their reasons, like the line would interfere with "soil sterilization" in their no-till, chemical wheat-growing strategies, were anything but consistent with Green agronomy. Some of the large local landowners, however, had even better reasons than I gave in my early testimony for questioning the validity of this project.

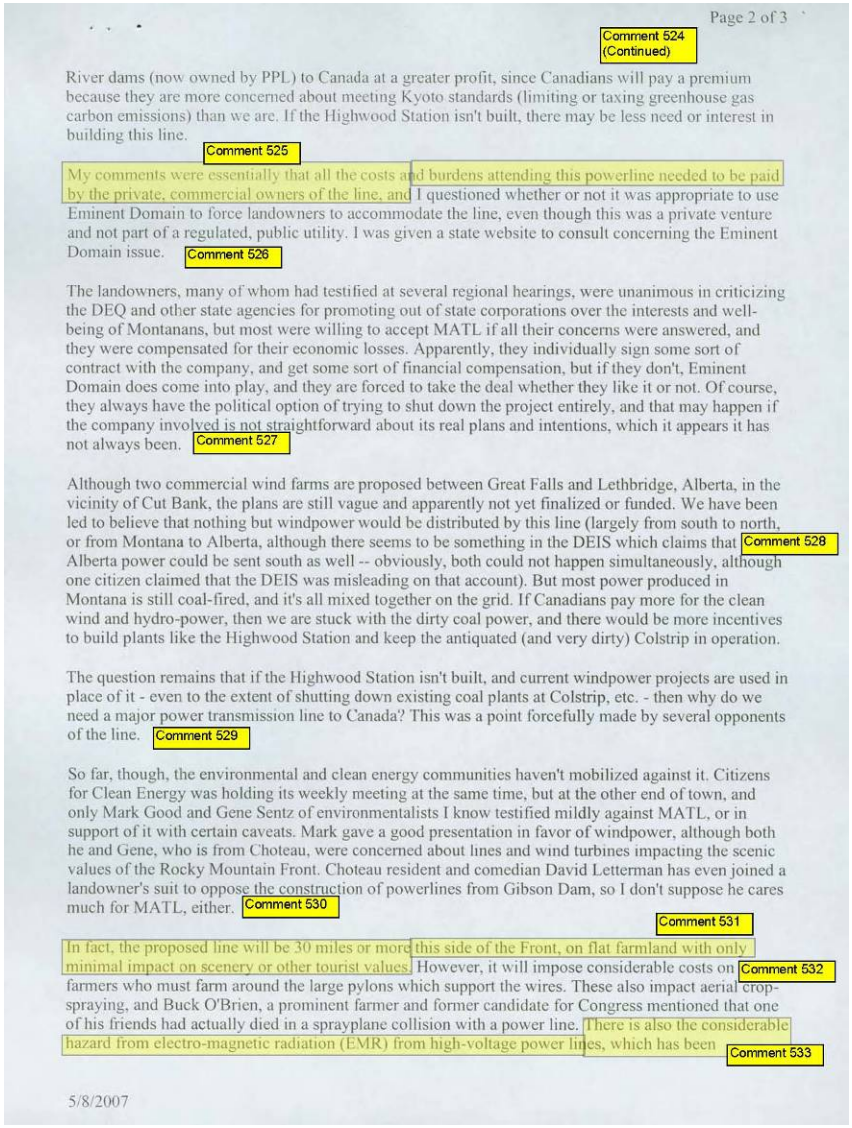
Comment 524

What became clear during the course of the Hearing is that this line has a lot to do with the proposed Highwood Station and other "merchant plants," as well as selling the cheap hydropower from Missouri

5/8/2007

Response 523: Because MATL has no firm contracts to ship power from the Highwood Generating Station and because power from the Highwood Generating Station would be used to satisfy the needs of members of the electric generating cooperatives in south-central Montana as well as the City of Great Falls, the agencies do not believe that the Highwood Generating Station is dependent on the MATL line. The agencies recognize that it is possible for power from the Highwood Generating Station to be shipped on the MATL line when the plant produces more power than the owners can use and short term capacity is available on the MATL line. See response to comment 25 that discusses the need for the project.

Response 524: See response to comment 523.



Page 2 of 3

Comment 524 (Continued)

River dams (now owned by PPL) to Canada at a greater profit, since Canadians will pay a premium because they are more concerned about meeting Kyoto standards (limiting or taxing greenhouse gas carbon emissions) than we are. If the Highwood Station isn't built, there may be less need or interest in building this line.

Comment 525

My comments were essentially that all the costs and burdens attending this powerline needed to be paid by the private, commercial owners of the line, and I questioned whether or not it was appropriate to use Eminent Domain to force landowners to accommodate the line, even though this was a private venture and not part of a regulated, public utility. I was given a state website to consult concerning the Eminent Domain issue.

Comment 526

The landowners, many of whom had testified at several regional hearings, were unanimous in criticizing the DEQ and other state agencies for promoting out of state corporations over the interests and well-being of Montanans, but most were willing to accept MATL if all their concerns were answered, and they were compensated for their economic losses. Apparently, they individually sign some sort of contract with the company, and get some sort of financial compensation, but if they don't, Eminent Domain does come into play, and they are forced to take the deal whether they like it or not. Of course, they always have the political option of trying to shut down the project entirely, and that may happen if the company involved is not straightforward about its real plans and intentions, which it appears it has not always been.

Comment 527

Although two commercial wind farms are proposed between Great Falls and Lethbridge, Alberta, in the vicinity of Cut Bank, the plans are still vague and apparently not yet finalized or funded. We have been led to believe that nothing but windpower would be distributed by this line (largely from south to north, or from Montana to Alberta, although there seems to be something in the DEIS which claims that Alberta power could be sent south as well -- obviously, both could not happen simultaneously, although one citizen claimed that the DEIS was misleading on that account). But most power produced in Montana is still coal-fired, and it's all mixed together on the grid. If Canadians pay more for the clean wind and hydro-power, then we are stuck with the dirty coal power, and there would be more incentives to build plants like the Highwood Station and keep the antiquated (and very dirty) Colstrip in operation.

Comment 528

The question remains that if the Highwood Station isn't built, and current windpower projects are used in place of it - even to the extent of shutting down existing coal plants at Colstrip, etc. - then why do we need a major power transmission line to Canada? This was a point forcefully made by several opponents of the line.

Comment 529

So far, though, the environmental and clean energy communities haven't mobilized against it. Citizens for Clean Energy was holding its weekly meeting at the same time, but at the other end of town, and only Mark Good and Gene Sentz of environmentalists I know testified mildly against MATL, or in support of it with certain caveats. Mark gave a good presentation in favor of windpower, although both he and Gene, who is from Choteau, were concerned about lines and wind turbines impacting the scenic values of the Rocky Mountain Front. Choteau resident and comedian David Letterman has even joined a landowner's suit to oppose the construction of powerlines from Gibson Dam, so I don't suppose he cares much for MATL, either.

Comment 530

Comment 531

In fact, the proposed line will be 30 miles or more this side of the Front, on flat farmland with only minimal impact on scenery or other tourist values. However, it will impose considerable costs on

Comment 532

farmers who must farm around the large pylons which support the wires. These also impact aerial crop-spraying, and Buck O'Brien, a prominent farmer and former candidate for Congress mentioned that one of his friends had actually died in a sprayplane collision with a power line. There is also the considerable hazard from electro-magnetic radiation (EMR) from high-voltage power lines, which has been

Comment 533

5/8/2007

Response 525: Comment noted.

Response 526: See response to comment 8.

Response 527: Comment noted. The agencies are not "promoting" the applicant or proposed project. They are responding to MATL's application as required by law.

Response 528: See response to comment 93 for more information on how the line might be used for short-term transactions when wind generators are not fully using their contracts to ship power. Power can be shipped both ways on a transmission line simultaneously especially if switches are installed at a midpoint substation.

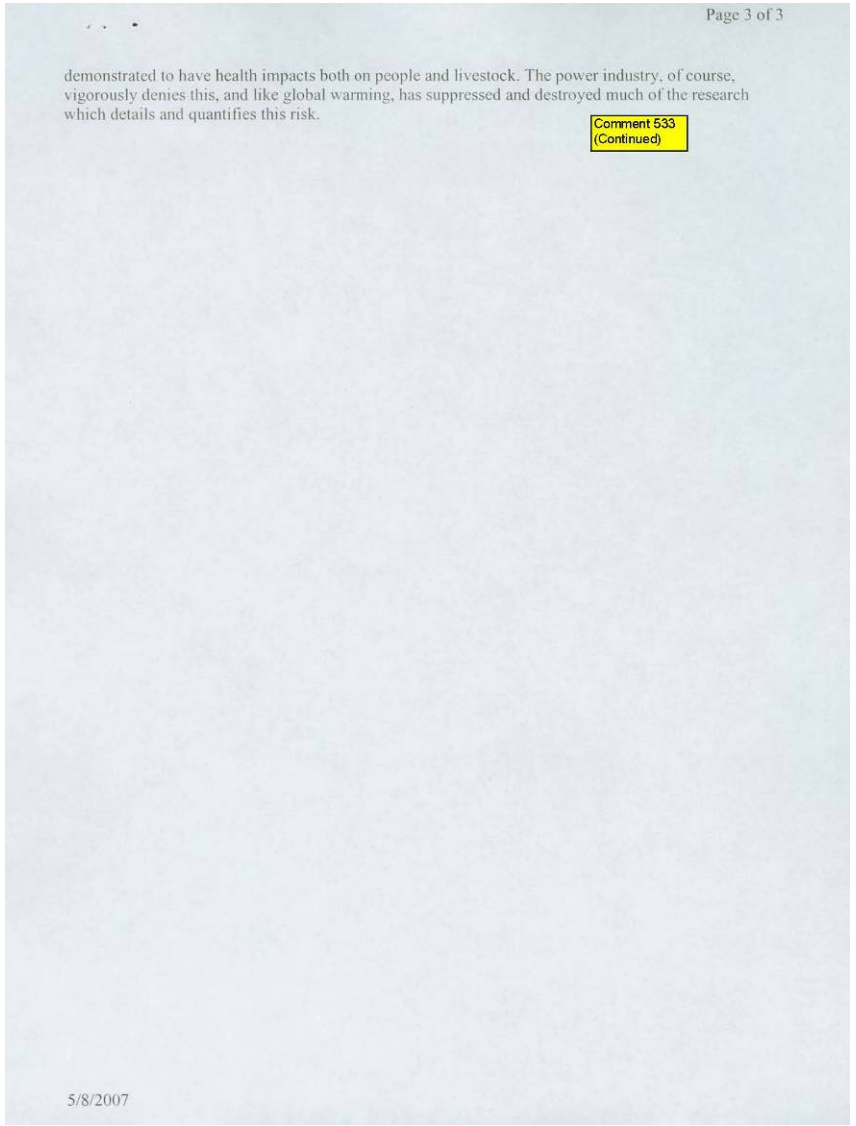
Response 529: The need for this line is stated in Section 1.2.1 is "to connect the Montana electrical transmission grid with the Alberta electrical transmission grid (no direct connection currently exists), provide access to potential markets for new and expanding power generation facilities in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line, and improve transmission access to markets seeking new energy resources." A power line would still be needed to ship power to and from Canada and satisfy the needs of wind generators which have signed contracts with MATL.

Response 530: Comment noted.

Response 531: The draft EIS notes major visual impacts would occur where the line passes in close proximity to houses, roads and recreation sites. In general, the presence of the line in the foreground distance (within ½ mile) from these viewpoints would result in major visual impact. This includes roads traveled by tourists.

Response 532: The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Response 533: Section 3.4.2 describes potential health effects from the transmission line.

