DOE/EIS-0399

Final
Environmental Impact Statement

for the

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

VOLUME 2
COMMENT RESPONSE DOCUMENT

September 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: Final 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.

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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 (Permit) from DOE to cross the U.S.-Canada border, a Certificate of Compliance (Certificate) 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 published a joint document (referred to herein as the March 2007 document) that was a Draft Environmental Assessment for DOE and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (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. In February 2008 the agencies published a document (referred to herein as the Draft EIS) that was a Federal Draft EIS and a State of Montana Supplemental Draft EIS. A 45-day comment period began with publication of a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* on February 15, 2008 (73 FR 8869), and ended on March 31, 2008, during which the agencies held three public hearings to obtain comments. The Final EIS contains the agencies' responses to comments and revisions to the Draft EIS. Text changes to this Final EIS from the Draft EIS are identified by underlining for corrected or added text and a mark along the left margin.

The EIS analyzes the "No Action" alternative and three alternative transmission line alignments with 11 Local Routing Options and other minor variations to the alternative alignments. The agencies will use the EIS to ensure that they have the environmental information needed to render informed decisions.

An accompanying compact disc contains electronic copies of the Final EIS, including the appendices, which are not included in the paper copy, along with Volume 2 from the Draft EIS, which provides responses to comments received on the March 2007 document. The EIS will be available on DOE's NEPA website at www.gc.energy.gov/NEPA/DOE_NEPA_documents.htm and at DEQ's website at http://deq.mt.gov/MFS/MATL.asp.

VOLUME 2

All references are in the Reference section of Volume 1.

RESPONSES TO COMMENTS, INTRODUCTION

Volume 2 contains the comments received on the Federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and State of Montana Supplemental Draft EIS for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230-kV Transmission Line issued in February 2008 (DOE/EIS-0399), referred to herein as the Draft EIS, and the agencies' responses to those comments.

Three hundred fifty-two individuals and organizations submitted comments on the Draft EIS, either orally at public hearings or in writing. The agencies identified 931 individual comments in the hearing transcripts, comment letters, and e-mails received. The agencies read and considered each comment, whether submitted orally or in writing. Because large numbers of comments addressed similar topics or themes, the agencies developed consolidated responses to address many of those related comments in one place.

There are four parts in Volume 2: **Consolidated Responses** (Part 1), **Responses to Individual Comments** (Part 2), a **List of Commenters** (Part 3), and **Duplicate Comments** (Part 4). Part 1, **Consolidated Responses**, presents the agencies' consolidated responses to address topics and themes that were raised in multiple individual comments. Part 2, **Responses to Individual Comments**, provides the scanned images of letters and other written comments submitted to the agencies, and transcripts of the public hearings in which comments were recorded. The agencies' responses are shown beside each comment or on the following pages, with the responses numbered to match the comments. All comments received by the agencies are included. Part 2 presents comments in the order in which they were received and logged by the agencies. An alphabetical index to individual commenters is provided in Part 3

Because some comments were submitted as letters and also read into the record at the public hearings, there are duplicates of some comments. In these instances, Part 2 contains the comments provided at the hearing, together with agency responses, and the original letters are in Part 4, **Duplicate Comments**.

Because many comments raised similar issues and concerns, and to present clear and consistent responses, the agencies grouped comments by major topic in Part 1, **Consolidated Responses**. The agencies prepared these consolidated responses for the convenience of the reader; to avoid repeating the same, often lengthy, responses for multiple comments on the same or similar issues; and to highlight the public's principal issues. If an individual comment is grouped with one (or more) of these major topics, the response to that comment in Part 2 directs the reader to the relevant consolidated response topics. As needed, additional discussion of these major topics has also been provided in some of the individual comment responses.

The agencies wish to thank all those who submitted comments and testimony regarding this project. All comments received – whether a letter, email, or oral comment presented at the hearings are part of the administrative record for the EIS.

Part 1. CONSOLIDATED RESPONSES

Introduction to Consolidated Responses

Many comments on the Draft EIS raised similar issues and concerns. The agencies have grouped comments by major topic and provided consolidated responses to those topics. This part of the document presents these responses. If an individual comment is grouped with one (or more) of these major topics, the response to that comment in Part 2 directs the reader to the relevant consolidated response topics in this section.

The Consolidated Responses categories, arranged alphabetically for the convenience of the reader, are:

Avian and Wildlife Issues
Economic Issues
Farming Issues
Legal and Regulatory Issues
Line Capacity Issues
Line Issues
Safety Issues
Socioeconomic Issues
Soils Issues
Tax Issues
Vegetation, Wetland and Weed Issues
Visual Issues
Wind Farm Issues

Avian and Wildlife Issues

A number of comments were related to impacts on birds, other wildlife, and their habitats. Specific topics included the quality of field surveys for wildlife, impacts on wildlife habitat, habitat fragmentation, possible collision mortality from the transmission line and potential future wind farms, and flyways.

Several commenters expressed concern that the field surveys for wildlife were not sufficient to verify the presence or absence of certain birds or other animals; one commenter suggested that one or two full years of data gathering would be needed. MATL has carried out field studies using censusing protocols including call back surveys. Call back surveys involve playing a recorded call of a selected species and recording the number of individuals that respond to the call. These are species specific surveys and can provide population estimates and indicate trends in the population. Field surveys for wildlife often identify suitable habitat for birds or other animals that are not actually observed during the survey period. Where potential habitat is present but uncertainty exists about whether the habitat is actually used, the EIS assessment of potential impacts conservatively assumes that wildlife is present and could be affected. Similarly, where uncertainty exists, appropriate mitigation would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to wildlife that might be present.

The discussion of impacts in the EIS, Section 3.8.3 acknowledges that there might be impacts on wildlife due to disturbance during construction, but that the impacts would be short-term and concentrated within the action area. Also, at crossings of the Marias and Teton rivers the transmission line would span the river, so the impact on bat habitat and bats at those river crossings would be minor.

Several commenters were concerned about the Project fragmenting wildlife habitats. Habitat fragmentation from wind farm development could be a concern if the wind farm were to be sited on undisturbed land, especially if the surrounding landscape had been altered by large-scale disturbances such as conversion to crop land. During operation, presence of a transmission line in grassland habitats could contribute to habitat fragmentation for those grassland species such as grouse that are reported to avoid areas where there are overhead objects that may serve as perches for raptors.

Potential bird and bat mortality from the Project were issues highlighted by several commenters. The analysis of potential bird and bat mortality from wind turbines in Section 4.9 is based on mortality data at wind farms that have modern wind turbine technology. Tables 4.9-1 and 4.9-2 indicate ranges of bird and bat mortalities at wind turbines. Section 4.9 has been revised in the EIS to include data on bird and bat mortality at the Judith Gap Energy Center in Montana. An estimated 100 million to over 1 billion birds are killed each year in the United States due to collisions with human-made structures, including vehicles, buildings and windows, transmission lines,

communication towers, and wind turbines (Erickson et al. 2001). Wind farm-related bird collisions are estimated to represent about 0.01% to 0.02% (i.e., 1 out of every 5,000 to 10,000 fatalities) of the annual bird collision deaths in the United States While the rotation speed of newer model wind turbines is slower than older models, the blade tip speed is still 140 – 200 mph due to the longer blades on newer turbines (National Research Council 2007).

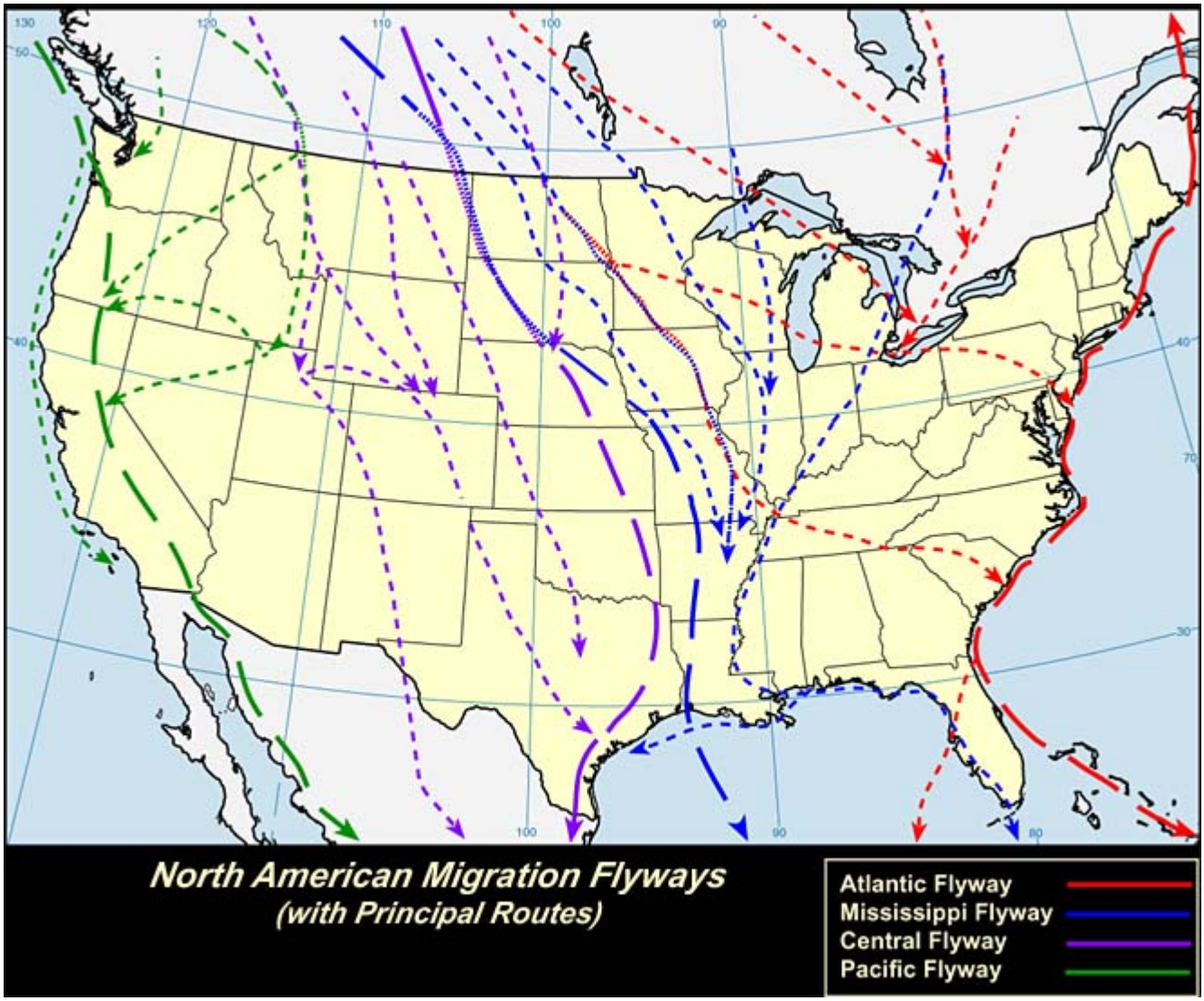
The map on the next page shows bird migration corridors through Montana. Exact migration routes vary from year to year depending on weather patterns and availability of habitat. Biologists from the local Fish Wildlife and Parks and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who were contacted had no knowledge of fine scale flyway maps for the study area, and the agencies are not aware of any finer scale delineation of migration routes within the study area. Within the study area the transmission line would cross portions of the Central and Pacific flyways.

