



---

## FACT SHEET FOR A HAZARDOUS WASTE PERMIT MODIFICATION

**ExxonMobil Corporation  
Billings Refinery  
Billings, Montana**

**Permit MTHWP-17-01**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is soliciting public comment on a draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for a permit modification in accordance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The EA outlines reasonable alternatives and any impacts that may result from DEQ's actions.

The draft EA was prepared to evaluate potential impacts of a modification of ExxonMobil Corporation's hazardous waste permit for its refinery located in Billings, Montana (ExxonMobil Billings Refinery). The hazardous waste permit modification includes changes to requirements for maintenance of two areas that formerly treated refinery waste in the soil. These former treatment areas are called the Old East Land Treatment Unit (OELTU) and the New East Land Treatment Unit (NELTU).

ExxonMobil requested the permit modification to allow for a new rail car storage development project (Rails Project). The Rails Project includes construction of railroad tracks over approximately 35 acres of land east of the active portion of the refinery and encompasses portions of the former treatment areas. To accommodate track installation, a portion of the soil within the former treatment areas would be excavated. The excavated soil would be placed in a different location within the treatment area. Any soil moved within the construction area that has visible contamination must be segregated and disposed off-site. Groundwater monitoring wells may also be relocated.

### **SITE LOCATION**

The ExxonMobil Billings Refinery is located northeast of Billings, Montana, at 700 ExxonMobil Road. Refinery operations are conducted on 367 acres of 770 acres owned by ExxonMobil, leaving approximately 403 acres of undeveloped land surrounding the Refinery operations on its west and eastern boundaries. The Refinery is bound on the north by the Yellowstone River and on the south by rail line, industrial facilities, and the Interstate 90 corridor. The site is currently zoned for heavy industrial use.

### **FACILITY HISTORY**

The ExxonMobil Billings Refinery has been in operation since July 1949. The Refinery has the capacity to process both domestic and Canadian crude oil into petroleum hydrocarbon products.

### **HAZARDOUS WASTE PERMIT BACKGROUND**

The Montana Hazardous Waste Act (MHWA), the state equivalent of the Federal law Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA), regulates the management, treatment, storage, and disposal of hazardous waste. Facilities that are or have managed hazardous waste in specific ways must obtain a hazardous waste permit, as required by MHWA.

The ExxonMobil Billings Refinery has had a hazardous waste permit since 1988. DEQ issued the current permit (MTHWP-17-01) on March 9, 2017.

### **LAND TREATMENT**

Waste was treated at the NELTU and OELTU by a process known as land treatment. Land treatment, also called landfarming, is a method of degrading petroleum-affected wastes by applying the waste to soil, which is then tilled and fertilized. Microorganisms in the soil degrade the waste over time. Land treatment has been successfully employed to degrade petroleum wastes for many years at the Refinery.

To enhance microbial degradation of applied wastes, soil nutrients (e.g., nitrogen, phosphorous, and potassium) and pH must be analyzed and adjusted, and the soil must be tilled. To prevent run-off of precipitation and wastes, ExxonMobil is required to maintain dikes around the unit. Mandatory inspections ensure the unit remains secure and undamaged.

Monitoring of soil and groundwater within the land treatment units has shown concentrations of petroleum constituents in the soil are below permit concentration limits. Permit concentration limits are protective of human health and the environment. Petroleum constituents have not been present in groundwater monitoring.

### **MODIFICATIONS TO THE HAZARDOUS WASTE PERMIT**

ExxonMobil has requested a permit modification to change the following conditions in the hazardous waste permit:

- A condition was added to the permit requiring DEQ approval of the final workplan for rail track construction. The work plan must detail activities that affect the OELTU and NELTU and how permit requirements will continue to be maintained throughout the project.
- Soil sampling locations will be changed to be outside of the new rail way area.
- Specific groundwater monitoring wells will be removed from the permit; permit requirements will include DEQ approval of the groundwater monitoring network for the OELTU and NELTU and must continue to accord with 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 264.97(a).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

An environmental assessment has been prepared for the permit modification in accordance with the Montana Environmental Policy Act. The environmental assessment outlines reasonable alternatives and any impacts to the human environment that may result from DEQ's actions.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Members of the public are provided the opportunity to review and comment on the draft EA. The draft EA, a redline/strikeout of the hazardous waste permit, and this fact sheet are available for review on DEQ's website at <http://deq.mt.gov/Public/publiccomment>. A hard copy of the draft EA and accompanying documents will be made available, if requested.

Only the draft EA is open for public comment. Public comment on ExxonMobil's permit modification request occurred January 2021 to March 23, 2021, with no comments received.

### **COMMENT PERIOD**

The comment period is from April 7, 2021 to May 10, 2021.

**WRITTEN/EMAIL COMMENTS**

Comments must be submitted no later than May 10, 2021 to:

**MAIL**

Ann M. Kron  
Hazardous Waste Section  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
PO BOX 200901  
Helena, MT 59620-0901

**EMAIL**

DEQhazwaste@mt.gov  
subject line: ExxonMobil Billings Refinery Permit

**DEQ'S PROCEDURE FOR REACHING FINAL DECISIONS**

DEQ will prepare a response to comments. The response to comments will explain any changes to the draft EA and any consequential changes to the permit modification.

DEQ will then make a final decision to issue or deny the permit modification. After DEQ makes its final decision, notice will be given to ExxonMobil and each person who submitted written comments or requested a notice of the final decision. The final decision becomes effective 30 days after notice of the decision, unless a later date is specified, or a public hearing is requested. If no written comments are received, the final permit modification becomes effective immediately upon notice of DEQ's final decision.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

If you need further information, please contact Ann M. Kron at the address listed above, or at 406-444-5824, or [akron@mt.gov](mailto:akron@mt.gov).