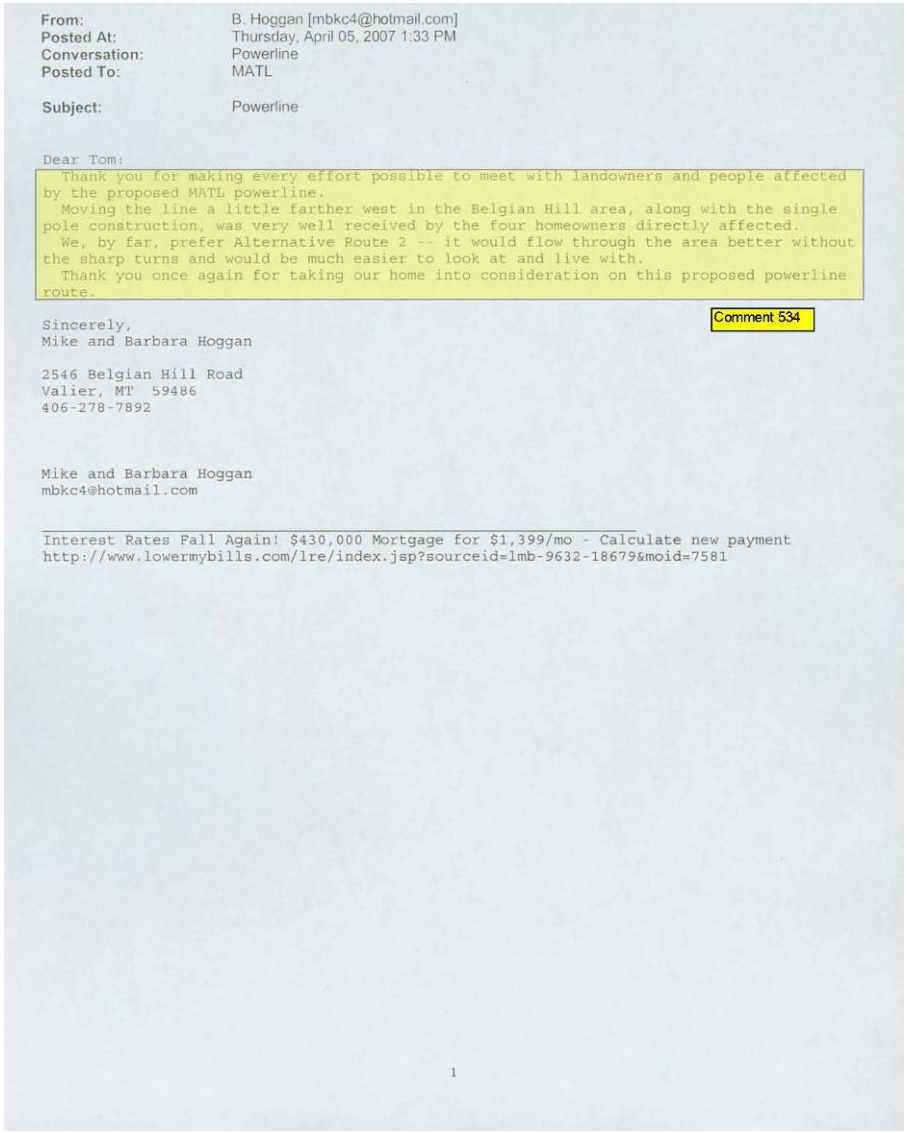


Page 3 of 3

demonstrated to have health impacts both on people and livestock. The power industry, of course, vigorously denies this, and like global warming, has suppressed and destroyed much of the research which details and quantifies this risk.

Comment 533 (Continued)

5/8/2007



From: B. Hoggan [mbkc4@hotmail.com]
Posted At: Thursday, April 05, 2007 1:33 PM
Conversation: Powerline
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Powerline

Dear Tom:

Thank you for making every effort possible to meet with landowners and people affected by the proposed MATL powerline.

Moving the line a little farther west in the Belgian Hill area, along with the single pole construction, was very well received by the four homeowners directly affected.

We, by far, prefer Alternative Route 2 -- it would flow through the area better without the sharp turns and would be much easier to look at and live with.

Thank you once again for taking our home into consideration on this proposed powerline route.

Comment 534

Sincerely,
Mike and Barbara Hoggan

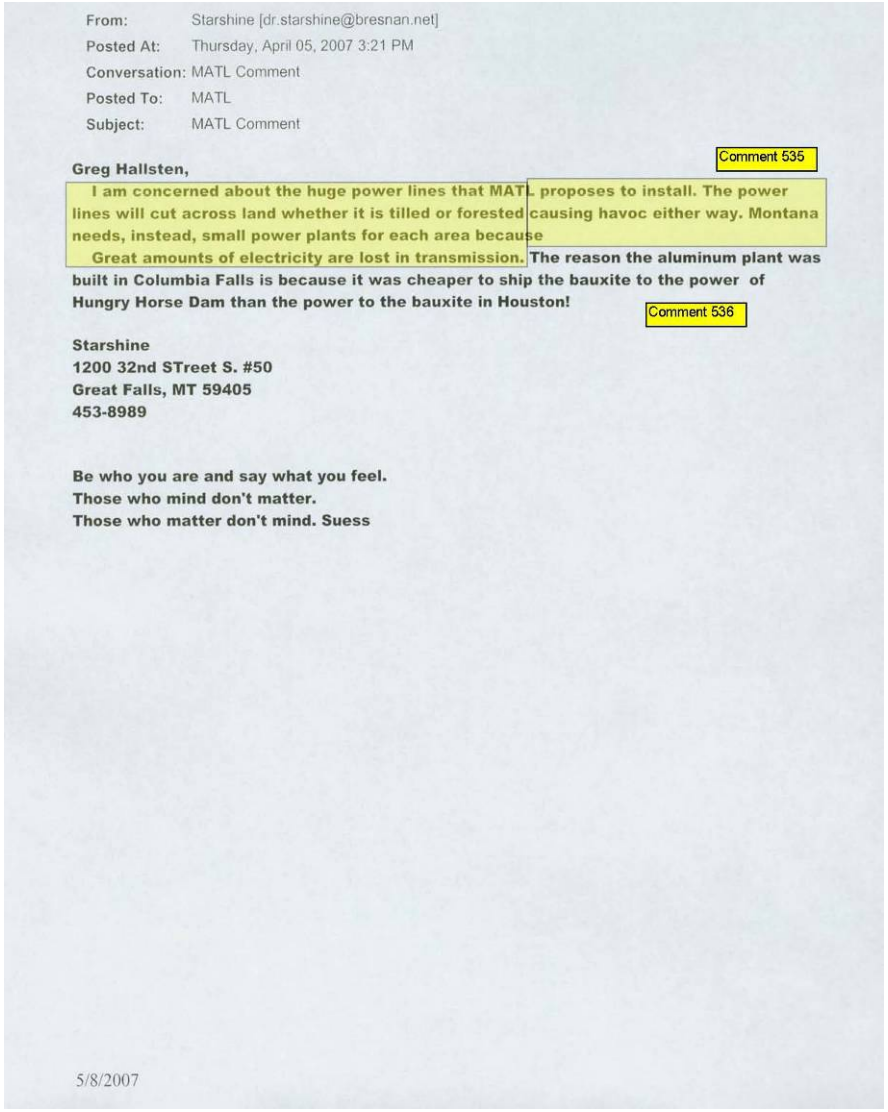
2546 Belgian Hill Road
Valier, MT 59486
406-278-7892

Mike and Barbara Hoggan
mbkc4@hotmail.com

Interest Rates Fall Again! $430,000 Mortgage for $1,399/mo - Calculate new payment
http://www.lowermybills.com/lre/index.jsp?sourceid=lmb-9632-18679&moid=7581

1

Response 534: Comment noted. Moving the line to the west appears to conflict with use of a side-roll irrigation system just south of the irrigation canal on the proposed reroute. Therefore another option in this area is identified in Section 2.6 and the agencies are accepting additional comment on alternatives in this area. Alternative 4 would avoid more homes in this area than the proposed alignment.



From: Starshine [dr.starshine@bresnan.net]
Posted At: Thursday, April 05, 2007 3:21 PM
Conversation: MATL Comment
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL Comment

Comment 535

Greg Hallsten,

I am concerned about the huge power lines that MATL proposes to install. The power lines will cut across land whether it is tilled or forested causing havoc either way. Montana needs, instead, small power plants for each area because

Great amounts of electricity are lost in transmission. The reason the aluminum plant was built in Columbia Falls is because it was cheaper to ship the bauxite to the power of Hungry Horse Dam than the power to the bauxite in Houston!

Comment 536

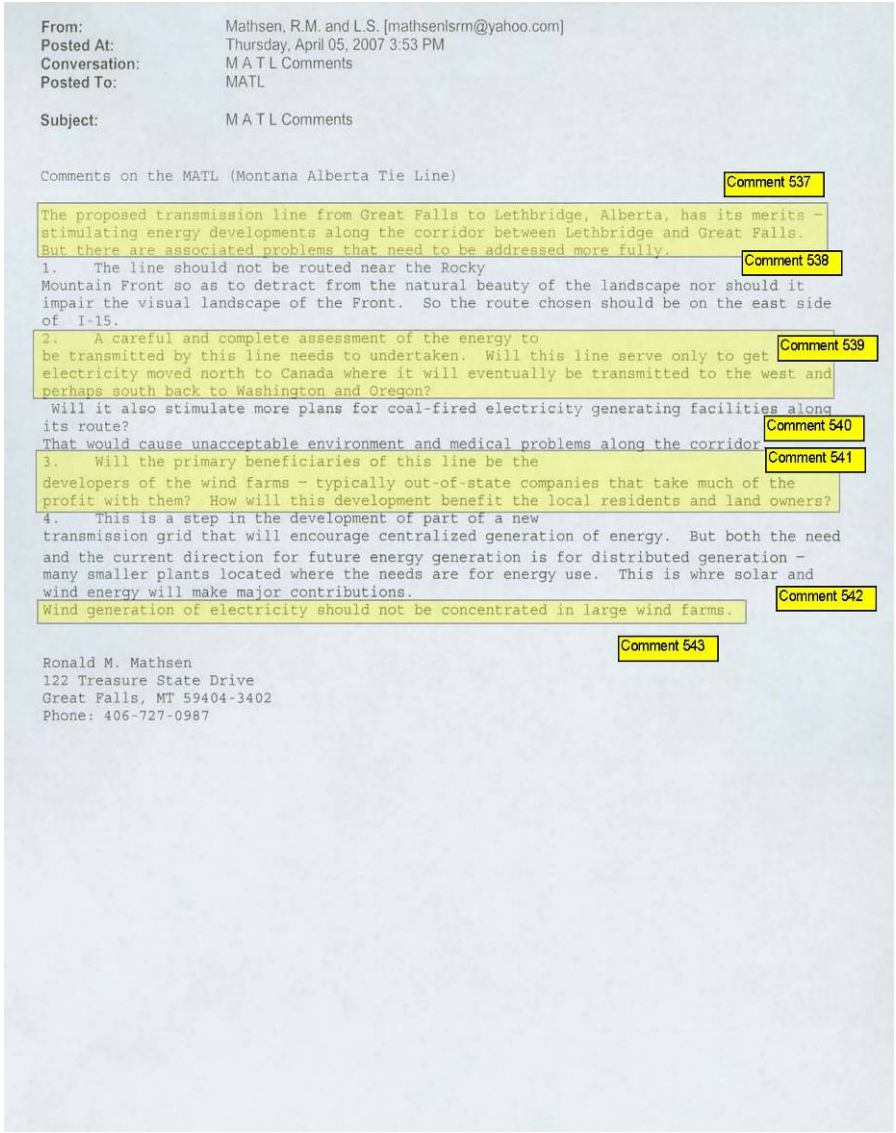
Starshine
1200 32nd STreet S. #50
Great Falls, MT 59405
453-8989

Be who you are and say what you feel.
Those who mind don't matter.
Those who matter don't mind. Suess

5/8/2007

Response 535: Comment noted.

Response 536: Comment noted.



From: Mathsen, R.M. and L.S. [mathsenlsrm@yahoo.com]
Posted At: Thursday, April 05, 2007 3:53 PM
Conversation: M A T L Comments
Posted To: MATL

Subject: M A T L Comments

Comments on the MATL (Montana Alberta Tie Line)

Comment 537

The proposed transmission line from Great Falls to Lethbridge, Alberta, has its merits - stimulating energy developments along the corridor between Lethbridge and Great Falls. But there are associated problems that need to be addressed more fully.

Comment 538

1. The line should not be routed near the Rocky Mountain Front so as to detract from the natural beauty of the landscape nor should it impair the visual landscape of the Front. So the route chosen should be on the east side of I-15.

2. A careful and complete assessment of the energy to be transmitted by this line needs to undertaken. Will this line serve only to get electricity moved north to Canada where it will eventually be transmitted to the west and perhaps south back to Washington and Oregon?

Comment 539

Will it also stimulate more plans for coal-fired electricity generating facilities along its route?

Comment 540

That would cause unacceptable environment and medical problems along the corridor

Comment 541

3. Will the primary beneficiaries of this line be the developers of the wind farms - typically out-of-state companies that take much of the profit with them? How will this development benefit the local residents and land owners?

4. This is a step in the development of part of a new transmission grid that will encourage centralized generation of energy. But both the need and the current direction for future energy generation is for distributed generation - many smaller plants located where the needs are for energy use. This is whre solar and wind energy will make major contributions.

Comment 542

Wind generation of electricity should not be concentrated in large wind farms.

Comment 543

Ronald M. Mathsen
122 Treasure State Drive
Great Falls, MT 59404-3402
Phone: 406-727-0987

Response 537: Comment noted.

Response 538: Comment noted. The line is not routed near the Rocky Mountain Front. See Figure 1.1-1 and response to comment 232.