Migrating birds do not all fly at low elevations, and most birds will migrate at heights far above the transmission line (Bellrose 1971). Some birds will, however, migrate at much lower elevations within a zone where they may collide with the transmission line. Although a few passerines collide with transmission lines, researchers generally suggest that larger, less maneuverable birds that fly at low elevation are more likely than passerines to collide with transmission lines. In North America it has been estimated that collisions with transmission and distribution lines may kill anywhere from hundreds of thousands to 175 million birds annually (Manville 2005).

Within the study area more collisions would be expected where the line would cross streams, lakes, and wetlands and where higher densities of larger, less maneuverable transient birds such as pelicans, swans, geese, and ducks are expected. To a lesser extent mortality may also occur in upland areas where smaller more maneuverable passerines would be expected. To reduce avian mortality from collisions, MATL has proposed, and the agencies are likely to require, as appropriate (See Appendix A, Sensitive Areas for the MATL Transmission Line Project, in Appendix F of the EIS.), installation of line marking devices on overhead ground wires within ¼ mile of streams, lakes, and wetlands and within ½ mile of the Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge boundary.

Following construction of Western Area Power Administration's Great Falls to Conrad 230 kV transmission line, a study was undertaken to determine avian collision mortality from the line at the crossing of Lake Creek (4.85 miles of line about 4 miles west of Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge), Bole Bench (5.6 miles of line not far from Freezeout Lake, an important waterfowl stopover during migrations), and the Teton River (roughly 1/3 mile of line). That study found an estimated 0.05 to 0.35 waterfowl collisions per 100 flights and concluded that there was no significant impact to waterfowl, shorebirds, or raptors. Authors of the study stated that the lack of

significant impact resulted from routing the line to avoid high collision areas, construction design, and the placement of orange globes on the line at the river crossing. The authors did note, however, that the loss of threatened, endangered, or rare species, if it were to occur, may be biologically significant (Hugie, et al. 1993).



Map from http://www.birdnature.com/allflyways.html

As discussed Section 3.8.2.2, several waterfowl and shorebird species are known to occur in the analysis area. While most knowledge of these species' nesting and foraging habitat is specific to the Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge, additional use is known for several outlying water bodies including Hay Lake, Grassy Lake, several Waterfowl Production Areas, and a few of the larger, undisturbed prairie potholes. There are no available data on specific migratory pathways or low-level flight feeding pathways. Additional nesting and stopover habitat is likely provided by area wetlands, stock ponds, and the Marias and Teton rivers. This additional information and discussion, including the map above, have been added to Section 3.8.2.2 to further describe the

areas of potential impact associated with migration and daily feeding pathways in relation to area water bodies.

Economic Issues

Some comments addressed economic issues related to the MATL proposal. Commenters were concerned about the distribution of the benefits and costs of the line and the line's effect on the cost of electric power.

The economic benefits and costs of the MATL line are discussed in Section 3.13. Some benefits from the MATL line would go to the owners of the line in the form of returns on investment, and some would go to stockholders in the company. There are some benefits that may be felt by a large number of Montana residents in the form of a possibly more robust transmission grid, and more opportunities for rerouting power during outages. These transmission-related benefits are discussed in Section 3.17. Small increases in tax revenues and worker income as a result of MATL could benefit residents of several Montana counties. Also, Section 1.2.1 states, "Additional expected benefits to Montana generators and consumers include: additional connection with markets that demand energy from sustainable sources, such as electricity generated from wind power; additional wholesale electricity purchasing options for Montana utilities, which could result in lower rates due to an increase in supplier competition; and increased opportunities for western grid system optimization during high Montana export and low Alberta-BC export scenarios." Currently, generators in Montana export approximately 1,400 average MW of electricity. MATL applied to have the capacity to deliver up to 300 MW in each direction and has current contracts for 300 MW in each direction on the line related to new generation not yet built (also see Line Capacity Issues).

There is a possibility that the MATL line could increase electricity prices to Montanans, but there is no hard evidence to support this.

Laws governing siting are different on each side of the United States–Canada border. The benefits and costs to stakeholders will be taken in account when DEQ and DOE make their decisions.

Farming Issues

Numerous commenters were concerned with the issues farmers would face in having to farm around structures, the types of structures, their location, and how they would be compensated for their costs and inconvenience.

Potential impacts to farming and farmers are addressed in several areas of the EIS: Section 3.1 addresses impacts to land use, including farm uses. Table 3.1-4 has been revised to provide revised estimates of the amount of land that would be permanently

removed from production due to support structures under each alternative. Section 3.1 also discusses the short-term disruptions of farming and other land uses that could occur during construction. Potential economic impacts to farmers are presented in Section 3.13, and a detailed study of costs to farmers per transmission structure is provided in Appendix N. Sections 3.1 and 3.13 and Appendix N have been revised. Since the publication of the Draft EIS, MATL has revised its proposal regarding the type of structures that would be placed on diagonal crossings of cropland and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land and has proposed a new compensation plan for farmers. The EIS has been revised to reflect these changes and to include analysis of potential impacts of the revised MATL proposal. Additionally, because there were large changes in commodity prices and costs of fuel and fertilizer since development of the Draft EIS, the agencies updated the assessments of costs and benefits for farmers to reflect more current cost and price data.

MATL currently proposes to use monopoles wherever the transmission line crosses cropland or CRP land diagonally, totaling about 56 miles of the line for Alternative 2. The majority of the structures would not be guyed. Where stronger structures are required – for example, where the line takes a turn or a dead end structure is necessary – guy wires are proposed. MATL would work with landowners to develop a placement that minimizes the impact of the transmission line on their property and farming operations (MATL 2008). MATL proposes for Alternative 2 to use H-frame structures instead of monopoles on non-diagonal crossings of cropland and CRP land and in rangeland and pasture land. Only H-frame structures would be used under Alternative 3. Under Alternative 4, monopoles would be used for all crossings of cropland or CRP land.

Following completion of the transmission line, in most cases the right-of-way could be farmed (depending on the individual agreement with MATL), but the presence of structures in a cultivated field would take some land out of production. The presence of the MATL project may also make installation of large center-pivot irrigation systems impractical in some fields. The additional costs of farming around transmission line structures are discussed in Section 3.13. Additional details of the cost analysis were presented in Appendix N of the Draft EIS. That analysis has been updated in the Final EIS to reflect spring 2008 farming input costs and crop prices. The study of the costs of "farming around" includes consideration of the potential for reduced crop yields due to inadvertent over-application of agricultural chemicals.

MATL is a chartered entity in Montana and must abide by the same laws that regulate any corporation in Montana. In its Major Facility Siting Act (MFSA) application MATL has committed to an alternative dispute resolution process as a method to help resolve disagreements over the level of compensation for damages caused by line construction and line maintenance (Section 2.3 in the EIS). MATL has stated:

> In the event that any damages are incurred in the process of regular or unscheduled maintenance, MATL will negotiate a settlement with landowners. MATL will compensate landowners for any crop loss, decrease in production, or any other damages to ensure that they are not adversely affected by MATL's operations. In the unlikely event that there is a dispute regarding damages owing, MATL would seek the advice of a mutually agreed party, such as a crop appraiser, to provide a neutral third party calculation of the damages owing (MATL 2006b).

In addition, MATL has indicated that it would fully compensate for damages caused by MATL and its contractors and this compensation would be paid immediately. If the line is approved, this procedure would become a requirement in the certificate.

MATL has revised its proposal regarding right-of-way width. Owners of land crossed by the transmission line would be paid for a 105-foot easement or right-of-way. In addition, MATL has committed to paying landowners annual compensation to offset lost production and increased input cost resulting from the existence of its facilities. MATL is currently proposing that the annual payment would be reviewed and adjusted every five years to ensure that the payment adequately reflects current input costs, commodity prices, and yields. These payment adjustments would usually be negotiated one-on-one between landowners and MATL. If a dispute arises upon future review of the annual compensation as to the amount of adjustment that is merited, the landowner would again be made the offer to take advantage of the alternative dispute resolution process (MATL 2008b).

MATL has also increased its proposed annual farmer compensation payment. This is discussed in more detail in the revisions to Section 3.13 in the Final EIS. In the June 19, 2008, submittal MATL indicates that their annual payment would compensate the landowner for reasonable, direct, ongoing impacts to his farming and/or ranching operation that may result from the presence of the transmission line. In most instances, this impact involves the additional cost of farming around the poles or associated structures combined with the lost production from those areas in which the structures are located.

MATL would have to obtain easements for access across private lands outside the right-of-way. If access to private roads was required in order to construct the transmission line, landowners would be properly compensated for the use of their roads and any damages.

MATL's revised compensation package proposal is in the EIS, Section 2.3. Additional discussion of costs to farmers is found in Section 3.13.3.2. DEQ could require that farmers receive compensation for any damages caused by transmission line construction, such as crop losses caused by construction during the growing season.

Legal and Regulatory Issues

A number of commenters raised legal and regulatory issues related to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), MFSA, and other state and Federal requirements related to transmission lines. Specific issues included adequacy of compliance with NEPA and MEPA, the extra-territorial application of NEPA, the consideration of whether wind farms are connected actions, DEQ's authority to regulate the power lines that could connect wind farms to MATL, and use of eminent domain to acquire the right-of-way.

The EIS was prepared in accordance with NEPA and MEPA and their implementing regulations. The agencies determined which alternatives were analyzed in the EIS after receiving public input through the scoping process. MATL had no role in selection of which alternatives were analyzed.

In accordance with Executive Order 12114 (*Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions*), the EIS does not assess impacts occurring in a foreign nation unless that foreign nation is not otherwise involved in the action. Because government authorities in Canada have regulatory involvement with the MATL proposal, impacts in Canada are not assessed in the EIS.

There are no connected actions associated with the MATL proposal. In compliance with NEPA, analysis of the potential cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable future actions, including wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line, is presented in Sections 4.1 to 4.16.

If the transmission lines built to connect individual wind farms to the proposed MATL line are large enough to fall under the definition of "facility" in MFSA (see 75-20-104(8), MCA) and are not exempted by statute, they would undergo a review process by DEQ. Regardless of whether they fall under MFSA, the companies proposing such lines would have the responsibility to negotiate easements with the landowners.

Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. is the chartered and recognized entity within the State of Montana under which name MATL would be conducting operations. It would be subject to applicable legislation within the State of Montana and the United States like any other United States corporation.

Section 3.18 lists the findings and determinations that DEQ must make under MFSA section 75-20-301, MCA, before the line can be approved. If DEQ cannot make the findings required in section 75-20-301, MCA, it is required to deny the certificate (75-20-301(4), MCA).

A landowner has the option of receiving a negotiated settlement for use of the land if and when the land is used for a facility by easement, right-of-way, or other legal conveyance in either a lump sum or in not more than five consecutive annual installments (75-20-409, MCA).

The standard easement agreement between MATL and the landowner contains terms that absolve the landowner of all liability for accidental damage to MATL's facilities (Williams 2008a).

