

Environmental Justice Plan for Montana Pole & Treating Plant Butte, Montana

Environmental Justice

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) promotes environmental justice at the Montana Pole and Treating Plant Superfund site in Butte, Montana in Butte-Silver Bow County.

This Environmental Justice Plan is meant to complement the Community Involvement Plan for the site as well as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Environmental Justice Action Plan for Butte, since both documents address environmental justice considerations for the Butte community. The EPA and DEQ work together as partner agencies on all of the Butte area Superfund sites and collaboration is encouraged to ensure the community is not over-burdened with information or meetings.

Environmental justice, according to the EPA, is defined as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies.

Environmental justice is considered in the Montana Pole Community Involvement Plan developed by DEQ. This Environmental Justice Plan is meant as a supplement to establish specific goals, objectives and considerations for site activities as it relates to the environment and human health.

Butte, Montana: An Environmental Justice Community

EPA provides a screening-level, public mapping tool for identifying potential environmental justice communities called EJSCREEN that can be found at epa.gov/ejscreen. The EJSCREEN provides access to environmental and demographic information for areas of interest. The attached EJSCREEN report helps describe the area potentially impacted by site activities for Montana Pole. The report indicates that the low-income population in the area is 55 percent (compared to 34 percent for the State of Montana).

EPA's EJSCREEN tool defines low-income as the percent of a population in households where the household income is less than or equal to twice the federal "poverty level."



Goals for Environmental Justice Activities

DEQ and EPA's goal is to provide an environment where all people enjoy the same degree of protection from environmental and health hazards as well as equal access to decision-making processes, information and updates for the Montana Pole site.

The approach to addressing environmental justice at the site is to make special effort to design outreach and public participation efforts for the site in ways that will help enable low-income citizens to overcome barriers in accessing information or participating in public involvement opportunities.

All residents, stakeholders and surrounding neighborhoods should have access to:

- The best available information on contaminants of concerns at the site and current and future remediation activities.
- Involvement in the decisions that will affect them.
- Informed assessment of potential risk and harmful effects to all citizens in Butte, Montana.

DEQ's goal is to implement actions that promote equity in access to information and activities that impact citizens near the Montana Pole site through:

- Partnering with the County, EPA and community organizations that are existing resources for vulnerable communities in Butte.
- Identifying issues related to environmental justice and modifying or continuing outreach activities to vulnerable communities based on an environmental justice perspective.
- Provide feedback opportunities for the Butte community to DEQ regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the Environmental Justice Plan.



Have feedback or suggestions? Send us an email.

Share your feedback at DeqCommunicationsTeam@mt.gov

Community Involvement Plan

The Community Involvement Plan developed by DEQ for Montana Pole includes examples of activities intended to help reach low-income citizens. Activities will be monitored for effectiveness in supporting environmental justice and will be modified accordingly.



A key strategy identified in the Montana Pole Community Involvement Plan for effectively reaching specific populations is holding neighborhood meetings. The nearby neighborhoods are most impacted by the site and remedial activities, and it is important that they are aware of site updates and potential health impacts. DEQ and the EPAA holds neighborhood meetings specifically targeted to the residents of the Williamsburg and Boulevard neighborhoods prior to beginning construction activities. Neighborhood meetings are held in addition to a general public meeting.

Additional community outreach that supports environmental justice includes:

- Partnering with neighborhood associations to hold in-person meetings when possible to provide information.
- Partnering with local community leaders.
- Distributing paper copies of outreach materials via mail and in-person when members of the public lack access to the internet.
- Identifying non-government locations to hold public meetings.
- Scheduling community involvement activities at times that allow for the best attendance.
- Partner with the Butte Citizens Technical Advisory Group to ensure information and activities are available to all citizens of Butte.
- Partner with EPA in the reoccurring Butte Community Discussion Meetings to ensure information and activities are available to all citizens of Butte.
- Provide easy to understand information on contaminants of concern, both online and in print.
- Upon request, provide site tours to the community and local community leaders.
- In the event of an upcoming construction season, provide ongoing information of the progress through both virtual dashboards and an onsite team member that can answer community questions during major movement of contaminants of concern.

Considerations for Environmental Justice Implementation

As part of the Environmental Justice Plan, DEQ will continue to collaborate and modify outreach activities meant to engage low-income families and individuals. Ongoing considerations will include:

- Partnering with the EPA and community partners on environmental justice efforts in Butte as it relates to Superfund activities. This includes inter-agency collaboration to ensure the Butte community is not feeling overburdened or fatigued by Superfund information, and to alleviate potential sources of confusion.
- Identifying community partners that reach low-income communities in Butte, such as Action Inc., and work with them on community outreach.

As the lead agency at the Montana Pole site, DEQ will consider environmental justice when planning the following:

- Involve all citizens in the public decision-making process at the site.
- Identify potential impacts of cleanup activities and contaminants of concern on the citizens of Butte and work to alleviate issues.
- Promote educational outreach about human health protection as it relates to the site.
- Help the county and health department promote educational outreach and foster environmental justice.
- Consider environmental justice in the Five-Year Reviews for the site.



Environmental Justice Plan Updates

The Environmental Justice Plan will be reviewed periodically to identify any new potential environmental justice issues. This Environmental Justice Plan for the Montana Pole site should be updated any time the Community Involvement Plan for the site is updated as the two documents complement one another.