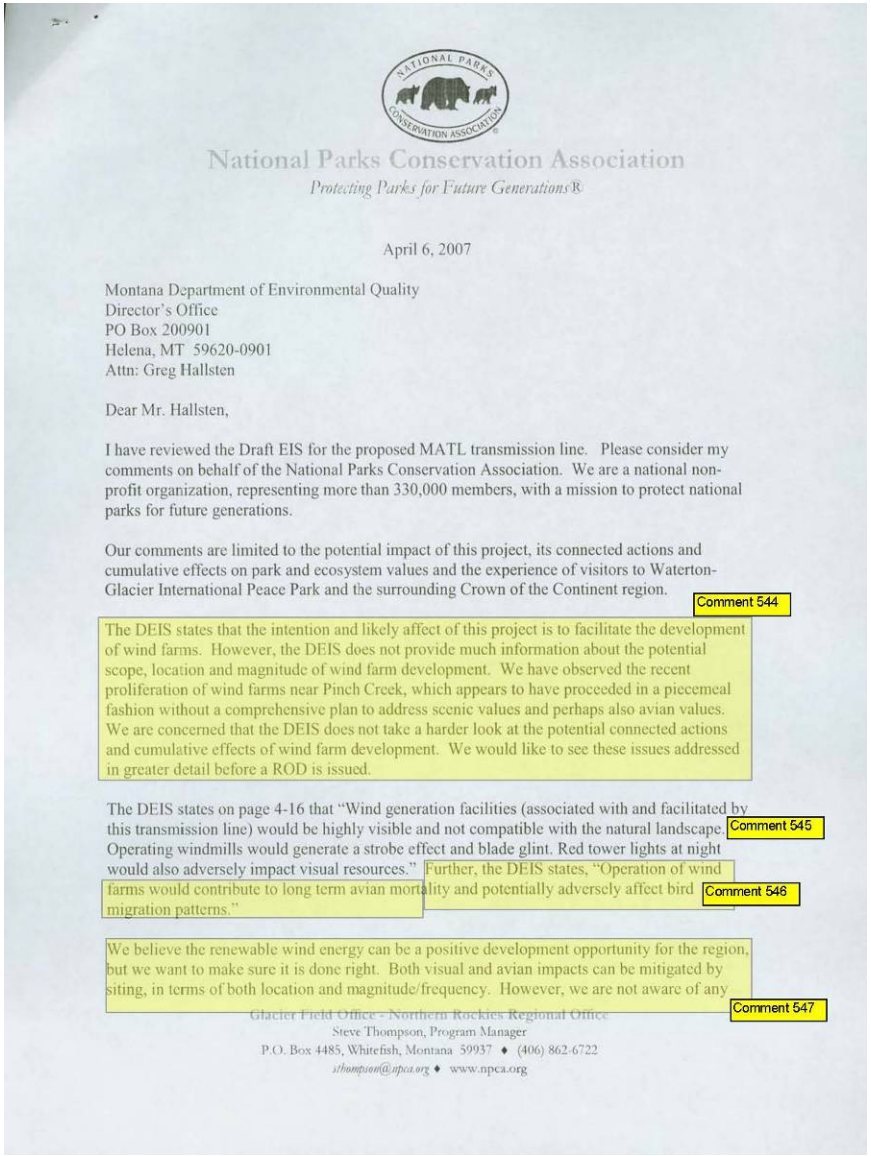
Response 539: See response to comment 529.

Response 540: See response to comment 529. Whether or not unacceptable environmental or medical problems would be stimulated would depend on the design and location of hypothetical future coal-fired electrical generating plants along the route. The agencies are not aware of future plans for coal-fired generation plants that would be dependent upon the MATL line.

Response 541: The primary beneficiaries of this line will be the company that proposes to build this line (Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. owned by Tonbridge Power Inc.), and any wind developers that build wind generators as a result of this line. Those benefits would be realized in the form of any profits made from these ventures. Stockholders of Tonbridge Power Inc. and of wind farm companies could also benefit from stock ownership if these companies are successful. Local residents and land owners are expected to experience benefits and costs from the line. See Section 3.13 for more discussions of the costs and benefits from MATL.

Response 542: Your opinion is noted. Solar power is currently more expensive than wind or coal generated power. While there is much discussion and research being devoted to decentralized power generation, at this time it is not proposed at a scale that would replace the proposed line.

Response 543: Comment noted.



National Parks Conservation Association
Protecting Parks for Future Generations®

April 6, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Director's Office
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
Attn: Greg Hallsten

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

I have reviewed the Draft EIS for the proposed MATL transmission line. Please consider my comments on behalf of the National Parks Conservation Association. We are a national non-profit organization, representing more than 330,000 members, with a mission to protect national parks for future generations.

Our comments are limited to the potential impact of this project, its connected actions and cumulative effects on park and ecosystem values and the experience of visitors to Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and the surrounding Crown of the Continent region.

Comment 544

The DEIS states that the intention and likely affect of this project is to facilitate the development of wind farms. However, the DEIS does not provide much information about the potential scope, location and magnitude of wind farm development. We have observed the recent proliferation of wind farms near Pinch Creek, which appears to have proceeded in a piecemeal fashion without a comprehensive plan to address scenic values and perhaps also avian values. We are concerned that the DEIS does not take a harder look at the potential connected actions and cumulative effects of wind farm development. We would like to see these issues addressed in greater detail before a ROD is issued.

The DEIS states on page 4-16 that "Wind generation facilities (associated with and facilitated by this transmission line) would be highly visible and not compatible with the natural landscape. Operating windmills would generate a strobe effect and blade glint. Red tower lights at night would also adversely impact visual resources." Further, the DEIS states, "Operation of wind farms would contribute to long term avian mortality and potentially adversely affect bird migration patterns."

Comment 545

Comment 546

We believe the renewable wind energy can be a positive development opportunity for the region, but we want to make sure it is done right. Both visual and avian impacts can be mitigated by siting, in terms of both location and magnitude/frequency. However, we are not aware of any

Comment 547

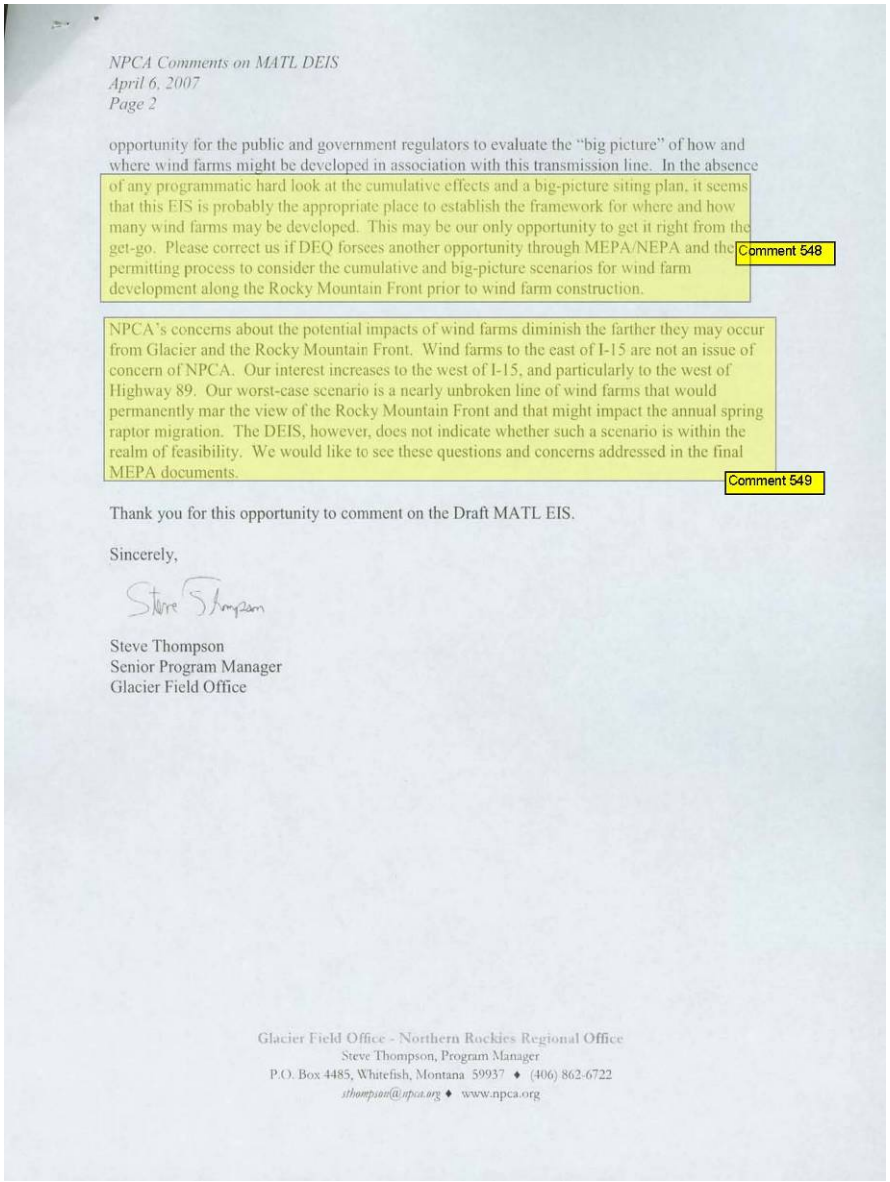
Glacier Field Office - Northern Rockies Regional Office
Steve Thompson, Program Manager
P.O. Box 4485, Whitefish, Montana 59937 ♦ (406) 862-6722
sthompson@npca.org ♦ www.npca.org

Response 544: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 545: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 546: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.

Response 547: The agencies have no regulatory authority to site wind farms and little if any regulatory authority to require mitigating measures to control how they would be built. See the revised cumulative impacts discussion in Section 4.16 for more detail on visual impacts of wind farm development. Persons interested in implementation of mitigating measures should work with individual developers as wind farms are sited and planned.



NPCA Comments on MATL DEIS
April 6, 2007
Page 2

opportunity for the public and government regulators to evaluate the "big picture" of how and where wind farms might be developed in association with this transmission line. In the absence of any programmatic hard look at the cumulative effects and a big-picture siting plan, it seems that this EIS is probably the appropriate place to establish the framework for where and how many wind farms may be developed. This may be our only opportunity to get it right from the get-go. Please correct us if DEQ forsees another opportunity through MEPA/NEPA and the permitting process to consider the cumulative and big-picture scenarios for wind farm development along the Rocky Mountain Front prior to wind farm construction.

Comment 548

NPCA's concerns about the potential impacts of wind farms diminish the farther they may occur from Glacier and the Rocky Mountain Front. Wind farms to the east of I-15 are not an issue of concern of NPCA. Our interest increases to the west of I-15, and particularly to the west of Highway 89. Our worst-case scenario is a nearly unbroken line of wind farms that would permanently mar the view of the Rocky Mountain Front and that might impact the annual spring raptor migration. The DEIS, however, does not indicate whether such a scenario is within the realm of feasibility. We would like to see these questions and concerns addressed in the final MEPA documents.

Comment 549

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the Draft MATL EIS.