Eminent Domain

DEQ does not have the authority to dictate what MATL pays to landowners for easements. This would be determined between MATL and each individual landowner, ideally in a negotiated settlement. If a negotiated settlement could not be agreed upon, a condemnation proceeding under the laws of eminent domain might be used to obtain the easement. 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 3.18, DEQ has determined the need 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." More information on eminent domain proceedings and compensation for easements can be found on the Office's website:

(http://leg.mt.gov/content/publications/environmental/2001edhandbook.pdf).

Any Presidential permit that DOE may issue would not convey any rights of Federal eminent domain.

Line Capacity Issues

A number of comments question whether the capacity of the MATL line would be adequate to handle the potential power transmission increases in the future and the ability for power to be shipped past the termination points of the MATL line. Commenters asked about MATL's responsibility for extending transmission capacity beyond Great Falls. They also expressed concern that the EIS does not analyze the impacts of constructing new transmission capacity beyond the proposed line's termination point at Great Falls.

MATL indicated (MATLb) that:

a. MATL had applied and designed for a path rating of 300 MW in both directions.

b. The 1590 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.

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 determine 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 Western Electricity Coordinating Council (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. 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.

The proposed MATL transmission line would be theoretically capable (based on its thermal rating) of transmitting up to 600 MW in each direction without any changes to the transmission line itself or to the rights-of-way. However, the amount of power that any transmission line may be able to transmit is usually limited not by its thermal rating but by the ability of the existing transmission system to accept the power from the line. In this case, MATL has prepared transmission studies that indicate that the existing transmission system at each end of the line (in Canada and the United States) would be capable of accepting up to 300 MW. MATL has entered into contracts for 300 MW of

transmission. Although the transmission capacity of the proposed line could be upgraded without changes to the poles or structures or easements, such an upgrade would require other modifications to the United States or Canadian transmission system, as well as extensive modifications to the facilities in substations along the line. Any increase in power on the MATL line beyond 300 MW could only happen after appropriate transmission studies were performed to identify the needed transmission system upgrades and then the implementation of those upgrades. Such an increase in power flows on the MATL line would require revised permits from Federal, State, and provincial regulators.

As part of its Presidential permit application, MATL has provided technical studies demonstrating the operation of the existing regional power system with 300 MW transmitted over the MATL line. If a Presidential permit is granted, there would be a condition in the permit limiting the operation of the MATL line to 300 MW in either the import or export mode. If MATL wanted to increase the amount of power transmitted over the line, it would need to apply to DOE for an amendment to the Presidential permit. System transmission studies would need to be performed in order to determine what, if any, enhancements to the United States and/or Canadian electrical system would need to be made in order to accommodate the increased power flow. In order to decide on any amendment, DOE would need to consider the environmental impacts of the proposed amendment, determine the impact of the amendment on electric reliability, and obtain favorable recommendations from the Departments of State and Defense.

Currently there are no permit applications to increase transmission capacity south or west from Great Falls, so the construction of additional transmission capacity beyond Great Falls is not within the scope of this EIS. Eventually, additional economically viable transmission lines are likely to be built as need for transmission service grows. DEQ is aware that transmission planners are examining options to accommodate additional generation in the vicinity of Great Falls.

Line Issues

Comments addressed construction of the line underground, use of monopoles instead of H-frames, easement widths, and substations connecting wind farms to MATL.

Some commenters suggested that the transmission line should be placed underground. Building the line underground was considered but dismissed from detailed study after considering costs and impacts, as discussed in Section 2.7 – Alternatives Considered but Dismissed. The discussion includes information on the additional costs and the potential impacts and benefits associated with this type of construction.

For its proposed alignment (Alternative 2), MATL has increased its commitment to use monopole structures from its original commitment of 25 miles to its current commitment to use them wherever cropland or CRP land is crossed diagonally (about 56 miles). H-frame structures would be used where the line crosses cropland or CRP land parallel or perpendicular to the crop pattern. MATL's preferred route, Alternative 2, incorporates additional north/south and east/west routing adjustment as compared to Alternative 3. Alternative 3 would generally follow the NorthWestern Energy (NWE) 115-kV transmission line diagonally from Great Falls to Cut Bank and would be the shortest route of the three action alternatives. Alternative 4 includes additional routing modifications to reduce farmland impact and would require use of monopoles on all crossings of cultivated or CRP land.

Since the Draft EIS, MATL has increased its proposed right-of-way easement width from 45 feet to 105 feet (see Section 1.6 in the EIS).

MATL has successfully acquired portions of the proposed right-of-way or options in Montana. The company would continue to pursue negotiations with affected landowners along the route that is approved by the agencies.

Any substations required to interconnect with the MATL line would be constructed by MATL on behalf of and at the expense of the interconnecting party. This would be done in accordance with the Standard Large Generator Interconnection Procedures that form part of MATL's tariff approved by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

Safety Issues

Comments addressed the adequacy of ground clearance under the proposed transmission line and the safety of working or farming under and around the proposed line.

MATL has changed its application relative to minimum ground clearance. The minimum ground clearance of MATL's proposed line would comply with the requirements of the National Electrical Safety Code. On cultivated and CRP lands, expected heights of the tallest farming equipment (20 feet), including antenna heights, were used to determine the new minimum ground clearance of 27.2 feet for the safe operation of farm equipment under the line. Additionally, MATL has indicated it would work with farmers to alleviate the issue of tall radio antennas on farm equipment.

In all cases, ground clearances are calculated with the conductor temperature at 100 degrees Celsius (212 degrees Fahrenheit) and the ambient temperature at 32 degrees Celsius (90 degrees Fahrenheit). This is equivalent to a situation where the conductors are moving close to 600 MW of power (twice the rating of the line) on a warm summer day, excluding power factor effect.

Socioeconomic Issues

Some people expressed their expectations regarding the impacts of the Project and potential wind farms on local socioeconomic conditions, such as school enrollment, property values, employment, and property tax revenues. These topics are considered in Sections 3.13 (for the Project) and 4.14 (for cumulative impacts, including the impacts of potential wind farms).

Impacts from the transmission line on school enrollment were not examined in detail in the EIS. The relatively low number of employees expected during Project construction and the relatively short duration of activities occurring in a given locale make it unlikely that schools would incur any measurable direct impacts. Impacts to schools and taxation are discussed in Section 3.13.3.2. Cumulative impacts to schools are discussed in Section 4.14.

Potential impacts on local employment from the Project are discussed in the Section 3.13.3.2 in the EIS). Transmission line construction is estimated to employ about 55 people over a 6-month period, with average wages of $23 per hour, generating approximately $4.6 million in income over the construction period. The number of operations and maintenance workers is not known, but would be much smaller; these workers would be paid about $25 per hour.

Some commenters expressed concerns about how the Project may affect their property value. Potential effects on real estate values are discussed in Section 3.13.3.2. The analysis used the latest studies available on the effect on real estate values from transmission lines.

Estimated property tax revenues from the proposed transmission line are presented in Table 3.13-18).

Soils Issues

Commenters expressed concern about soil compaction and erosion from construction and maintenance vehicles traversing the fields and field roads.

Soil-related impacts associated with access road construction and vehicle movement are a potential problem with any linear facility and are discussed in Section 3.2. Table 2.3-4, MATL Proposed Environmental Protection Measures, lists actions MATL would

implement to either minimize or avoid soil impacts. It states, "At sites with soils that are sensitive to compaction, construction would be done with low bearing-pressure vehicles or compacted soil would be rehabilitated after construction by discing, plowing or other means."

Appendix F, Revised Draft DEQ Environmental Specifications, includes several measures that deal with soils and access roads that are likely to become conditions to the Certificate of Compliance, if it is approved. Section 2.3.2 of Appendix F states, "In order to prevent rutting and excessive damage to vegetation, construction will not take place during periods of high soil moisture when construction vehicles will cause severe rutting." Section 2.7 of Appendix F includes 12 separate specifications that would apply to soils and access roads. The DEQ specifications are intended to help minimize soil compaction, erosion, and sedimentation and ensure that the soils and roads are returned to a condition as good as or better than when construction began. Compliance with these standards should minimize destruction of soils.

Additional information on soil compaction from other than farm equipment has been added to Section 3.2.3.2 in the EIS.

Erosion

As described in Table 2.3-4, Section 3.2.3, and Appendix D, project specifications would include preparing an erosion control plan and implementing best management practices (e.g., water bars, drainage contours, straw bales, filter cloth) in areas with susceptible soils in order to minimize erosion impacts. Driving around coulees and steep draws, rather than through them, would minimize or avoid erosion. Appendix F, Section 2.11, includes 23 separate specifications that apply to erosion and sediment control that are likely to become conditions to the Certificate of Compliance, if it is approved. Compliance with these standards should minimize impacts from erosion.

Tax Issues

A number of comments asked questions or expressed opinions about the taxation status of the MATL line in Montana.

Additional information on the relevant tax laws has been added to Section 3.13.3.2. The revised analysis in that section is based on current laws, including the May 2007 tax rate reduction on certain transmission lines and other applicable tax abatements.

MATL would pay property taxes in five Montana counties as well as paying Montana income tax.

House Bill (HB) 3 from the 2007 May Special Legislative Session states that the 3% tax rate (down from 12%) will be allowed for "(p) all property of electric transmission lines, including substations, that originate at facilities specified in this subsection (1), with at least 90% of electricity carried by the line originating at facilities specified in this subsection (1) and terminating at an existing transmission line or substation that has commenced construction after June 1, 2007".

The Act identifies a number of facilities that, if connected to the MATL line, may make MATL eligible for favorable tax treatment. Under Montana law (15-24-3111, MCA), MATL would be eligible for a tax abatement of 50% of its taxable value for a qualifying period, not to exceed 19 years, that would include the construction period and the first 15 years after the facility commences operation. Because the agencies do not know if MATL would receive such an abatement, tax revenue for each affected county has been estimated at the 3% level as specified in HB 3. If MATL were to receive an abatement, its tax liability would be about half of those values for up to 19 years.

Vegetation, Wetland, and Weed Issues

Commenters expressed concerns about spread of weeds and impacts to vegetation and wetlands. Weed control and disturbance of wetlands and riparian areas were the main areas addressed by the commenters.

Vegetation

There are very few sites with riparian vegetation in the study area. Generally these areas are located low in drainages adjacent to wetlands and streams. Because transmission line structures are usually located at high points or in uplands, water bodies are normally spanned, and it is unlikely that much riparian area would be affected. There is no tall riparian vegetation at the proposed Marias River crossing site.

At the Teton River crossing, Alternative 2 crosses land near the river that is currently enrolled in the CRP program. This crossing would avoid all tall cottonwood trees, while the few low-growing willows there could easily be spanned.

The Local Routing Option to the east of MATL's proposed Teton River crossing might require removal or topping of several cottonwood trees on the south side of the river to allow for the sag of the conductors. This routing option was located to avoid placing structures in fields or in the inundation zone described in a firsthand account of the location of floodwaters from the 1964 flood (close to a 500-year flood event). (There are no 100-year flood maps available for this portion of the Teton River.) Under this Local Routing Option structures could be sited on high terraces outside the riparian zone. Although cottonwoods might be affected, willows could probably be spanned by this Local Routing Option.