Sincerely,

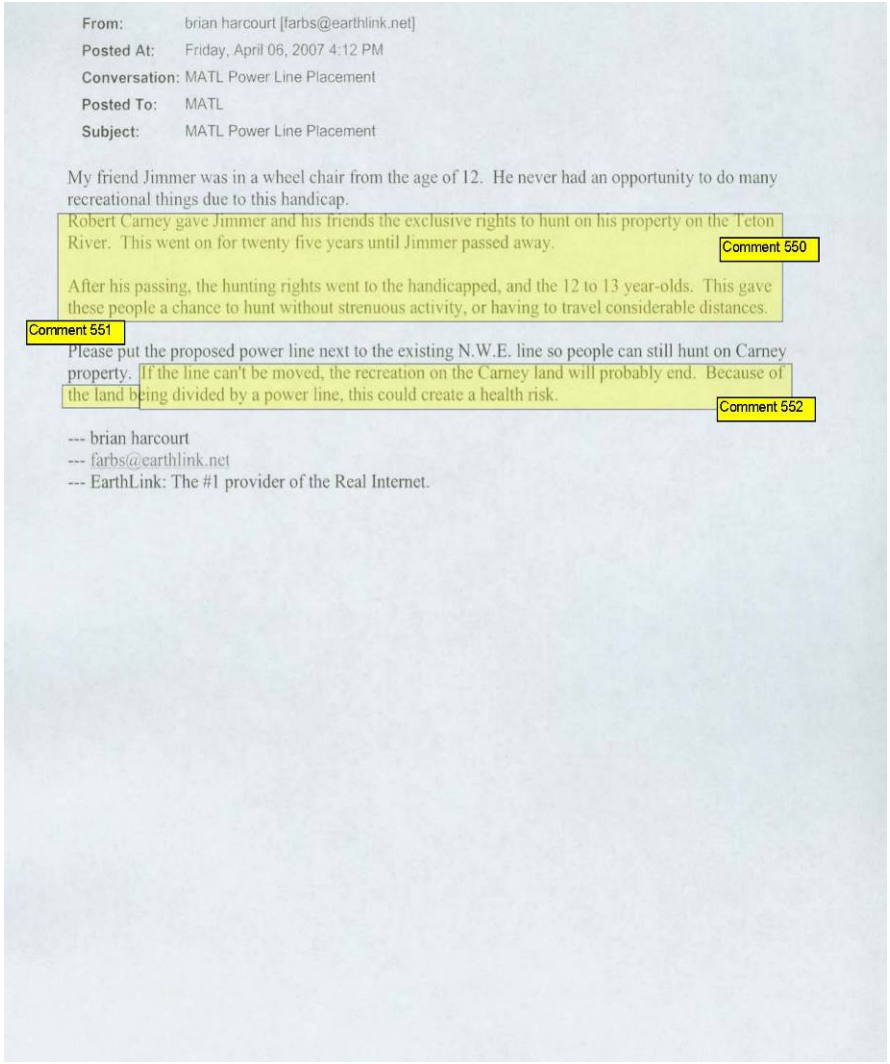
Steve Thompson

Steve Thompson
Senior Program Manager
Glacier Field Office

Glacier Field Office - Northern Rockies Regional Office
Steve Thompson, Program Manager
P.O. Box 4485, Whitefish, Montana 59937 ♦ (406) 862-6722
sthompson@npca.org ♦ www.npca.org

Response 548: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4 for further explanation of the types of impacts that may occur and Appendix O for possible measures to reduce these impacts. The agencies do not have regulatory authority over siting of wind farms.

Response 549: Your worst case scenario is not likely from the proposed line and planned projects. Extensive development of dispersed wind generation projects may pose a greater threat to viewsheds and birds using the area. See response to comments 182 and 522. Although wind farms associated with the proposed MATL transmission line could be located west of Interstate 15, the agencies are unaware of any that would be located west of Highway 89. Where developments are located depends on project economics, availability of transmission capacity, landowner agreements, and the wind resource.



From: brian harcourt [farbs@earthlink.net]
Posted At: Friday, April 06, 2007 4:12 PM
Conversation: MATL Power Line Placement
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL Power Line Placement

My friend Jimmer was in a wheel chair from the age of 12. He never had an opportunity to do many recreational things due to this handicap.
Robert Carney gave Jimmer and his friends the exclusive rights to hunt on his property on the Teton River. This went on for twenty five years until Jimmer passed away.

Comment 550

After his passing, the hunting rights went to the handicapped, and the 12 to 13 year-olds. This gave these people a chance to hunt without strenuous activity, or having to travel considerable distances.

Comment 551

Please put the proposed power line next to the existing N.W.E. line so people can still hunt on Carney property. If the line can't be moved, the recreation on the Carney land will probably end. Because of the land being divided by a power line, this could create a health risk.

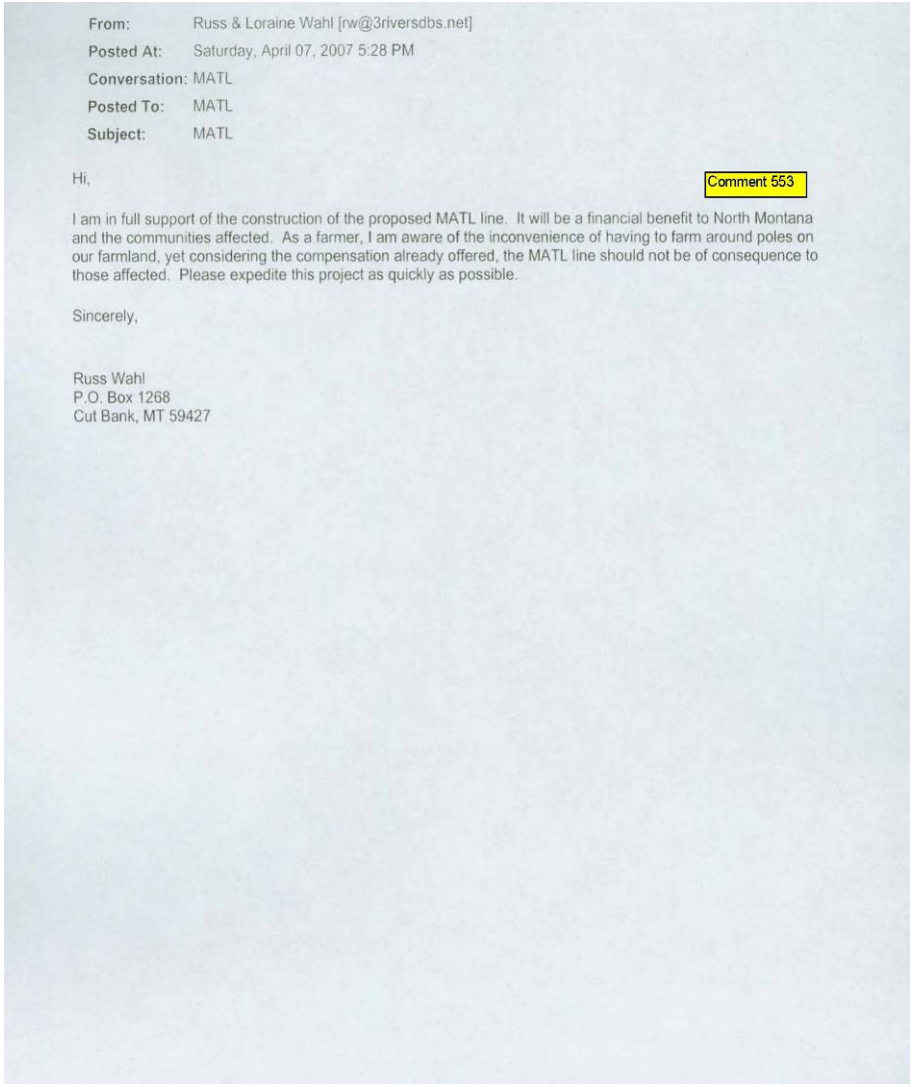
Comment 552

--- brian harcourt
--- farbs@earthlink.net
--- EarthLink: The #1 provider of the Real Internet.

Response 550: Comment noted.

Response 551: Comment noted.

Response 552: Hunting can continue near and around a power line. Health concerns are discussed in Section 3.4.2.



From: Russ & Loraine Wahl [rw@3riversdbs.net]
Posted At: Saturday, April 07, 2007 5:28 PM
Conversation: MATL
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL

Hi,

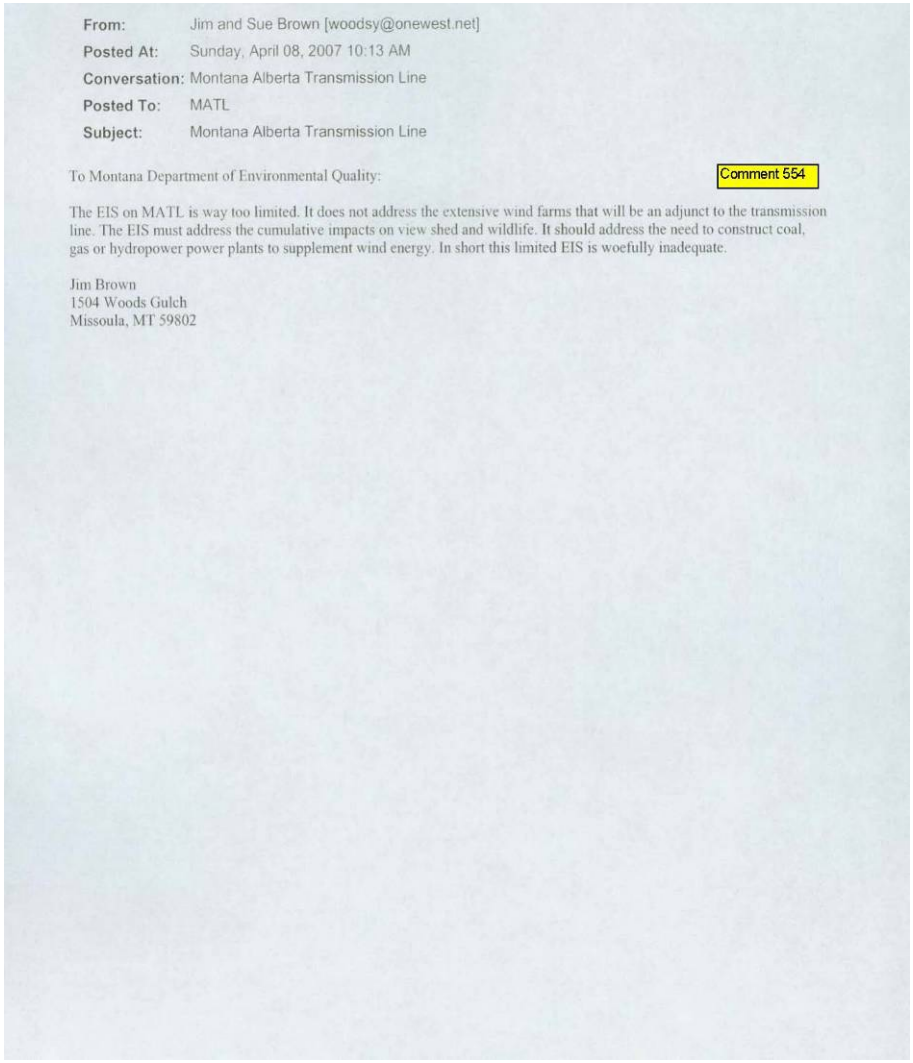
Comment 553

I am in full support of the construction of the proposed MATL line. It will be a financial benefit to North Montana and the communities affected. As a farmer, I am aware of the inconvenience of having to farm around poles on our farmland, yet considering the compensation already offered, the MATL line should not be of consequence to those affected. Please expedite this project as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Russ Wahl
P.O. Box 1268
Cut Bank, MT 59427

Response 553: Comment noted. See additional discussion of costs associated with farming around structures in Section 3.13.



From: Jim and Sue Brown [woodsy@onewest.net]
Posted At: Sunday, April 08, 2007 10:13 AM
Conversation: Montana Alberta Transmission Line
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Montana Alberta Transmission Line

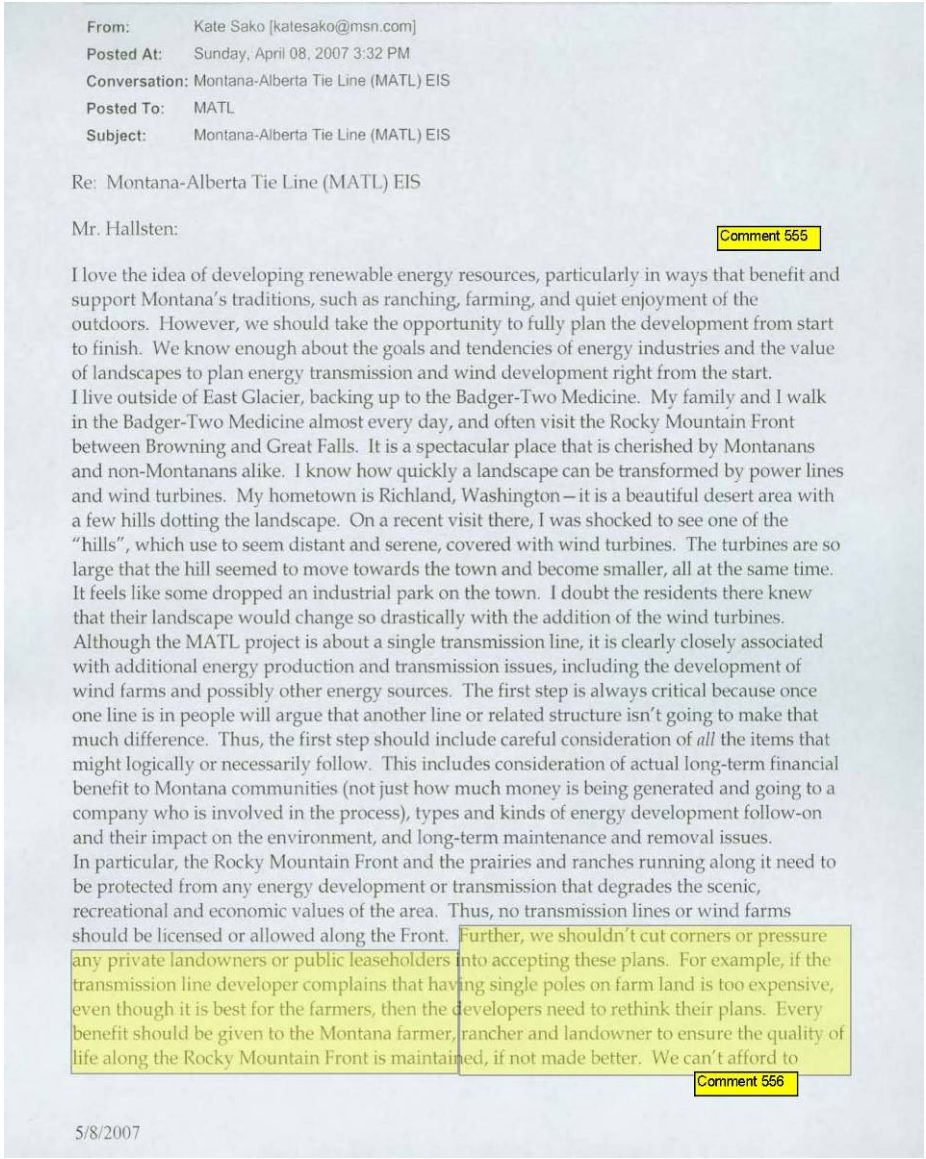
To Montana Department of Environmental Quality:

Comment 554

The EIS on MATL is way too limited. It does not address the extensive wind farms that will be an adjunct to the transmission line. The EIS must address the cumulative impacts on view shed and wildlife. It should address the need to construct coal, gas or hydropower power plants to supplement wind energy. In short this limited EIS is woefully inadequate.

Jim Brown
1504 Woods Gulch
Missoula, MT 59802

Response 554: See the revised discussion of cumulative impacts in Chapter 4.



From: Kate Sako [katesako@msn.com]
Posted At: Sunday, April 08, 2007 3:32 PM
Conversation: Montana-Alberta Tie Line (MATL) EIS
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Montana-Alberta Tie Line (MATL) EIS

Re: Montana-Alberta Tie Line (MATL) EIS

Mr. Hallsten:

Comment 555

I love the idea of developing renewable energy resources, particularly in ways that benefit and support Montana's traditions, such as ranching, farming, and quiet enjoyment of the outdoors. However, we should take the opportunity to fully plan the development from start to finish. We know enough about the goals and tendencies of energy industries and the value of landscapes to plan energy transmission and wind development right from the start.

I live outside of East Glacier, backing up to the Badger-Two Medicine. My family and I walk in the Badger-Two Medicine almost every day, and often visit the Rocky Mountain Front between Browning and Great Falls. It is a spectacular place that is cherished by Montanans and non-Montanans alike. I know how quickly a landscape can be transformed by power lines and wind turbines. My hometown is Richland, Washington—it is a beautiful desert area with a few hills dotting the landscape. On a recent visit there, I was shocked to see one of the "hills", which use to seem distant and serene, covered with wind turbines. The turbines are so large that the hill seemed to move towards the town and become smaller, all at the same time. It feels like some dropped an industrial park on the town. I doubt the residents there knew that their landscape would change so drastically with the addition of the wind turbines.

Although the MATL project is about a single transmission line, it is clearly closely associated with additional energy production and transmission issues, including the development of wind farms and possibly other energy sources. The first step is always critical because once one line is in people will argue that another line or related structure isn't going to make that much difference. Thus, the first step should include careful consideration of *all* the items that might logically or necessarily follow. This includes consideration of actual long-term financial benefit to Montana communities (not just how much money is being generated and going to a company who is involved in the process), types and kinds of energy development follow-on and their impact on the environment, and long-term maintenance and removal issues.

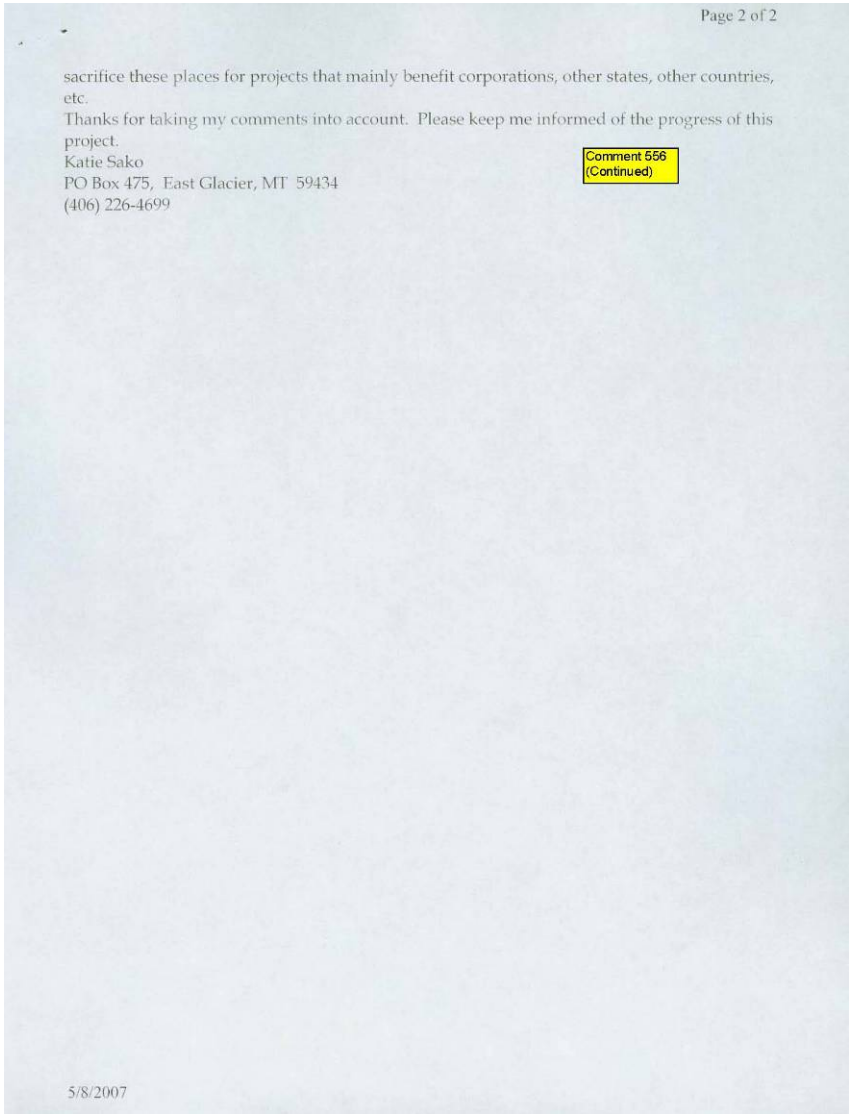
In particular, the Rocky Mountain Front and the prairies and ranches running along it need to be protected from any energy development or transmission that degrades the scenic, recreational and economic values of the area. Thus, no transmission lines or wind farms should be licensed or allowed along the Front. Further, we shouldn't cut corners or pressure any private landowners or public leaseholders into accepting these plans. For example, if the transmission line developer complains that having single poles on farm land is too expensive, even though it is best for the farmers, then the developers need to rethink their plans. Every benefit should be given to the Montana farmer, rancher and landowner to ensure the quality of life along the Rocky Mountain Front is maintained, if not made better. We can't afford to

Comment 556

5/8/2007

Response 555: Comment noted. The discussion of cumulative impacts for the proposed MATL transmission line has been expanded in Chapter 4. The agencies administer no permits specifically for wind farms as energy facilities. It is possible that few if any state permits would be necessary for projects proposed on private lands with no stream or wetland crossings or encroachments. Persons interested in protecting the viewshed of the Rocky Mountain Front would need to work with individual developers as wind farms are sited and planned.

Response 556: Comment noted.

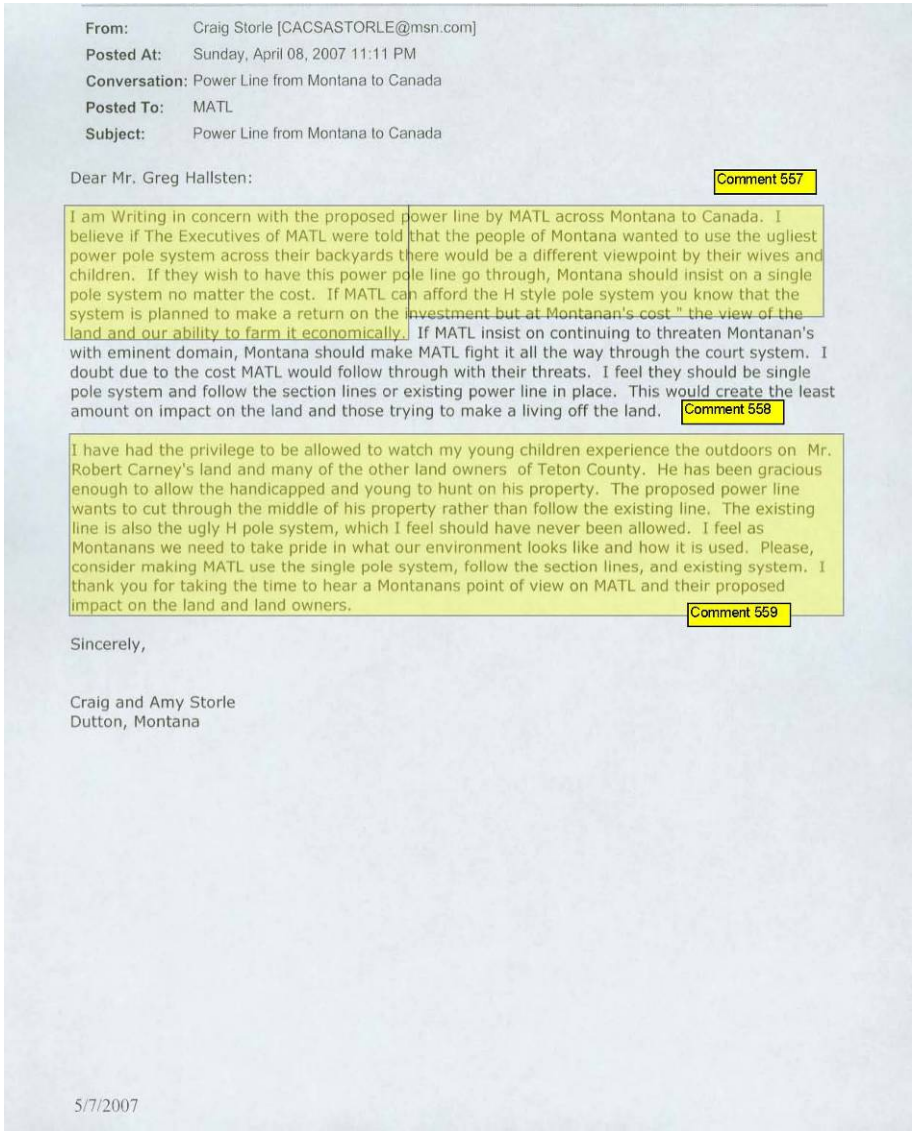


sacrifice these places for projects that mainly benefit corporations, other states, other countries, etc.
Thanks for taking my comments into account. Please keep me informed of the progress of this project.

Comment 556 (Continued)

Katie Sako
PO Box 475, East Glacier, MT 59434
(406) 226-4699

5/8/2007



From: Craig Storle [CACSASTORLE@msn.com]
Posted At: Sunday, April 08, 2007 11:11 PM
Conversation: Power Line from Montana to Canada
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Power Line from Montana to Canada

Dear Mr. Greg Hallsten:

Comment 557

I am Writing in concern with the proposed power line by MATL across Montana to Canada. I believe if The Executives of MATL were told that the people of Montana wanted to use the ugliest power pole system across their backyards there would be a different viewpoint by their wives and children. If they wish to have this power pole line go through, Montana should insist on a single pole system no matter the cost. If MATL can afford the H style pole system you know that the system is planned to make a return on the investment but at Montanan's cost " the view of the land and our ability to farm it economically. If MATL insist on continuing to threaten Montanan's with eminent domain, Montana should make MATL fight it all the way through the court system. I doubt due to the cost MATL would follow through with their threats. I feel they should be single pole system and follow the section lines or existing power line in place. This would create the least amount on impact on the land and those trying to make a living off the land.

Comment 558

I have had the privilege to be allowed to watch my young children experience the outdoors on Mr. Robert Carney's land and many of the other land owners of Teton County. He has been gracious enough to allow the handicapped and young to hunt on his property. The proposed power line wants to cut through the middle of his property rather than follow the existing line. The existing line is also the ugly H pole system, which I feel should have never been allowed. I feel as Montanans we need to take pride in what our environment looks like and how it is used. Please, consider making MATL use the single pole system, follow the section lines, and existing system. I thank you for taking the time to hear a Montanans point of view on MATL and their proposed impact on the land and land owners.