Another Local Routing Option located farther west and upstream was suggested that would avoid most cropland. This upstream location would not be as high above the present river channel and is believed to be more vulnerable to flood damage. That area has younger riparian vegetation that is just becoming established and would probably grow up around the line over the project lifetime. This vegetation could later require clearing or topping so that it would not interfere with the sag of the line. It is more likely that structures would have to be located in this young riparian zone.

DEQ would hold restoration and revegetation bonds for a period of up to 5 years or until perennial vegetation exclusive of noxious weeds and tall growing trees, attains a 90 percent ground cover when compared to similar undisturbed vegetation outside the right of way.

Wetlands

MATL has stated that its goal is to avoid impacts to floodplains and wetlands by avoiding placement of any structure (or related construction impact) within a regulatory floodplain or jurisdictional wetland and using construction buffers to avoid impacts to wetlands or other waters of the United States. Therefore, the agencies currently expect that the project could be completed with little direct disturbances to streams and wetlands because most of these waters can be spanned. Thus, no compensatory mitigation should be needed. If, however, during construction, a site specific wetland-impact issue arises, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) would be contacted to ensure compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and Section 318 of the Montana Water Quality Act. DEQ would be contacted for a 318 authorization if water were present. If work in streams or wetlands were necessary, the measures listed in sections 2.11.5, 2.11.6, and 2.11.9 of the revised Appendix F would likely apply as would any measures required by the USACE permits or DEQ 318 authorizations, and the agencies could require mitigation for lost wetland functions or values.

Possible impacts to wetlands are identified in EIS sections 3.6.2 and 3.6.3. The agencies are considering a revision to MATL's proposal for an area north of Great Falls to remove an angle structure from the southern end of Black Horse Lake and place this structure on higher ground west of the highway. The values in the EIS for wetlands crossed include all wetlands within a 500-foot-wide corridor; these values overstate the potential impact because they include areas that would be completely avoided by the narrower 105-foot right-of-way. The most probable general short-term, indirect impacts to wetlands and waters of the United States would include additional noise and vehicle traffic, an increase or decrease in surface water runoff to an area due to an access road grade, and increased soil erosion and sedimentation resulting from any soil disturbances. Although Alternative 4 would cross the largest area of wetlands within the 500-foot-wide corridor, it would cross the least area of wetlands associated with lakes.

Under MFSA rules, applicants are required to identify wetlands greater than 20 acres in size (Circular MFSA-2, Section 3.4(1)(u)). This size was selected to recognize that smaller wetlands can usually be spanned. At this time it appears that all wetlands could be spanned or otherwise avoided through final routing, except for one angle structure in Black Horse Lake, but final design is not yet complete. The revised Draft DEQ Environmental Specifications in Appendix F would require MATL to delineate wetlands within 250 feet of the approved alignment and would not allow construction activities within a 50-foot buffer around wetlands, so that wetlands would not be affected by construction disturbance and maintenance access.

All of the proposed alternatives would cross Teton County in an area (approximately from the town of Brady south to just north of Benton Lake NWR) for which no National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps were available for use during preparation of the Draft EIS. Thus, to ascertain the potential impact of the proposed action on wetlands in that area, the agencies reviewed 2005 aerial photographs and, as stated in the Draft EIS, determined that no large wetland or concentration of smaller wetlands would cover more than approximately 500-linear feet of any of the proposed alignments. Therefore, the agencies concluded that through engineering design and implementation of mitigation measures existing wetlands along the entire proposed line could be completely spanned by the typical ruling span of 800 feet (except for one angle structure in Black Horse Lake). NWI maps are now available for this area, and the agencies have revised Table 3.6-2 in the EIS to include the new information on wetlands in Teton County. The new information does not change the agencies' earlier determination regarding the ability to span wetlands in Teton County.

The agencies would require installation and maintenance of line marking within ¼ mile of wetlands to reduce avian mortality from collisions.

Weeds

MATL would be responsible for weed control within the right-of-way for weeds due to its activities. MATL has prepared an integrated weed control program that includes spraying target weed species in coordination with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), state weed coordinator, and county weed boards and groups (see the EIS, Appendix C – MATL Noxious Weed Control Plan, and Appendix F – Revised Draft DEQ Environmental Specifications). Herbicides would be used in a safe manner in accordance with Federal label instructions and restrictions. Herbicides would not be used in certain areas identified by the landowners, DEQ, BLM, or the state and county weed boards. Section 4.4 in the revised Appendix F relates specifically to Herbicides and Weed Control measures and includes the requirements to employ Montana licensed applicators, use proper herbicide application methods, and inspect and monitor the right of way.

Visual Issues

Several commenters questioned the impact that the line or potential wind farms would have on the area viewshed and the possibility of requiring mitigation for wind farm impacts. Commenters were concerned about the intrusion of the line onto the landscape and locations from which the line would be visible. For wind farms, there were particular concerns about possible effects on views in and near Glacier National Park and the Rocky Mountain Front.

Table 3.15-1 notes that major visual effects would result from the proposed line for a distance of 1/2 mile from residences and primary travel routes, and minor effects would extend from 1/2 mile to one mile from the line.

Due to the distance from Glacier National Park to the proposed transmission line of 50 miles or more, the MATL line would not be visible from the park.

For a wind farm directly connecting to MATL to be economically viable, it would need to be no farther than 40 miles from the line. The park would be about 10 miles farther west from a wind farm located 40 miles west of the transmission line. At a distance of 10 miles, the visual impact to Glacier National Park visitors is likely to be low.

The Glacier Wind Project is a wind farm being developed by NaturEner approximately 10 miles southeast of Cut Bank (referred to as the McCormick Ranch wind farm in the Draft EIS). Other known areas of interest for potential wind farm development near Cut Bank, shown on Figure 4.1-2 are more than 50 miles to the east of the park.

DEQ has no legal authority to require mitigation for wind farm impacts.

Wind Farm Issues

A number of comments were concerned with siting of wind farms and impacts associated with the wind farms that are expected to connect to the MATL line. Commenters were concerned about the location of future wind farms and the lack of regulation of wind farms located on private property. Some comments were concerned with bird and bat mortality at wind farms; that topic is addressed in the Avian and Wildlife Issues section of the Consolidated Responses.

Neither DEQ nor DOE would have a regulatory role in siting future wind farms or have regulatory jurisdiction over wind farm development or operations. Specific proposals could, however, necessitate water quality permits under the Montana Water Quality Act (75-5-101 et seq., MCA). In compliance with NEPA, the potential future development of wind farms is considered in the EIS as a potential source of cumulative impacts. Assessment of potential cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable actions,

including wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line, is in Sections 4.1 to 4.16.

As a basis for assessing the impacts of potential wind farms, the agencies assumed that 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. Areas within 30 to 40 miles of the MATL line would have the highest probability for future wind farm development due to the cost of interconnecting power lines from the wind farms to the transmission line. Any substations necessary for connection to the MATL line would be built by MATL on behalf and at the expense of the interconnecting party in accordance with applicable FERC tariffs.

The agencies based their analysis of cumulative impacts from wind farm development on the best information available. Although the analysis does not include site-specific and design-specific impacts, it does provide comprehensive identification of the potential adverse impacts and possible mitigations of wind farm development and conservative estimates of the magnitude of those impacts. The assessment of the potential cumulative impacts of wind farms that may connect with the MATL line is based on realistic estimates of likely locations and conservative estimates of the number of wind turbines that could be built. More detailed assessment would require specific information on the locations and designs of wind turbines, associated transmission lines, and other associated facilities. That information either does not exist or is not available to the agencies. 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 line has indicated a willingness to release detailed plans. Often projects are announced without details, and the announced projects may either change or not materialize.

The only wind farm known to the agencies is NaturEner's Glacier Wind Farm, referred to as the McCormick Ranch Wind Park in the Draft EIS. USFWS provided the agencies with a map outlining the extent of this wind farm; it appears as Figure 4.1-2 in the EIS. NaturEner is proceeding with development with the intent of interconnecting to other transmission lines in the area. This wind farm, which would have up to about 140 turbines, is located north of the Marias River between the McCormick and Sullivan Bridge roads. NaturEner still has an agreement with MATL for 300 MW to be shipped to the north and eventually might choose to exercise some of its rights on the MATL line with power generated at the Glacier Wind Farm. NaturEner might also build another wind farm in the area or choose to otherwise exercise its rights to firm capacity if the MATL line is built.

New wind farms that use transmission capacity on the proposed MATL transmission line would require new power lines to connect them to the MATL transmission line. These lines would be built by the wind farm developers, and interconnections would be coordinated with MATL. It is unlikely that new lines would be built underground. Instead, it is most likely that these new lines would be overhead lines. However, landowners would negotiate details with the wind farm developers. The use of eminent domain is a possibility if agreements could not be reached with landowners (see Eminent Domain in Legal and Regulatory Issues). If the transmission lines are large enough to fall under the definition of "facility" in the Major Facility Siting Act (75-20-104(8), MCA) and not exempted by statute, they would undergo a review process by DEQ.

Details on other potential wind farm locations, number of turbines, and other project-specific information are not available. This information is not necessary for certification of the MATL transmission line. In the absence of information from prospective wind farm developers, it would be speculative to assume that one alignment of the MATL line would be better than another relative to the ability of wind farms to interconnect to the line.

It is not possible to accurately determine how many permanent workers would be employed by wind farms made possible by construction of the MATL line. Section 4.14 includes estimates of job creation for different levels of potential wind development in the study area.

Potential visual impacts associated with wind farm development are discussed in Section 4.16 (see Visual Issues in Consolidated Responses).

SquirrelMail Page 1 of 2

http://www.deq.state.mt.us/MFS/MATL.asp Check out this site for Draft EIS.

We need tons of positive comments. Please take a moment to make one and contact 5-10 of your firends and have them make ones as well. If we all procrastinate this, then this development opportuntiy will leave. It is also crucial that we have a postive contingent at evry meeting. Don't just assume this will be OK. Step up and make it OK. Comment 1

Some comemnt thoughts:

Comment 2

1) Due to legislation passed in 2006 the farmer/rancher get a ¼ mile tax free strip under the line to recognize the "devaluation" the line might have on the underlaying land. This "tax free" strip exists as long as the line exists. This helps compensate farms/ranches for land devaluation.