Comment 559

Sincerely,

Craig and Amy Storle
Dutton, Montana

5/7/2007

Response 557: Comment noted.

Response 558: Comment noted.

Response 559: Use of monopoles and following section lines are measures adopted to address land use impacts where appropriate. Many existing lines in Montana use H-frame wood poles. This structure type would be used on the MATL line in range land and in selected locations on crop land. The presence of the new line on Carney property would not preclude use of the land for hunting.

The following comments are summarized from hearings conducted on the draft EIS.

Comment 560: Commenter strongly opposes cutting across a field on a diagonal on the Belgian Hill Alternative. The field is currently in CRP but the contract will run out in a few years. Commenter wants the line to go along the field line or property line with no diagonals through the field.

Response 560: Comment noted.

Comment 561: Monopoles are the same price as dual pole H-frame structures. Directly embedded steel monopoles are the same price as H-frames.

Response 561: See responses to comments 38 and 357.

Comment 562: Opposes cutting diagonally across field on Belgian Hill Alternative and commenter wants to see the line built along the field line or property line.

Response 562: Comment noted. The trade offs between alignments in the Belgian Hill Road area are summarized in Section 2.6 and 3.16.

Comment 563: A bill was introduced in Montana's recent legislative session to give property owners crossed by a new transmission line a property tax break as a way for the state to help these landowners who are making sacrifices for the public good.

Response 563: House Bill 843 would have exempted property taxes on lands that are within 660 feet on either side of the midpoint of a transmission line right-of-way or easement which had a design capacity of 30 megavoltamperes or greater and was constructed after January 1, 2007. The type of land that was to be exempted was agricultural lands. House Bill 843 did not pass the 2007 Legislature. This exemption of property taxes was incorporated into House Bill 3 in the Special Session of 2007 and was signed into law.

Comment 564: Commenter supports Alternative 4 as it does a good job of addressing landowner concerns. It would take only 4-5 months to pay off the extra costs of Alternative 4.

Response 564: Comment noted.

Comment 565: The draft EIS does not compare what the added cost would be for affected farmers to farm around this line for the next 100 years relative to MATL's costs to build each alternative.

Response 565: The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Comment 566: DEQ did a good job developing Alternative 4 but caved into MATL by selecting modified Alternative 2.

Response 566: Comment noted.

Comment 567: The Belgian Hill Road alignment is through farmland, not grassland on the north side of the alignment.

Response 567: On the north side of the alignment, north of the irrigation canal, the alignment traverses about 2,320 feet of grassland and then about 320 feet of cultivated land which likely can be spanned. South of the canal the revised alignment runs north-south traversing about 1,030 feet of land irrigated with a side roll irrigation system oriented east-west. This system would probably have to be broken apart and reassembled on the far side of one structure each time it is used in the future. From here, the revised line would run north-south along irrigated fields for about 7,900 feet. South of this point the line would be diagonal for about 3,030 feet across farm land before rejoining the proposed alignment.

The Belgian Hill Road alignment is actually through farmland and was identified incorrectly in the draft EIS as grassland. The agencies are soliciting comment on these alignments and another possible alignment in the Belgian Hill Road area. See Sections 2.6 and 3.16 for additional information.

Comment 568: Commenter already has 22 H-frames on his land which are located on a diagonal and 21 more are proposed. Nowhere in the Major Facility Siting Act does it mention that MATL's ability to borrow funds is a decision criterion.

Response 568: The Major Facility Siting Act requires a finding "that the facility minimizes adverse environmental impact, considering the state of available technology and the nature and economics of the various alternatives."

Comment 569: Commenter supports Alt 4.

Response 569: Comment noted.

Comment 570: The draft EIS failed to address the cost to farmers who have to farm around the structures for the life of the line.

Response 570: DEQ has worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Comment 571: Having to farm around structures on Alternative 2 would cost more than the additional cost of building Alternative 4. The commenter estimates it would cost farmers an additional $6,522,000 to farm around the structures over the life of the line.

Response 571: Comment noted. The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Comment 572: Page 3-157 of the draft EIS draws a conclusion on the cost to farm around structures but it's hard to quantify the cost to local farmers from a Canadian study done in 1970 and then converting costs to today's US dollar values.

Response 572: Comment noted. Additional discussion of alternatives in the Diamond Valley area is found in Sections 2.6 and 3.16. See Section 3.13 for additional information about the cost to farmers.

Comment 573: Commenter feels insulted by DEQ's view that annual payments proposed by MATL for farming around structures is mitigation for impacts.

Response 573: Mitigation is typically viewed as a measure that will reduce or eliminate an impact. While the measure proposed by MATL would not eliminate an impact, it might reduce the impact through compensation.

Comment 574: The draft EIS cites MATL's economic ability and demands but does not mention their $28 million per year revenue stream to pay additional costs of Alternative 4. Reconsider Alternative 4 after doing a fair economic analysis.

Response 574: Comment noted. See Section 3.13 for additional information on farming costs. The agencies have worked with area landowners and identified three additional alignments in the Diamond Valley area. These are described in Sections 2.6 and 3.16.

Comment 575: Commenter believes the draft EIS is an economic statement and not an environmental impact statement.

Response 575: Your opinion is noted.

Comment 576: Are annual payments to landowners a condition of the Major Facility Siting Act certificate? If so, what is the amount per pole?

Response 576: Annual payments are part of the applicant's proposal. As proposed by MATL annual payments would vary with placement within a field and the degree to which farming practices are interfered with. Annual payments of this nature are a new concept in Montana. See Section 3.13 for further discussion of costs to farming around poles.

Comment 577: Commenter is opposed to the line if it doesn't run north/south and east/west. He farms around 44 existing structures. Alternative 2 would move the proposed line off his place. DEQ's proposed reroute in the Diamond Valley area would put the line close to 17 existing poles. Commenter prefers Alternative 2 rather than DEQ's tentative preferred alignment.

Response 577: Comments noted. See Sections 2.6 and 3.16 for discussion of local routing options in the Diamond Valley area that could be required by the agencies to reduce impacts.

Comment 578: Commenter would prefer monopoles on his land rather than H-frames.

Response 578: Comment noted.

Comment 579: A member of the local Port Authority commented in support of the transmission line because it could add several million and possibly a billion dollars to the area economy; the line would allow for wind energy generation, and would increase tax revenue.

Response 579: Comments noted. See revised Section 3.13 for updated tax revenues as a result of the passage of House Bill 3, Tax Incentives for Energy Development which recently passed the Montana Special Legislative Session.

Comment 580: Commenter supports Alternative 4 because it balances impacts and costs; DEQ did a good job developing this alternative but made a mistake when it tentatively selected Alternative 2 with mitigation.

Response 580: Comments noted.

Comment 581: On page 2-10 of the draft EIS there is an error when it says there was no plan to use extra fiber optic line for other commercial purposes. Six months ago a Tonbridge press release said the company was exploring the commercial value of the fiber optic overhead ground wire. If the company used the potential revenue from the fiber optic lines, wouldn't this aid in the recovery of extra costs for Alternative 4?

Response 581: See response to comment 346.

Comment 582: There is an error on page 2-40 where the draft EIS indicated that there is a potential upgrade to 400 MW in each direction, 800 MW total. In a MATL press release it was stated that the line might be upgraded to 450 MW.

Response 582: See response to comments 346 and 626 for discussion of line capacity.

Comment 583: Any upgrade is a potential revenue increase to MATL and should be factored into DEQ's decision.

Response 583: Comments noted. At this time no upgrades are proposed.

Comment 584: On pages 2-45 though 2-47 four alternatives were dismissed solely on the basis of higher costs including guyed versus self-supporting angle structures, underground construction, use of monopoles, and a tie into Western Area Power Administration's line at Shelby. Why is it appropriate for the agency to dismiss alternatives based upon concern for MATL's costs. DEQ is protecting MATL, not Montana's farmers. DEQ admits that there would be a higher cost to farmers in the long run but the tentative proposed route does not require the company to use monopoles placed on field lines. MATL will be able to recoup these higher costs in the long-term. It is not appropriate for DEQ to

rely on the company to some how mitigate these increased costs with some yet to be calculated and agreed upon payment. The company is not required to make such a payment. These payments need to be specified in the certificate. DEQ needs to do a proper balancing as required by ARM 17.26.1607.

Response 584: It is appropriate to dismiss alternatives because the Major Facility Siting Act requires a finding "that the facility minimizes adverse environmental impact, considering the state of available technology and the nature and economics of the various alternatives." The agencies will balance factors listed in their administrative rules and regulations as required by statute before making a decision. The agencies worked to quantify the costs of the line to farmers and compare those costs with the costs to MATL of pursuing the more expensive alternative (See Section 3.13).

Comment 585: Table 13-1-11 describes the positive tax benefits to counties but these revenues could be cut by 75 percent if Governor Schweitzer's clean and green energy bill is passed by the legislature.

Response 585: See revised Section 3.13 for estimates on property tax savings to MATL from recent changes in the law.

Comment 586: On page 4-18 the draft EIS discusses easement payments. This discussion is not required by the Major Facility Siting Act.

Response 586: The Montana Environmental Policy Act requires that an EIS disclose the economic impacts of regulations on an applicant. Easement payments made on MATL's proposed route would be an adverse economic impact of regulation if another alternative is selected.

Comment 587: If MATL already paid for ROW access and that alternative is not permitted, MATL may lose the money they already spent. To seek easements and pay for routes that have not been permitted by DEQ is a business decision MATL made which it was free to make and the agency should not base decisions about the project on any such payments.

Response 587: Comments noted.

Comment 588: A commenter provided additional information on the number of jobs that may be generated at a wind farm. A wind farm may generate 10 jobs but more likely only one or two jobs.

Response 588: Your opinion is noted. See Section 4.14 for further discussion of the economic impacts from wind farms.

Comment 589: The mayor of Cut Bank fully supports findings in the draft EIS and the proposed route.

Response 589: Comments noted.

Comment 590: A member of the MATL American Advisory Committee noted that MATL tried to accommodate everyone. The project is important to Glacier, Toole, Pondera, and Teton counties as well as the Great Falls area. While Great Falls is looking at an expensive coal fired generation project, wind power could be harnessed for energy but a transmission line is needed for this type of generation. He supports the project.

Response 590: Comments noted.

Comment 591: A tribal member supports Alternative 3 because it is a little closer to the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and thus would give a potential advantage to wind projects on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation.

Response 591: Comments noted.

Comment 592: A Toole County Commissioner and member of the Port Authority in Shelby supported the MATL project because it is necessary for wind farms, several million dollars could be invested in Toole and Glacier counties, and this investment could help the tax base and possibly lower taxes for other property owners.

Further, he supports alternative that causes the least impacts to farmers urges DEQ to make a decision quickly so the project can move forward.

Response 592: Comments noted.

Comment 593: The Mayor of Shelby and Director of the Port Northern Montana commented that DEQ did a good job looking so thoroughly at the alternatives. MATL has done a good job trying to accommodate property owners and farmers. He supports the idea of making annual payments for those having structures on their property. Interstate 15 impacted a lot of farm land but it was for the common good and farmers do not get annual payments for Interstate 15. At least MATL is trying to mitigate the impacts from the line. He hopes that this project will lead to a larger tax base perhaps resulting in lower taxes.

Response 593: Comments noted. See the revised discussion of tax revenues in Section 3.13. House Bill 3, Tax Incentives for Energy Development that was passed in the recent Special Session of the Montana Legislature modified tax law that would affect tax revenue from the MATL line.

Comment 594: A Glacier County Commissioner commented that MATL has done the best job they can in trying to do the best to mitigate negative impacts to farmers. Sacrifice must be made and MATL has done an excellent job in trying to minimize impacts. He sees MATL as a watershed event that will bring other projects like wind farms and related businesses into the community. He supports the MATL project.

Response 594: Comments noted.

Comment 595: Don Banyack supported the project but has concerns including: Concerns about H-frame structures and wonders why monopoles were not required. Monopoles might cost more but "What the heck is cost nowadays?" Farmers will be stuck working around the poles for life.

Response 595: Comments noted.

Comment 596: Tim Hoof submitted alternatives to DEQ and appreciates that his alternatives were considered and one incorporated into the tentative preferred action. He supports the economic development and benefits the line would bring.

Response 596: Comments noted.

Comment 597: What happens if a land owner doesn't sign an easement contract for the right-of-way? Would eminent domain be used?

Response 597: Use of eminent domain is a last resort. However under Montana law (Section 70-30-102, MCA) eminent domain can be used for "electrical energy lines." These proceedings are handled through state court. More information on eminent domain can be found in the publication "Eminent Domain in Montana" available through the Environmental Quality Council and available on the internet at http://www.leg.mt.gov/content/publications/lepo/edhandbook.pdf. Also see the response to comment 8.