2) Everyone, including large property tax paying farms benefit from having the tax base expand. Judith Gaps wind farm paid in 1.2 million dolalrs. This was a great benefit to everyone in the area as it helped spread the tax burden out. Comment 3

3) Yes, MATL line does get to pay taxes at the 3% rate. That makes it equivalent to the tax rate paid by all the area COOPS. This rate is still much higher than surroundiing states. Even at this rate, the amount of taxes paid by the powerline is substantial. Comment 4

4) Its seems that every 10-12 MW's of wind farm requires 1 employee. The 135MW farm at Judith Gap requires approx. 12 direct employees. If you consider the size of the farms, it seems there will be 60 or so direct employees. These employees are usually working age with children etc. In our rural areas having large tax paying firms with 60 direct employees is a tremendous boost. Plus there is the inevitable impact of the money multiplier..the people that take on support roles. Electricians, backhoe operators..etc. When was the last time we had the oopportuntiy to have such a huge tax and employment boost to our area? Comment 5

5) MATL has been done extra work under its new CEO Johan to meet farmer needs. It now is going single pole in most crucial areas. Plus, the farms will receive an anuual payment for the line based upon a per pole amount. In addition, the farmers get a ¼ mile wide tax free strip. Yes, the line is a chailenge as all lines are, but the benefit to our area and our state is huge. Comment 6

6) The new windmills turn very slow and the mill itself is not a lattice design that encourages nesting. They are not the threat to birds as some of the older mills are. It seems the very folks that want to protect the environment form carbon and want renewable energy now want to stop a great source of renewable energy. Comment 7

7) It seems that it bothers some that this is a "for profit" line..a "for profit" corporation. Most farms that it crosses over are "for profit" coorporations. Since when, In America, is "for porfit" bad? Is not our whole economy based upon a profit motive? When the farms porfit the area profits. When a store makes a profit, its employees do well. If this line makes a proft, and thus grows a profitable industry with a large Montana tax and employee base, how is that bad? It seems this project is going to share substantial profit with our rural area via taxes and employment. Yes, they need to take care of business and have respect for area land owners. We also have to find a way to work with them and not Comment 8

http://www.webmail.3rivers.net/src/read_body.php?mailbox=INBOX&passed_id=3628&c... 2/28/2008 L1

Response 1: Comment noted.

Response 2: The information in the comment is correct and was considered in the analysis presented in Section 3.13.

Response 3: Comment noted.

Response 4: See Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section for a discussion pertaining to tax revenue resulting from passage of House Bill 3.

Response 5: The economic impacts and benefits of wind farms are discussed in Section 4.14.

Response 6: Comment noted. See the discussion of Economic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the EIS for discussion of these revisions to MATL's proposal.

Response 7: The analysis of potential bird and bat mortality from wind turbines in Chapter 4 of the EIS is based on mortality data at wind farms that have modern wind turbine technology. While the rotation speed of newer model wind turbines is slower than older models, the blade tip speed is still 140 – 200 mph due to the longer blades on newer turbines. (Manville 2005 and Danish Wind Industry Association undated). See the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 8: Comment noted.

squirrelMail Page 2 of 2

be so dififcult to deal with that some other area, or some other state gets this as well.

8) Because we are nationally known for our difficulty to work with we have only approxiamtely 10% of the coal industry as Wyoming does, even though we have twice the coal. The schools consistently complain that they can't pay their teachers like Wyoming, etc. We have lumber, but we don't log much. We have gas reserves, but we don't drill. We have one of the best wind resources in the nation. We already are getting a reputation for being a difficult place to build wind farms. Consider the huge farm that left the Glasgow area. If we go the extra mile to defeat this line as well, soon even the wind firms won't come to Montana. We need to find a way to actually be pro a development, and to work to address challenges instead of simply being anti development. Comment 9

9) Why would a farmer complain about exporting power? The majority of grain is exported and new export markets are proactively sought constantly. The majority of beef is exported and new export markets sought all the time. Trains and Trucks leave the state carrying exports daily. There have been numerous articles about Senator Baucus and other groups going to Japan and such pursuing ag export opportuntites. If we can export some wind down a powerline to either Canada, or to the west coast, while employing people in Montana and paying taxes in Montana, is this not the exact same concept? It seems to me that the more wind and coal we can "via" powerlines, the more activity we have in our state and the better our economy does. Comment 10

The agencies will conduct hearings on March 11-13, 2008 to take oral and written comments on the Draft EIS. The hearings will be held at the following locations from 6-9 P.M.:

March 11: Great Falls - Civic Center, Missouri Room, 2 Park Dr. S.
March 12: Cut Bank - Voting Center, 917 East Railroad St.
March 13: Conrad -Norley Hall, 400 N Virginia

Written comments are being accepted on the document during a 45-day comment period which will end on March 31, 2008. Written comments may be submitted to either:

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Or e-mailed to: MATL@mt.gov

DEQ and DOE will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities who wish to participate in the hearings. A person in need of accommodation should contact Tom Ring at DEQ at (406) 444-6785 to advise of the needed accommodation no later than March 10, 2008.

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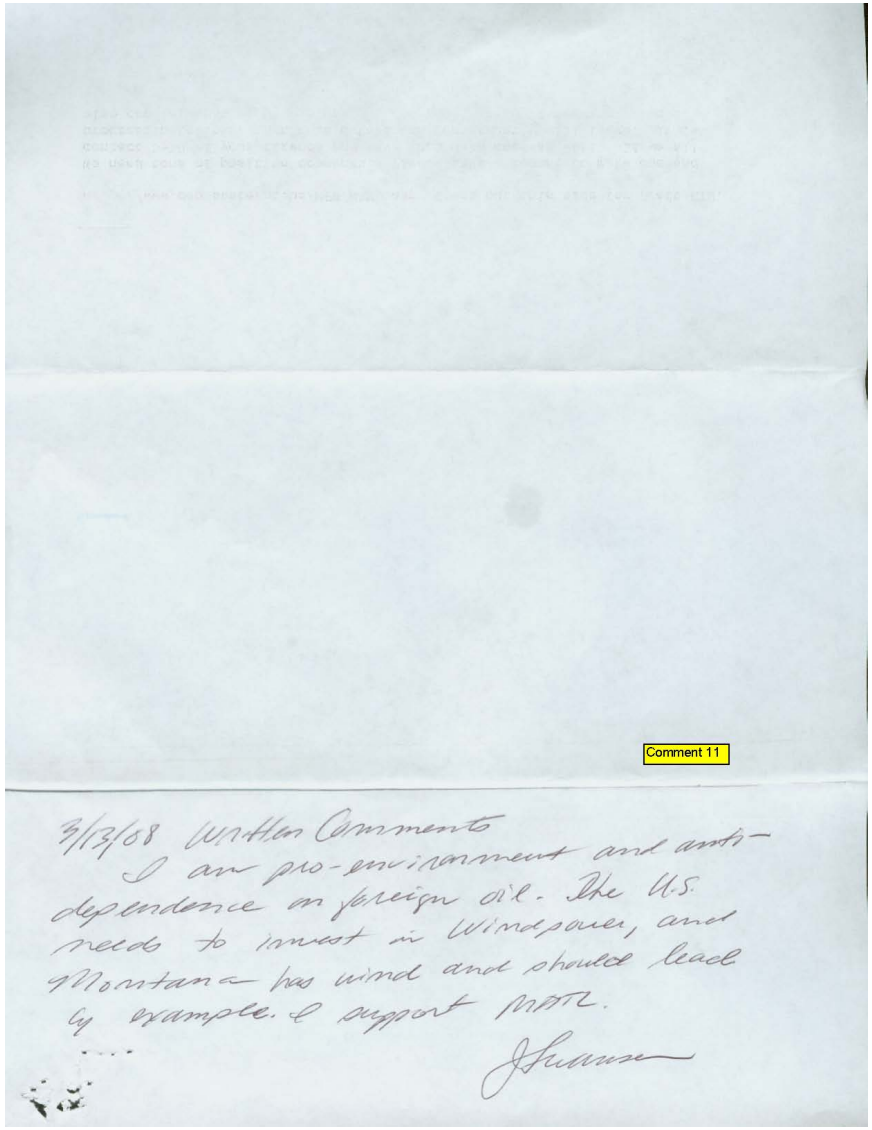
Response 9: Your opinion is noted.

Response 10: Comment noted.


Comment 11

3/13/08 Written Comments
I am pro-environment and anti-dependence on foreign oil. The U.S. needs to invest in Windpower, and Montana has wind and should lead by example. I support MATL.

Response 11: Comment noted.

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

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Great Falls, MT 59405
406-454-5846
FAX:406-761-8477
Ref:RS031408-01

Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality – DEQ
Environmental Science Specialist
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: Federal Draft EIS MATL

Dear Mr. Ring:

With regards to the content and context of the Draft EIS for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230 kV Transmission Line, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) is submitting the following comments.

Energy Development and the need to develop and increase that overall capacity of transmission lines in Montana is recognized by FWP as a benefit to all Montanans. Along with development comes the requirement to assure impacts are minimized or avoided. An obligation to identify potential/real impacts related to development, operations, presences, and connective activities lie with the Applicant (MATL) during the EIS process. Accordingly adequate analysis of those impacts and the options to avoid, minimize, or mitigate for impacts must be detailed in this draft EIS so that reviewers and agencies responsible for protecting Montana's resources and interest can correctly and precisely assess where and what impacts should be identified. Based on inadequate data, analysis, identification and assessment on many issues in the Draft MATL EIS, FWPs believes additional review or analyzes are needed. When proposed actions result in undesirable impacts to natural, social, and or cultural resources, adequate and detailed mitigation options must be identified in the EIS.

Comment 12

Based on the size, complexity, potential associated and connective development, the crossing of an international border, and the diverse natural and other resource values that will be found within the zone of development of this project, FWP believes the Draft EIS is inadequate to meet both MEPA and NEPA requirements. Where specific information regarding floodplains, wetlands, stream crossings, and aquatic resources would be appropriate, this MATL Draft EIS provides only brief and incomplete information and generalizations. An example of this, page 3-68, Table 3.6-2: "*because there are no wetland data available for portions of Teton County ….. the table does not reflect the total amount of wetlands in the analysis area.*" . To meet MEPA and NEPA, MATL EIS needs to ground truth, identify, and then make appropriate analysis of any

Comment 13

L2

Response 12: Your opinion is noted. Adequate mitigation of significant impacts has been identified.

Response 13: DEQ must comply with MEPA "to the fullest extent possible" and "discuss the impacts of a proposed action in a level of detail that is proportionate to their significance." Streams, wetlands, and aquatic resources would be spanned (except for one angle structure in Black Horse Lake) and would be minimally impacted. Floodplains would also be minimally impacted. Additional wetland impacts in Teton County are described in the Final EIS, Section 3.6. At this time it appears that all wetlands can be spanned, as noted above, or other wise avoided through design. DEQ would require a 50-foot buffer around wetlands (Appendix F). Also see the discussion in Vegetation, Wetlands and Weeds in the Consolidated Responses section. DEQ considered the level of information to be sufficient to make a decision because the detailed on-the-ground surveys to be completed during the construction phase will ensure effective mitigation.

Comment 14

wetlands that may occur in each of their alternatives. If existing data does not exist, it is the responsibility of the applicant to gather the appropriate information and provide an adequate analysis. Additionally, the draft MATL EIS does not include analysis for known, proposed, and potential associated and connective development as required in NEPA for projects that cross international borders. Comment 15

Comment 16

Other specific concerns parallel the comments above regarding generalities, a lack of analysis where information was not found, and lack of any adequate analysis of mitigation (pages 3-80 & 3-81). Several sections of the draft MATL EIS reference possible resource conditions, possible presence of wildlife, habitat types that may hold specific species, and other resource related possibilities. General terms found throughout much of the document indicate lack of knowledge, therefore inadequate analysis of conditions and thus inadequate conclusions of impacts that this project and connected projects may have on local resources. In the example sites (Chapter 3 pages 3-98 and 3-99) it is apparent that there is a lack of actual knowledge of wildlife resources, ("*The cottonwood stands along the Marias and Teton Rivers represent **potential** roosting habitat for those species that roost in tree cavities and exfoliated bark. These Species **may** occur in low densities given the limited availability of forest habitats within the analysis area.*"). This should be specific and not ***potential and may***. If, as suggested, there is low density of a species, FWP would suggest that low levels of disturbance in or around an area with limited habitat and expected low numbers of a species would result in substantial impacts to local resources and those species. The conclusion made in the document does not reflect any such conclusion, and is based on potential habitat type and may be present. Comment 18

Comment 17

Review of the MATL draft EIS revealed consistent inadequacies related to wildlife, fisheries, aquatic and terrestrial resources, resulting in concerns regarding protection of valuable resources, minimizing potential impacts and compliance with MEPA and NEPA. We recommend further details be addressed in areas where little of no specific information was obtained and more thorough and specific investigation of local conditions be made. Additionally, connected development and energy projects should be addressed as required in NEPA when project cross international borders.

Comment 19

Sincerely,

Gary Bertellotti
Region 4 Supervisor

Response 14: The EIS has been revised to include additional information pertaining to Teton County wetlands in Section 3.6.

Response 15 and 16: See the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 17: The information available and the surveys completed were adequate to complete successful impact analysis. See the discussions of Legal and Regulatory Issues and Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 18: Unless the entire habitat area were disturbed, low levels of disturbance should not impact a species with limited habitat. The analysis in the EIS does not indicate that the entire habitat area for any species would be disturbed due to the Project. Therefore, there should not be substantial impacts to any species. The discussion of impacts in Section 3.8.3 acknowledges that there might be impacts to wildlife due to disturbance during construction, but that the impacts would be short-term and concentrated within the action area. Also, at crossings of the Marias and Teton rivers the transmission line would span the river, so the impact to bat habitat and bats at river crossings would be minor. A few riparian cottonwood trees may need to be cleared or topped along the south shore of the Teton River Crossing Local Routing Option. See the discussions of Legal and Regulatory Issues and Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. The analyses of direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts were complete and adequate, and the determination that populations within the area would not be negatively impacted was supported within the analyses.

Response 19: Comment noted. Also see responses to comments 12 through 18. On April 30, 2008, an on-ground survey for sharp-tailed grouse leks was conducted by AMEC-Helena for MATL. On May 2, 2008, an aerial survey was conducted by AMEC. No sharp-tailed grouse were observed during the April 30th survey, but two sharp-tailed grouse were seen during the May 2nd survey. No leks were observed, and AMEC concluded that the sighting of the lone birds did not necessarily imply grouse lek activity. Other reasonably foreseeable energy projects in the regions are addressed in the cumulative impacts analysis in Section 4 of the EIS.

Glacier Electric Cooperative, Inc.
TELEPHONE (406) 873-5566
WILLIE WIREHAND
410 EAST MAIN
Cut Bank, Montana
59427
P.O. BOX 2090

February 14, 2008

COPY

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
Mr. Tom Ring, Environmental Science Specialist
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RECEIVED
FEB 15 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Dear Mr. Ring:

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. Comment 20

Construction of the tie line, and the associated wind generation facility, will create a positive impact on our area in many ways. Comment 21

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 22

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 23

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 24

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 25

L3

Response 20 and 21: Comment noted.

Response 22: Thank you for your comment

Response 23 to 25: See Socioeconomic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Mr. Tom Ring
page 2
February 14, 2008

Comment 26

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

Hallsten, Greg

From: Noel Duram [nrduram@hotmail.com]
Posted At: Saturday, February 16, 2008 3:17 AM
Conversation: MATL line comments
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL line comments

To whom it may concern;

Comment 27

I am a resident and home owner in Glacier County north of Cut Bank. I believe this proposed line will be a very beneficial asset to all of North Central Montana and especially beneficial to the economies of Glacier and Pondera Counties. The planned line allows further development of wind energy to further supplement all of Montana as well as the both the US and Canadian energy needs. I am in full support of the planned transmission line.

Thank you for your time.

Noel R. Duram
148 Hwy 213
Cut Bank, MT 59427

Climb to the top of the charts! Play the word scramble challenge with star power. Play now!

Response 26: Comment noted.

Response 27: Comment noted.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Jim Anderson [wings@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Saturday, February 16, 2008 10:20 AM
Conversation: commment
Posted To: MATL

Subject: commment

Comment 28

Hi there,

I am a businessman in Choteau. This project would be good for our area and Montana.

Jim Anderson
Choteau

1

45

Response 28: Comment noted.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Lew and Christy Clark [cnlclark@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Monday, February 18, 2008 3:23 PM
Conversation: Let's make this work
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Let's make this work

Comment 29

To Whom it May Concern,
I am a fifth generation rancher from Choteau, and I have watched our agricultural communities dry up and blow away in the last 25 years. Part of the decline has been due to government programs such as CRP, part of it has just been a shift in the economy in our country, but reguardless of the why, the fact is our rural cummunities desperately need economic stimulation.

Wind energy can be one way to stimulate the econcomy and respond to our world's demand for cleaner enegy. We need MATL to pass because we have no trasmission left to move the energy created out of the area for sale. Please do what it takes to make this MATL work. We need the money in our counties to boost our dying economy.

Thank you,
Christy Clark
Box 423
Choteau, MT 59422

3/10/2008

L6

Response 29: Your comment regarding economic stimulation is noted.

Response 30: Information on the potential location of the line in Pondera County has been sent to the commenter.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Jim Cummings [Jim.Cummings@chrobinson.com]
Posted At: Monday, February 18, 2008 4:05 PM
Conversation: Confirmation of location
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Confirmation of location

Comment 30

With regards to the proposed location of the utility lines can you confirm based on the plans where the lines may be constructed. In particular I am interested in the following site, N2 SW4, T30N, R4W Section 13. Pondera county. State of Montana, formerly owned by Slezak Farms.

****

CH Robinson Worldwide, 14701 Charlson Road, Eden Prairie, MN, USA

****

3/10/2008

L7

Cut Bank Public Schools
SCHOOL DISTRICT 15 – GLACIER COUNTY

COMMITTED TO EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

101 Third Avenue SE
Cut Bank, MT 59427
406-873-2229
406-873-4691 FAX

February 19, 2008

RECEIVED
FEB 21 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Montana Department of Environmental Quality Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring,

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 31

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. These benefits are in addition to the obvious benefit of readily available power generated and transmitted through our area. Comment 32

This project is very important to all those who participate in our school system. With such a great potential impact to schools and 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 some views will be obscured. Comment 33

Obviously, the main focus for MATL is power transmission, and that capability will be a great benefit for this area especially when combined with the wind farms that will be built in proximity to the MATL line. "Green" energy sources such as the wind available to us in Glacier and Toole Counties should be developed to the fullest extent possible for economical development of this area, development and usage of green energy, and to strengthen the reliability of our electrical transmission capabilities in this area. Comment 34

Please approve the MATL project and get it started as soon as possible. Comment 35

Sincerely,

Wade Johnson, Superintendent
Cut Bank Schools

Response 31: Your perspective on school enrollment trends has been noted.

Response 32: Socioeconomic impacts and benefits of the proposed MATL line are discussed in Section 3.13. Socioeconomic impacts of potential wind farms are discussed in Section 4.14. Also see the discussion of Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 33: Your comments regarding start of construction and your regard for those who own the land are noted. Also see the discussion of Farming Issues and Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 34 and 35: Your comments regarding area benefits, green energy resources, reliability of the transmission grid, and project schedule are noted.

RECEIVED

FEB 20 2008

Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

FEB. 14, 2008

DEAR MR. RING;

I WOULD VOTE A "NO ACTION" AND NO CONSTRUCTION OF THE MATL LINE.
AS STATED ON PAGE S-3 BENEFITS ADMITTED BY THE APPLICANT AS FOLLOWS Comment 36

EIS STATES "THE PRIMARY PURPOSE OF WHICH IS TO FINANCIALLY BENEFIT THE OWNER/OPERATORS."

I WONDER IF THIS IS BENEFITING THE CITIZENS OF MONTANA AS A WHOLE ? PERHAPS INSTEAD IT ONLY ENRICHES A FEW PRIVATE INTERESTS. Comment 37

EIS STATES "ADDITIONAL CAPACITY IS NOT NEEDED TO PROVIDE POWER TO MONTANA CUSTOMERS"

Comment 38

IT IS ADMITTADLY NOT NEEDED .

EIS STATES "ADDITIONAL TRANSMISSION CAPACITY IS NOT NEEDED TO SERVE MONTANA CUSTOMERS, BUT IS ESSENTIAL FOR THE VIABILITY OF NEW GENERATION ENTERPRISES" Comment 39

IN OTHER WORDS THE CITIZENS OF MONTANA DO NOT NEED IT BUT A FEW PRIVATE FOR PROFIT ELECTRICAL COMPANIES MAY.

ALLOWING THIS LINE TO GO IN MIGHT ONLY HURT MONTANA RATEPAYERS AND IS NOT IN THE MONTANA RESIDENTS BEST INTEREST. IT WOULD ALLOW NEW POWER SOURCES TO BE EXPORTED OUT OF THE COUNTRY TO HIGHER PAYING Comment 40 MARKETS , AND MAYBE EXISTING POWER AS WELL. THE POWER WOULD FLOW TO THE HIGHEST PRICE MARKET AND FORCE MONTANANS TO COMPETE AND PAY A HIGHER COMPETITIVE PRICE FOR THEIR POWER. VERY SIMILAR TO THE HIGH GASOLINE PRICES WE ARE FORCED TO PAY COMPETING WITH OTHER RAPIDLY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. LOWER POWER COSTS FROM THIS LINE ARE ONLY WISHFUL

L10

Response 36: Your comment regarding no action is noted.