Comment 598: When will the routing decision be made?

Response 598: DEQ has 30 days in which to issue its decision after the final EIS is published.

Comment 599: How would the line affect GPS and computerized farming equipment? Who is responsible for these effects?

Response 599: See revisions to Section 3.4.3. The agencies could condition approval of the line in a manner that would require MATL to investigate complaints and correct GPS interference caused by the line. GPS receivers communicate using microwave and radio frequencies. Many factors affect GPS use, including receiver/antenna design, type of GPS equipment, satellite geometry, when a GPS satellite exhibits operational anomalies and proximity of shielding objects. Out-of-band emissions by radio, TV, communications, and radar transmitters can cause an electromagnetic interference problem. Other potential electromagnetic interference sources include gasoline engine ignition systems, TV and computer monitors, electric motors, fluorescent lights, ac-dc converters, alternators, and generators and switching power supplies. At the surface of the earth the satellite microwave signals are weak and any reduction of signal intensity due to scattering by transmission line conductors or noise due to corona and/or gap discharges could degrade receiver performance or cause loss of signal lock.

A gap discharge occurs between parts of hardware on a power line that are physically close but at different voltages. If the voltage becomes high enough, a spark occurs across the gap. Gap discharges tend to happen in dry weather and are more common in smaller distribution lines. Corona noise is caused when large electric fields at the conductor surface induce impulsive currents on the transmission line. These induced currents, in turn, cause wide band electric and magnetic "noise" fields that fill the entire frequency spectrum from below 100 kHz to approximately 1000 MHz, although they are usually too small to be measured above 10 – 20 MHz.

Presently, studies have found that transmission lines do not adversely affect most GPS usage and especially when GPS with high quality receivers and antennas was used, but the possibility exists. Studies have concluded that when receivers were used in close proximity to transmission lines that one satellite signal was diluted or lost. The loss of one satellite signal would not be completely detrimental since most GPS receivers rely upon a dispersed constellation of satellites to determine position, at least four or more satellites. Loss of lock on just one satellite could potentially affect accuracy due to an increase in dilution of position error caused by poor constellation accuracy. The transmission line could possibly cause a loss of signal lock. MATL would only be responsible for minimizing potential gap discharges and corona noise that has been identified as impacting GPS.

Comment 600: Do wind power sites tie directly into the line?

Response 600: As currently planned, wind energy sites would tie into the proposed Marias substation near the McCormick Ranch wind farm southeast of Cut Bank.

Comment 601: How far along is MATL in Alberta?

Response 601: A hearing began on October 30, 2007 and the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board must issue a decision within 90 days of the completion of the hearing.

Comment 602: How long will it take to construct the line?

Response 602: See Chapter 2 in draft EIS.

Comment 603: What is the capacity of the transmission line? Would the structure design (H-frames versus monopoles) restrict future capacity upgrades of the line?

Response 603: Proposed capacity is 300 MW in each direction. No, structure design would not restrict future capacity upgrades. However, if future upgrades are planned then the line should initially be designed so that ground clearances would meet National Electric Safety Code regulations. This may affect pole height. Within reason either single or double poles can be used to accommodate any required additional ground clearances.

Comment 604: Is the transmission line a connection into Alberta for protection and safety or for wind farm development?

Response 604: MATL's line would help wind generators transmit their power to Canada or south to the US market. It would provide another transmission path that could be used if other lines were out of service.

Comment 605: Why don't all of the turbines in wind farms run all of the time? They seem unreliable.

Response 605: Wind turbines do not run all the time because they operate within an optimal range of wind speed. If the wind is not strong enough, the turbine would not turn and power would not be produced. If the wind is too strong, turbines are shut down or depowered to protect them from damage. Like all types of generators, wind turbines are sometimes deactivated so that maintenance can be performed on them. Lastly, generation may not occur if there is not a market for the power produced.

Comment 606: Is wind power cheaper than power from other sources?

Response 606: Currently, wind generated electricity is fast becoming cost competitive with electricity produced by natural gas-fired generation. This is especially the case with higher natural gas prices. However, wind farm developers still claim to need a tax credit to operate profitably in most locations, so they may not yet be competitive with more conventional existing forms of electricity generation such as coal and hydro power.

Comment 607: Who pays for the line? Will the cost of the line be passed on to taxpayers?

Response 607: MATL is financing the line by itself through investors. The cost will not be passed on to taxpayers.

Comment 608: What is the MATL line going to do to the cost of power since approval of the line would open the market to Alberta?

Response 608: MATL should have little effect on the cost of power in Montana. This is discussed in the draft EIS in Section 3.13.

Comment 609: Information in Appendix F appears to be at odds with other laws and restrictions. Does the Major Facility Siting Act trump federal laws or other state laws?

Response 609: Montana's Major Facility Siting Act does not "trump" other federal laws. After a Major Facility Siting Act certificate is issued, certain other state and local laws are preempted. Section 75-20-401, MCA, states:

"Additional requirements by other governmental agencies not permitted after issuance of certificate -- exceptions -- venue for challenging certificate issuance.

(1) Notwithstanding any other law, a state or regional agency or municipality or other local government may not require any approval, consent, permit, certificate, or other condition for

the construction, operation, or maintenance of a facility authorized by a certificate issued pursuant to this chapter, except that the department and board retain the authority that they have or may be granted to determine compliance of the proposed facility with state and federal standards and implementation plans for air and water quality and to enforce those standards.

(2) This chapter does not prevent the application of state laws for the protection of employees engaged in the construction, operation, or maintenance of a facility…"

In addition, the Major Facility Siting Act does not preempt state agencies which have an ownership interest in land. For example, when state school trust land is crossed an easement or land use license is still required from DNRC and the Board of Land Commissioners for that property right.

Comment 610: Is trespassing allowed outside of easements?

Response 610: No.

Comment 611: Cascade County commissioner Peggy Beltrone testified that the project is needed as a whole, and believes the process balances interests of agriculture and businesses along the route with the communities along the line with regard to renewable energy. She believes a good process was used in developing the project.

Response 611: Comment noted.

Comment 612: Commissioner Beltrone stated Montana has strong wind resource and the wind occurs in an area that has a very poor economic record.

Response 612: Comment noted

Comment 613: Commissioner Beltrone presented information indicating that the US Department of Energy has a National goal of 20 percent wind energy and north central Montana has the potential for 5-10 GW of wind generation. Such a theoretical 5-10GW development would physically disturb an area 26 miles in diameter within an area 186 miles in diameter. Transmission would be needed to transmit this power out of Montana.

Response 613: Comment noted. The current proposal is for a transmission line with a capacity to move 300 MW in each direction as shown in Table 4.1-2 and would not be able to handle 5-10 GW. See Chapter 4 for the revised discussion of cumulative impacts from wind farm generation.

Comment 614: Montana is in the western transmission grid which includes Alberta and British Columbia. Alberta is a natural trading partner but transmission is limited between Montana and Alberta. Montana has 600 MW wind generation that has subscribed to the MATL line if it is built.

Response 614: Comment noted. Montana is in both the western and eastern transmission grids. The dividing line in Montana runs from about Fort Peck dam through Miles City. Transmission and generation east of this line operates as part of the eastern grid and west of this line electricity is exchanged in the western grid. In Montana a small amount of exchange between the grids occurs at Miles City.

Comment 615: Habel's worked with MATL to locate the line through the Teton River area and this would have prevented further paralleling of NorthWestern Energy's line thus would have reduced farming impacts. DEQ's tentative preferred alternative surprised him and adds a total of 9 additional structures they would have to farm around for the rest of his life. Why does the DEQ alignment have to diagonal across his property?

Response 615: Alternative 3 diagonals through more farm lands and was located in close proximity to the NorthWestern line. In scoping meetings other farmers indicated that another line close to the NorthWestern line would cause more impacts to farming than a single line would. The alternative 2 crossing of the Teton River would be located on state owned land while alternative 3 that parallels the NorthWestern line would be located on private land. The Major Facility Siting Act requires DEQ to select alignments on public lands when such alignments are as economically as practicable as using private lands.

Comment 616: The commenter supports trade with Canada and developing renewable wind resources.

Response 616: Comment noted.

Comment 617: MATL is not a utility and therefore how can they gain the right of eminent domain? The MATL line would not be used to satisfy Montana consumers.

Response 617: See response to comment 8.

Comment 618: Commercial companies building lines should have to pay a yearly rent. Will private landowners have any recourse or revenue if the transmission line crosses their land?

Response 618: Comment noted. See response to comment 8.

Comment 619: When the missile silos were constructed the government did it the right way; poles are located 30 feet from the property line. If a transmission line is built along the edge of a field, it is easier to farm around the poles.

Response 619: Comment noted.

Comment 620: Commenter feels disenfranchised from the process because he leases a parcel of state school trust land and a couple of alternatives cut diagonally across this land. Farming practices are changing as farm equipment continues to become larger. Fields are larger as strips are combined, chemical sprayers are 100 feet wide or wider, and therefore having to farm around structures is going to cost more. The commenter will try to negotiate with DNRC to lower the lease rate to use state school trust land because of the lost production and extra expenses to farm around power poles.

Response 620: Comment noted. The agencies have worked with consultants to better quantify the costs of the line to farmers. See Section 3.13 for additional information.

Comment 621: Anything worth doing is worth doing well. The commenter supports Alternative 4 even though it costs a bit more. However Alternative 4 is more environmentally friendly.

Response 621: Comment noted.

Comment 622: Commenter voiced support for wind farms but doesn't want to see transmission lines and wind farms in every landscape, especially the Rocky Mountain Front.

Response 622: Comment noted.

Comment 623: Concerned how energy development is occurring around the state in an unplanned, piecemeal fashion. The public and decision makers should have a better sense about what the expanded energy grid is going to look line when it is fully built up.

Response 623: Montana law does not require a comprehensive plan for the grid. Projects, both generators and transmission lines, are built in response to growing demands. These patterns of growth vary geographically and over time. Transmission planners within and between these geographic areas propose new projects in response to these changing demands as needed. Thus it is difficult to say what the transmission grid will look like in the future. In Montana,

major new transmission lines are planned south of Townsend and/or Garrison, west of Broadview, and MATL has discussed possibilities for new transmission lines between Great Falls and Townsend and from Alberta to Havre and Great Falls.

Comment 624: The EIS needs to make it clear where the wind farms will be located.

Response 624: See response to comment 22 and the revised discussion of cumulative impacts effects in Chapter 4.

Comment 625: EIS does not address what the impacts would be from other proposed transmission lines connecting to the MATL line nor the cumulative impacts to wildlife from the MATL line and other proposed transmission lines connecting to it.

Response 625: See Chapter 4 for a revised discussion of cumulative impacts.

Comment 626: Concern was expressed about future upgrades of the transmission line.

Response 626: Comment noted. The conductors that MATL proposes to use would be able to handle 600 MW but the line losses would be so high that this would be impractical. The project will run more efficiently, with low line losses, at 300 MW (see response to comment 346 as well). Future upgrades are not proposed at this time, but remain a possibility. See response to comment 10 about ground clearance.

Comment 627: Commenter supports the MATL project because it will benefit all of Montana.

Response 627: Comment noted.

Comment 628: Commenter stated that MATL has accommodated his concerns.

Response 628: Comment noted.

Comment 629: Why can't the line border the southwest side of the wildlife refuge? This kind of adjustment would take the line out of crop land for about 7-8 miles.

Response 629: The mission of the national wildlife refuge system is "to administer a national network of lands and waters for the conservation, management, and where appropriate, restoration of the fish, wildlife, and plant resources and their habitats within the United States for the benefit of present and future generations of Americans". Under the National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997, the Secretary of the Interior is required to ensure that the mission of the system and the purposes of each refuge are carried out, except that if a conflict exists between the purposes of a refuge and the mission of the System, the conflict shall be resolved in a manner that first protects the purposes of the refuge, and, to the extent practicable, that also achieves the mission of the System (Public Law 105-57 Oct. 9, 1997, 111 STAT. 1255). Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge was established by Executive Order of President Herbert Hoover in 1929, as "a refuge and breeding ground for birds". Because power lines pose a risk of killing birds that collide with the lines, guy wires, and ground wires, it is highly unlikely that the proposed transmission line would be considered to be compatible with the purposes of the refuge and the federal system of wildlife refuges. Therefore the agencies conclude that there would be a very low probability that Fish and Wildlife Service would allow the line to be built on refuge lands. Consequently, an alternative to site the proposed transmission line on refuge lands was not carried forward for detailed consideration.

Comment 630: MATL said they would do 25 miles of monopoles. This would cut the cost of the annual fee given to landowners, and would help reduce costs to MATL.

Response 630: Comment noted. MATL has revised its proposal so that single pole structures would be used where the line would cross 53 miles of cultivated land diagonally.