Response 37: See Section 3.13 and the discussion of Economic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 38 to 40: The need for the line is addressed in Sections 1.2 and 3.17. Also see the discussion of Economic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

THINKING SOUNDING LIKE A SALES PITCH. I BELIEVE IT IS NOT IN MONTANANS BEST INTEREST TO ALLOW THIS INTERNATIONAL LINE TO BE BUILT. WE HAVE ALREADY LOST MOST OF OUR JOBS, MANUFACTURING AND INDUSTRY TO OTHER COUNTRIES THANKS TO NAFTA, AND NOW DO YOU WANT TO SUBJECT OUR POWER SUPPLY TO INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION AS WELL? Comment 41

THE EFFECTS ON WILDLIFE, FISH, AND THE ENVIRONMENT HAVE BEEN STUDIED AND ARE WITHIN REASON, BUT THE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT ON REAL ESTATE VALUES MAY BE GROSSLY UNDERESTIMATED. I AM QUITE FAMILIAR WITH THE REAL ESTATE MARKET AND I FEEL A POWER LINE OF THIS SIZE HAS A DEVASTATING EFFECT ON ONES LAND VALUE AS WELL AS A TOTAL NEGATIVE VISUAL EFFECT ON PROPERTY FOR MILES AROUND. IF YOU DONT BELIEVE IT HOW WOULD YOU LIKE THIS MONSTER IN YOUR BACK YARD? I WOULD GUESS THE ANSWER WOULD BE A RESOUNDING "NO" FROM NEARLY ANYONE WHO WAS NOT MONETARILY DIRECTLY BENEFITING BY OWNERSHIP IN THE LINE. Comment 42 Comment 43 Comment 44

I URGE YOU TO ALLOW "NO ACTION" ON THIS PROJECT. IT PERHAPS ONLY BENEFITS A SMALL NUMBER OF PRIVATE INTERESTS. IF PUT TO A VOTE WITH THE FACTS AS PRESENTED IN THE EIS TO ALL THE CITIZENS OF MONTANA I BELIEVE THE RESULT WOULD ECHO "NO ACTION". HOW IS THE BENEFIT TO A FEW INDIVIDUALS IN ALL GOOD CONSCIENCE GOOD FOR MONTANA OR MONTANANS? Comment 45

SINCERELY,

David Baumann

DAVID BAUMANN

Response 41: The U.S. power supply, including power supplied in Montana, already faces some international competition from those customers that live in Canada and Mexico that are on the U.S. Western grid. The MATL line could increase competition for Montana generated power up to the rated capacity of the line going south to north which is 300 MW and a portion of this space would likely be used by generation from new Montana sources. Currently, Montana generators export about 1,400 MW. See Section 3.17.1 in the EIS.

Response 42: See the discussion of Socioeconomic Impacts Issues in the Consolidated Responses section

Response 43: See the discussion of Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 44: Thank you for your comments pertaining to visual impacts.

Response 45: Comments pertaining to benefits of the project are noted.

Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Brady MT 59416-8970

Tom Ring
MT Dept of Environmental Quality
Helena, MT.

Dear Mr. Ring:

Please don't allow the MATL power line to be built for the following reasons:

(1) It will severely devalue the land that it crosses especially land on or near a river (such as the Teton)

Comment 46

(2) It is a supreme headache to farm around power poles to begin with, but with a 45 foot right of way, would we have a 45 foot circle or square that was a weed patch?

Comment 47

(3) This electricity is not needed in the Great Falls area. I'm sure MATL wants to get the line to Great Falls and then beg for more lines going south. If they asked ~~more~~ for everything at once it would probably be denied - it's the old "divide and conquer" idea.

Comment 48

(over)

L12

Response 46: See the discussion of Socioeconomic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the EIS, Section 3.13.3.2, "Effects on Property Values."

Response 47: MATL has changed its proposal to include a 105-foot right-of-way. Appendix N, Figure 1, illustrates the typical amount of land taken out of production that could be more susceptible to weed infestation if control measures are not undertaken. Also, see the discussion of Farming Issues and Vegetation, Wetland and Weed Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 48: The need for the line is addressed in Sections 1.2 and 3.17.

(4) If it fails it is a major white elephant. Nobody would remove the poles and wires. Comment 49

(5) If it is so wonderful why did they need a tax break to start with? Comment 50

(6) There exists technology to bury the power lines. Why don't they do that? Comment 51

Please deny the MATL power line. Comment 52

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Larry L. Mauro

Response 49: The agencies have noted your comment regarding the fate of the line should it not be a success. After the line is operational, it is expected to be an asset with value. In the hypothetical event that the project owners were to file for bankruptcy, the agencies expect that some other entity would acquire this asset and continue to operate it.

Response 50: See the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 51: Discussions of undergrounding the line are in Section 2.8. Also see Line Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 52: Comment noted.

Hallsten, Greg

From: Lorette Carter [shbcdc@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Tuesday, March 04, 2008 10:47 AM
Conversation: Support of the MATL line
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Support of the MATL line

Committee Members:

Comment 53

I am writing on behalf of the community of Shelby and Office of Economic Development to support the efforts to construct the Montana Alberta Transmission Tie Line (MATL). Shelby, Toole County and Northern Montana are in a unique position of incredible economic benefit in the potential of the MATL line. With construction of the wind farms to begin soon, the approval of the line will create an invaluable source of electric transmission, incredible economic opportunity and reduction of taxes to those in the region.

Our rural Montana region continually struggles with decades of drought, a depressed oil and gas industry and other economic factors beyond our control. The key to sustainability and development of a solid economic base is diversity and access to our available resources. Wind generation is an abundant, renewable resource that can provide a tremendous economic boost to our area in job creation, additional business and secondary services, reduction in taxes and wealth within our communities.

Comment 54

MATL officials have been diligent in following all guidelines, garnering the commitment of landowners and assuring communities of their sincere commitment to the benefit and wellbeing of the community now and for generations to come. I sincerely hope you will consider the wishes of those who live, work and raise our families in our region. Outside interests have many voices, but the voice of those who live here need be heard loud and clear.

Comment 55

Please support the efforts to bring new, clean industry to rural Montana. Help us keep our communities alive for our children and those that will come after us.

Comment 56

Sincerely,

Lorette Carter
City of Shelby
112 1st St. So.
Shelby, MT 59474
(406) 424-8799
Fax: (406) 424-8413
shbcdc@3rivers.net

3/10/2008

L13

Response 53 to 56: Your comments are noted.

Shelby Chamber of Commerce

From: "Locke Mellott" <lmellott@hotmail.com>
To: "Shelby Chamber of Commerce" <shelbycoc@3rivers.net>
Sent: Tuesday, March 04, 2008 1:16 PM
Subject: Locke Mellott's review of the MATL line

March 4, 2008

Locke Mellott
PO Box 1051
Shelby, MT 59474

To Whom It May Concern:

Comment 57

I would like to express my earnest support in favor of the MATL power project. This project is a future boon for Montana and neighboring areas and will create opportunities for our economy while pursuing alternative energy production.

Comment 58

With any new projects, there are certain obstacles that can be overcome with persistence and creative problem solving. This power project has so many positive benefits to our area that forward progress should not be halted.

As an avid outdoorsman who appreciates the truly wild areas of Montana and also a person who grew up on the Belgian Hill south of Shelby, an area projected as hosting some windmills, I think I can appreciate the different aspects presented with this opportunity. To be sure, the skyline will change to some extent, but I think this will be merely a situation that we will become accustomed to in the same way that barbed wire fences and telephone poles go relatively unnoticed in Montana. Comment 59

I am also very excited about the production of energy that does not dam up waterways or pollute the atmosphere. Any inroads that can be made in this area help all Montanans, as well as our neighboring states and the many tourists that enjoy our great outdoor resources.

Comment 60

The Montana-Alberta Tie Line is a good sized step in the right direction!

Comment 61

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Locke Mellott

From: shelbycoc@3rivers.net
To: "Undisclosed-Recipient:;"@trinity.vnet-inc.com
Subject: meeting

3/5/2008 L14

Response 57 and 58: Thank you for your comment.

Response 59: Comment noted.

Response 60 and 61: Thank you for your comments.

Greg Hallsten
(Director Office - Montana DEQ)
PO Box 2000901
Helena, MT 59620

RECEIVED
MAR 0 4 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Tom Ring - MFSA Coordinator
Ellen Russell - USDE

My name is Greg Habel and I farm East of Dutton Montana. At the present time our family has 44 Double Power Poles placed on our property by Montana Power.

All but 4 of these poles are set up diagonally across our farm ground. There are no less than 3 Double Power Poles per 1/4 section of land, including several more 1/4 sections with 5 Double Power Poles. Comment 62

DEQ's Alternate Route 4 wants to place MATL's line next to Montana Power lines on 6 of our 1/4 sections of land.

This means we would have to farm around no less than 8 power poles per 1/4 section of land.

This simply not fair nor is it efficient when it comes to farming. Our 2 sprayers would end up running in circles all day on each 1/4 section of land to get the job done.

We find it strange that for the most part DEQ's Alternate Route 4 stays away from Montana Power lines until it arrives near our land, at this point it is diverted and ran next to Montana Power lines on our land.
After they leave our land, they re-route the poles so that they are running North to South instead of diagonally. Comment 63

We are asking for a break, we have enough poles to farm around without adding 4 to 5 more poles per 1/4 section of land in addition to the 3 to 5 poles that already exist now. Comment 64

Farming these days around power poles is a huge problem expense wise, especially when poles are set running diagonally across sections of our farm ground. Comment 65

I have always said, North, South, East and West!
Therefore I support the No. 1 Diamond Valley South Route. Comment 66
(Fig. 2.61 of Local Routing Options) shown on pgs. 2-40
If we need it at all.....

By the way.... MATL's yearly payment per pole is simply a joke to the point of being an insult. Comment 67

Greg R Habel L15

Response 62 and 63: See Section 2.6.1 in the EIS. The Alternative 4 portion through the Diamond Valley did not meet with local acceptance and is no longer being carried forward as a viable option. See the revisions to the Diamond Valley local routing option in Section 2.6.1.

Response 64: Your comment is noted. In the Diamond Valley area several alternatives were identified that would limit the amount of farmland crossed on a diagonal. See Figure 2.6-2.

Response 65: The agencies acknowledge the increased cost to farm around structures. Farming cost estimates have been updated in Section 3.13.3.2.

Response 66: See Figure 2.6-2 of the Final EIS.

Response 67: The average per-structure payment has been updated to $33.90. Also see Section 2.3 concerning the alternative dispute resolution process.

CITY OF SHELBY

112 First Street South
Shelby, MT 59474
Telephone: (406) 434-5222
FAX: (406) 434-2039
www.shelbymt.com

March 4, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
Attn: Tom Ring
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Committee Members:

I am writing on behalf of the community of Shelby and Office of Economic Development to support the efforts to construct the Montana Alberta Transmission Tie Line (MATL). Shelby, Toole County and Northern Montana are in a unique position of incredible economic benefit in the potential of the MATL line. With construction of the wind farms to begin soon, the approval of the line will create an invaluable source of electric transmission, incredible economic opportunity and reduction of taxes to those in the region. Comment 68

Our rural Montana region continually struggles with decades of drought, a depressed oil and gas industry and other economic factors beyond our control. The key to sustainability and development of a solid economic base is diversity and access to our available resources. Wind generation is an abundant, renewable resource that can provide a tremendous economic boost to our area in job creation, additional business and secondary services, reduction in taxes and wealth within our communities. Comment 69

MATL officials have been diligent in following all guidelines, garnering the commitment of landowners and assuring communities of their sincere commitment to the benefit and wellbeing of the community now and for generations to come. I sincerely hope you will consider the wishes of those who live, work and raise our families in our region. Outside interests have many voices, but the voice of those who live here need be heard loud and clear. Comment 70

Please support the efforts to bring new, clean industry to rural Montana. Help us keep our communities alive for our children and those that will come after us. Comment 71

Sincerely,

Lorette Carter

Lorette Carter
City of Shelby
112 1st St. So.
Shelby, MT 59474
(406) 424-8799
Fax: (406) 424-8413
shbcdc@3rivers.net

Cc: Larry Bonderud, Mayor
Shelby City Council

4/6

Response 68 to 71: Your comments are noted.

Montana Department of Enviromental Quality Enviromental Management Bureau

Comment 72 The MATL people were very nice to workwith. They were considerate to us and were well mannered. They moved the line to the east side of us and then the line could be put on grass land.