Comment 631: Is there going to be another EIS for each wind farm?

Response 631: An environmental review, whether an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement, is required for most state and federal permitting actions. The state does not have permitting authority over wind farm siting, so it is unlikely an EIS would be prepared for future wind farms located on private land.

Comment 632: Commenter does not dispute the need for the line.

Response 632: Comment noted.

Comment 633: There are still farming and visual impacts when the transmission line follows the section lines even if single poles are used. For example the commenter farms land where the Western Area Power Administration's 230 kV single pole line was built at the edge of the field. In the fall they harrow these fields and when they turn they have hit the pole with the outer end of the harrow causing extensive damage to the harrow.

Response 633: Comment noted. The agencies concur. No matter which alternative is selected, impacts will result as discussed in the draft EIS.

Comment 634: An aerial applicator was killed when the wing of his airplane clipped a guy wire on Western Area Power Administration's single pole 230kV line.

Response 634: Comment noted.

Comment 635: What is the potential for this line tying into the WAPA line at Shelby? The commenter has heard that there is excess power capacity on the WAPA line. Is this true?

Response 635: MATL determined that tying into the WAPA line at Shelby would be too expensive due to electricity shippers having to pay two tariffs. A discussion about MATL tying in to Shelby as an alternative is found in Section 2.8, Alternatives Considered but Dismissed. Also refer to response to comment 40.

Comment 636: Commenter supports the line because the economic effect is going to be positive for communities along the line. In addition, when private money comes in for each dollar spent it multiplies itself seven times through the community. By contrast, each government dollar brought in is multiplied by two.

Response 636: Comment noted.

Comment 637: Commenter has a concern about farming around the structures. He likes how MATL has shifted the line to the section line making it easier to farm around the poles. He supports the project and the potential for wind farms on Trunk Butte (also known as Belgian Hill).

Response 637: Comment noted.

Comment 638: Commenter who is a member of the MATL Montana Citizen Advisory Council supports the project because it will help bring good paying jobs and will be a good source of tax revenue.

Response 638: Comment noted. See the revised discussion of tax revenues in Section 3.13 since the passage of House Bill 3, that was passed in the recent Special Session of the Montana Legislature.

Comment 639: If the line is built, will an upgrade occur? Would an upgrade require another EIS?

Response 639: It is not known if a future upgrade would occur. An upgrade is not proposed at this time. An amendment to the Major Facility Siting Act certificate would be required only if additional right-of-way would be needed. Thus a review under the Montana Environmental Policy Act would be unlikely unless the Major Facility Siting Act certificate needed revision.

Comment 640: The alternatives balance the effects between agriculture and wind development.

Response 640: Comment noted.

Comment 641: Commenter believes that wind power offers an opportunity for economic development and he would like to see more than four wind projects that are planned north of Great Falls. These will have substantial economic benefits for the region and there is a possibility of a wind turbine manufacturing facility. The proposed line will strengthen ties between Alberta and Montana and strengthen the existing electrical grid.

Response 641: Comments noted.

Comment 642: The window of opportunity for other projects is only open for so long and this project needs to come to a timely conclusion before these other projects can move ahead.

Response 642: Comment noted.

Comment 643: This would be the third line that crosses the commenter's farmland north of the Rainbow Switchyard and he has concerns about farming around the new line.

Response 643: Comment noted.

Comment 644: It's a 300 MW line not a 600 MW line as indicated in the draft EIS. It is not possible to send power both ways at the same time.

Response 644: See response to comment 346.

Comment 645: This line has limited capacity to handle the large amount of wind power that might be generated in the area.

Response 645: Comment noted.

Comment 646: There is limited capacity to move power south of Great Falls.

Response 646: Yes, that is true. There is limited capacity to move power south of Great Falls at certain times. See response to comment 623.

Comment 647: Usually transmission lines are built by the generators of power.

Response 647: Comment noted. A more recent model is for independent transmission line companies to build lines. However, traditional integrated companies still build transmission lines in their territories. Independent system operators in some parts of the country also propose and build transmission lines.

Comment 648: We are facing unplanned and piecemeal planning for expansion of the grid. Instead of this small line, a larger line should probably be built. Is connecting this line to the Montana grid at Great Falls the best idea? This line should probably not connect at Great Falls but connect somewhere further south.

Response 648: See response to comments 623 and 346. MATL's proposed line is sized to meet the needs of its customers and allows for a bit of expansion.

Comment 649: MATL is not a utility but out to make a profit.

Response 649: The agencies agree that MATL is not a utility but is a private transmission line service provider. MATL plans on making profits from the services it provides.

Comment 650: Senator Baucus has concerns that the needs of farmers and ranchers be addressed. He favors production tax credits for spurring the development of renewable energy in Montana. He gives serious consideration to the concerns raise by the citizens and looks favorably upon positive growth and development of this kind of renewable and clean energy in the state.

Response 650: Comments noted.

Comment 651: Since the study area consists of 88 percent agricultural land and 69 percent is dry land cropland or CRP land, reducing adverse impacts to this category of land should carry great weight when comparing the alternatives.

Response 651: Comment noted. See revised estimates of the type of land use affected by the alternatives in Section 3.1.

MONTANA ALBERTA TIE LTD

COMMENTS ON THE LETTER FROM
WAYNE BAUER TO
THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
DATED 16 JULY 2007

Mr. Wayne Bauer provided answers in the referenced document to questions posed by the Montana Department of Environmental Quality in a letter to him dated 15 May 2007. MALT considers those responses to be complete and accurate, but wishes to provide some additional information or perspective as noted below:

10 **Question from MDEQ:**

The conductor height listed on page 2-13 does not meet the requirements of the 2007 National Electrical Safety Code. Minimum conductor to ground clearance should be 22.41 feet and if they (MATL) take into account the height of modern farm equipment which exceeds the standard 14 foot vehicle road height, the conductor would need to be closer to 30 feet off the ground. Hand written notes that accompanied the comment are attached. See comments 19 and 306 also. One response should be prepared for these three comments.

MATL's Response:

Three different calculations of minimum conductor height have been presented: one derived by Mr. Shawn Dolan, one by MATL (via its design engineer, SNC Lavalin ATP) and one by Mr. Wayne Bauer. All are based on the NESC code for minimum conductor clearance but all arrive at slightly different conclusions.

In order to address this discrepancy MATL approached the firm of Marne and Associates from Billings Montana who are specialists in applying the NESC code. Marne reviewed the height calculations of Mr. Shawn Dolan and Mr. Wayne Bauer and compared them to the calculations of MATL's design engineer, SNC-Lavalin ATP. His conclusion is that the calculated minimum conductor clearance employed by MATL is correct except for a small rounding error.

MATL employed NESC 232D4 to determine minimum clearance because it is appropriate for the configuration of the MATL transmission line. MATL will install surge protection and other voltage control equipment to minimize over-voltage on the line which reduces air gap clearance requirements. With this additional electrical protection, the absolute minimum conductor clearance height allowed by code is somewhat lower than as calculated by both Mr. Dolan and Mr. Bauer while still maintaining safe clearances.

As a result of Marne's assessment, MATL has corrected the round-off error to 21.2 feet and has modified the line design to reflect this. This rounding requirement was introduced in the latest edition of Section 23 of the NESC which was published after MATL's initial height

calculations had been completed. The small difference has no practical effect on the design of the transmission line.

As has been identified by Mr. Bauer, the Design Clearance should prudently be greater than the calculated Absolute Minimum Code Clearance. In fact, that is the case with the MATL line for the following reasons:

- MATL incorporates a 2 ft safety factor to accommodate variables in the land profile as well as construction tolerances.

- The maximum sag is calculated at a conductor temperature of 100 degrees C. This only occurs when 600 MW of power is being transferred over the MATL line at an ambient temperature of 32 degrees C. However, MATL is only permitted to transfer 300 MW. When transferring 300 MW at an ambient temperature of 32 degrees C the sag will be a further 2 ft less than at 600 MW.

- The maximum design sag is calculated at the full design span between poles. However, it is often not possible to optimize the line design because of fixed points such angles or dead ends. The conductor will be higher than the minimum clearance in these abbreviated spans.

MATL is designing to standard vehicle heights as stipulated by NESC. Should a landowner have particular requirements for additional clearance, MATL will accommodate these known conditions. At crossings where relevant regulations or conventions apply (e.g. when crossing railways), MATL will increase the minimum clearance appropriately.

13. The executive summary lists wind power as being able to provide a firm backup power source to NorthWestern Energy. Wind is not considered firm power by transmission planning entities such as WECC. Wind is also not seen as a reliable source of capacity.

MATL's Response:

Wind generation is not a source of firm backup power and any such inference would be incorrect. This misinterpretation may have originated from the statement that: "The MATL line could also create another opportunity for Montana's largest privately owned transmission and distribution utility, NorthWestern Energy, to obtain regulating reserves for its transmission system control area." As has been demonstrated by the wind farms, the MATL line is a useful conduit for connecting generation to load. It could similarly be used to bring regulating reserves to the NorthWestern system, but by its nature such reserve would have to come from a source of generation other than wind.

19. Conductor height listed on page 2-13 does not meet the requirements of the 2007 NESC. Minimum line to ground clearance should be 22.41 feet based on a 14 foot vehicle height. Farm equipment typically exceeds this height and lines should be designed to accommodate anticipated vehicle heights. A photocopied portion of NESC Clearance calculations was attached to this comment and is enclosed.

MATL's Response:

Refer to the answer to question 10.

38. What is the cost of unguyed single pole construction at points of inflection compared to the cost of proposed guyed angle structures? Diagrams of the proposed angle structures, both single pole and H-frame structures are attached.

MATL's Response:

Refer to MATL Response dated July 17, 2007 to DEQ Supplemental Information Request of June 28, 2007, question 1.

306. In the draft EIS there is a statement that the minimum line to ground clearance of the MATL line would be 21.5 feet. This distance is too low to comply with the requirements of the governing code of the National Electric Safety Code. The line to ground clearance needs to be increased to alleviate the code violation. The NESC requires that line clearances be set to accommodate the tallest equipment that one would reasonably expect to work under them. Many pieces of farm machinery, when in operation, exceed the 14 foot vehicle heights in accordance with the NESC. I (the commenter) am including excerpts from the NESC and clearance calculation worksheets for you reference. For 230 kV line crossing farmland, line to ground clearances around 30 feet would be more practical. The referenced worksheets are attached.

MATL's Response:

Refer to the answer to question 10.

385. DEQ seeks an opinion on the costs (estimate) comparing proposed H-frame construction, single pole long-span design (with a concrete base), and single pole design (with direct embedded poles). The estimate would assume construction across flat to gently rolling farmland and access along the right-of-way from nearby farm or country roads. The estimate would be compared with those provided by MATL in application materials submitted to the department. These materials are attached. You would be expected to contact MATL and MATL's engineering contractor to understand and document how MATL derived its costs estimates including its application.

MATL's Response:

Refer to MATL Response dated July 17, 2007 to DEQ Supplemental Information Request of June 28, 2007, question 1.

385a. Are the conductors proposed by MATL appropriate to the 600 MW line envisioned in MATL's application (300 MW in each direction with the potential to eventually handle 400 MW in each direction)? If not, how would the opinion of costs change in response to comment 385?

MATL's Response:

Refer to MATL Response dated July 17, 2007 to DEQ Supplemental Information Request of June 28, 2007, question 2.

358b. When the transmission line can handle 300 MW in each direction, is it appropriate to refer to it as a 600 MW line?

MATL's Response:

No. The 300 MW rating is the end-to-end Path Rating as designated by WECC.

360. Would the opinion of cost change if the line were designed to handle a maximum of only 300 MW in each direction? Is so, how much would a line capable of handling only 300 MW cost?

MATL's Response:

The MATL line is designed and is being permitted to move 300 MW end-to-end, bidirectionally. The cost of the line reflects this designed capability.

700. One of the alternatives suggested following the hearings would place the conductors near a grain storage bin. The bin in question is located at T25N, R2E, SW1/4 OF SW1/4 Section 29 (see attached map). How close to the bin could the line be built and still meet code requirements?

MATL's Response:

MATL will adhere to NESC requirements as well as any other pertinent regulations when designing its line in proximity to grain storage bins or any other structures. Alternatively, MATL may offer to move the grain bin at its expense, to a new location, acceptable to the owner and away from the proposed route.

Lastly, DEQ requests calculation for the induced short-circuit current for a sprayer that is 130 feet wide when it is positioned parallel to and beneath the proposed line in to locations: a) near a structure, and b) at mid-span.

MATL's Response:

MATL has not checked HDR's calculation of a 0.79 mA induced current, but MATL has investigated whether or not an induced current at this level represents a health hazard. The value of 0.79mA is well below the safety limits stipulated in IEEE Standard 80-2000