The alternat 2 alignment and 4 alignment would be the same on us at 30N-4 W in Sec 24, 13 and 14. Comment 73

S. 4. 6. Local Routing options Page 5-20.

Chapter 3, page 3-217, 3.16. 3.7. Bullhead Coulee south local routing options would increase the land potential for soil erosion greatly.

MATL and I looked at this option when we laid out the plan to cross us. There are several drawbacks to the option of going down the hill. Erosion was the first and weed control from construction and servicing the line, plus the extra expense of $80,000 to 100,000 to build it. It is also Comment 74 close to an artifact that was blessed by the Blood Indian tribe from Canada. They asked if we would try to not have the line to close to it. If you go Comment 75 down this hill and back up again there is about a 200 foot drop and it would involve 3 more land owners. The MATL people and us as land owners GPS'd the line on top the ridge to a gradual decent with a minimum of impact on Comment 76 the land. We will have one H pole we can either farm around it or include it into the grass nextto it.

Comment 77 We would like to have the line as it was proposed to us and the Bull head Coulee south routing option dismissed.

Aiken Ranch Co
Russell Aiken Pres

PS We also farm around 20+ H poles from line to the west.

Aiken Ranch Co
att Russell Aiken
1000 Frontier Rd
Valier, Montana
59486

RECEIVED
MAR 07 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Phone 406-279-2559

L21

Response 72: Comment noted.

Response 73: Comment noted.

Response 74: Your comments reflect conclusions in the EIS, Section 3.16. Since publication of the Draft EIS, DEQ and MATL staffs have reviewed the Bullhead Coulee South local routing option. Both MATL's proposed Alternative 2 and the Bullhead Coulee South local routing option pass near the cultural resource site mentioned in your comment. MATL has committed to avoid cultural resource sites. See Table 2.3-4 in the EIS.

Response 75: Both MATL's proposed line and the local routing option would cross four landowners (Montana Cadastral project, March 2008). MATL would have to obtain right-of-way no matter which alternative is selected.

Response 76: Note that the location proposed by MATL would place the line on an adjacent landowner's land in a manner that would prevent a wind turbine from being located on his property. Navitas Energy is considering a project in this vicinity (Davies 2008).

Response 77: Your comment regarding the Bullhead Coulee South Local Routing Option is noted.

Page 1 of 1

Hallsten, Greg

From: Gottfried,Heather A [Heather.Gottfried@edwardjones.com]
Posted At: Thursday, March 06, 2008 10:28 AM
Conversation: MATL Support
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL Support

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
ATTN: Tom Ring

RE: Support of MATL project

Dear Mr. Ring -

Comment 78

On behalf of the Shelby Area Chamber of Commerce please accept this letter of support for the MATL project in Northern Montana. Our area is very excited about the proposed project and strongly believe that this will be an incredible boast to our local and neighboring community's economy. The construction of the wind farm in our area will begin soon and approval of the MATL transmission line will create an invaluable source of electric transmission, additional economic wealth to this region, and a reduction in taxes.

Comment 79

The taxes generated by this project will be a huge benefit to our local communities and schools which have struggled for years due to declining funding. The other biggest benefit to our business community is the potential for a firm with 60 direct employees as well as creating additional business for existing contractors such as electricians, construction workers, plumbers, etc. These new employees and additional business will be a great benefit to our existing businesses who are ready, willing, and able to provide services and expand to serve a growing community. Our region has few opportunities such as this and we need to take advantage of this huge tax and employment boast to our community.

Thank you for your consideration and support of the MATL project in our area. Northcentral Montana has one of the best wind resources in the nation and we look forward to being able to utilize this resource to benefit our communities and the people of Northcentral Montana.

Comment 80

Sincerely yours,

Heather Gottfried
Shelby Area Chamber of Commerce President

Heather Gottfried
Financial Advisor
Edward Jones
424 Main Street
Shelby, MT 59474
(406) 434-7234
www.edwardjones.com

3/10/2008

L18

Response 78: Thank you for your comment.

Response 79: Thank you for your comment. Employment and tax revenue impacts and impacts to local services are discussed in Section 3.13. Also see Socioeconomic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 80: Comment noted.

RECEIVED
MAR 0 6 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

CONRAD BUILDING CENTER
JOHN McFARLAND, OWNER
- GREAT SERVICE AT COMPETITIVE PRICES -

107 So. Main, Conrad, MT 59425
Phone (406) 278-3612
FAX (406) 278-9115

3-4-08

MONTANA DEQ
BOX 200901
HELENA MT 59620-0901
ATTN: TOM RING

MR RING,

Comment 81

As a business owner in Conrad, I have a great deal of interest in seeing the MATL become reality. Our economy is highly dependent on agriculture. With the volatility of agriculture being what it is, the stability of our economic future is questionable at Best, to say nothing of anticipated growth from agriculture.

The possibility of economic diversification, job creation, increased tax base, and clean industry is music to a small business owners ears. This type of growth will have far reaching economic benefit for a community like Conrad. Simply stated WE NEED TO SEE THE MATL BE APPROVED BY THE DEQ !!

Comment 82

At the same time I realize there is impact to individual landowners. I believe there has been great progress in dealing with locating MATL to lessen the impact. I am also aware of legislation introduced for property tax relief for the land affected by the MATL Footprint.

With the efforts to minimize landowner impact in mind, I believe the overall positive impact on the MATL far outweighs the negative impact that remains.

Comment 83

Please make my comments IN FAVOR OF THE MATL part of your public record.

Comment 84

Thank You,
John L McFarland
owner, Conrad Building Center

L19

Response 81: Employment and tax revenue impacts and impacts to local services are discussed in Section 3.13.3.2. Also see Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 82 to 84: Your comments are noted.

Page 1 of 1

Hallsten, Greg

From: SCOTT.ROBAR@usbank.com
Posted At: Friday, March 07, 2008 4:56 PM
Conversation: MATL - Diamond Valley South Option
Posted To: MATL
Subject: MATL - Diamond Valley South Option

Comment 85

Tom Ring:
US Bank is Managing Agent for five related landowners that own farm land in the NW1/4 Sec. 10, Twp24, Rge 1 in Teton County, MT. My understanding of the Diamond Valley South option is that the transmission line would run along the north end of their field. I am concerned about how the placement of the line could impact the owner's value and ease of farming. There is a field trail that gives access along the north end. Would the proposed line be placed down the middle of the trail and thereby create the need to take away farmable land to create a new access trail on both our owners side and the neighboring side to the north? Or, would the line go totally on one ownership or the other (north or south)? Our farm tenant farms both the NW 1/4 of Sec 10 and the SW1/4 of Sec 3. When he uses aerial applications of spray and fertilizer, the airplane can now go north-south over the fields in both sections. Any transmission line constructed here could hinder the use of an airplane in this case. I would appreciate any comments you might have and would prefer another option be explored if at all possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Comment 86

Comment 87

Scott Robar, AFM
V.P. & Farm Manager
Farm, Ranch & Timber Management
U.S. Bank - Private Client Group
office (509)353-7092
toll free 800-231-4888
fax (509)353-7058

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U.S. BANCORP made the following annotations

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3/10/2008

L20

Response 85: All of these comments refer to the Diamond Valley South local routing option. If adjacent property owners cannot agree on a line location that would straddle the property line, the intent is that the line would be located far enough off the edge of any field road to allow passage of the largest expected piece of farm equipment in a folded position. For example, a combine with the header attached may be the widest piece of equipment expected.

Response 86: The aerial applicator may not be able to fly north and south unhindered if a power line is present. Likewise, an aerial applicator may not be able to fly the length of a field unhindered with a diagonal line crossing it.

Response 87: Comments as well as information in the Draft EIS will be weighed and balanced in making final location decision.

RECEIVED

MAR 0 7 2008

Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana DEQ
Attn:Tom Ring
Helena, Mt.

My name is Jack Hayne, Dupuyer, Mt.

Comment 88 I am a rancher/farmer who has lived in Pondera county over 50 years. I believe that MATL could give us a chance to improve our local economy and perhaps halt the decline of our local communities.

Comment 89 I especially favor this line because, as a nation we need all the energy sources we can generate.

Comment 90 Basically MATL provides a means for wind farms to market their power and it is a clean carrier of energy in our environment. I much prefer wind farms generating power than to have another coal fired power plant in the area.

Comment 91 I believe that MATL has tried to treat the land owners fairly. If we go into all the nit picking of pole location, the proposed line might not be built.

Comment 92 I know that MATL does not generate power in itself but it is the catalyst that would give the wind farms a place to market their product.

Comment 93 If I were in charge of the project. I would change the location of the line to run down highway 89. It would then run through the middle of our ranch. This might then make our local wind farms a reality and would keep our community alive.

Sincerely,

Jack Hayne

Jack Hayne
Box 209
Dupuyer, Montana
59432

L22

Response 88: Comment noted. Economic benefits are discussed in Section 3.13.3.2 and in Socioeconomic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 89 to 92: Comments noted.

Response 93: Routing down Highway 89 is outside the study area. Figure 2.3-2 shows the study area boundary.

Response 94: Comment noted.

March 8, 2008

Montana Department of Environment Quality

Environmental Management Bureau

Attn: Tom Ring
P.O. Box 200901
Helena MT. 59620-0901

Dear Attn: Tom Ring: Comment 94

I'm writing this letter as I support the MATL system that would be very good for the economy of Northern Montana and Toole County .As you probably know the wind in this part of Montana is very productive . Ecology is very important to this to this country , this is a clean source of energy. Remember , Montana needs these jobs .

Thank you

Dave Miller

Toole County Commissioner

226 1 st. So.

Shelby Mt. 59474

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Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

L23

Page 1 of 1

Hallsten, Greg

From: Burke McCormick [burkemccormick@hotmail.com]
Posted At: Tuesday, March 11, 2008 6:52 AM
Conversation: Hearing opinion
Posted To: MATL
Subject: Hearing opinion

Comment 96 Comment 95

Tom Ring,
I am citizen of Glacier county, **I vote to build the line.** Lets be like our neighbors to the north in Alberta and "Get er done". We all need electricity. Glacier county has the highest unemployment numbers in the state it would be good for us. What is the delay? Lets stop talking and start doing. Are we trying to build a power line or are we just building another case to stop progress in Montana?

Comment 97 Comment 98

In my opinion the state needs to help get this project done and quit talking about it. 25 years ago this project would have been going up and people would have said "look they are building a power line". Today people make careers out of talking about building a power line. Its just an electric power line not a nuclear power plant! The state needs to help companies build projects like this, not look for excuses to shut them down. We have been hearing about wind farms and power lines for 4 years and nothing is happening. That is why our most talented young people are leaving Montana, they are going to states that get it done.

Comment 99 Comment 100 Comment 101

Burke McCormick
burkemccormick@hotmail.com
800-273-5530 work Cut Bank
877-278-5531 work Conrad
406-450-3606 cell phone
406-873-2813 home
www.frontlineag.com

3/11/2008

L24

Response 95: Thank you for your comment.

Response 96: Thank you for your comment.

Response 97: Unemployment data and trends by county are presented in Table 3.13-3.

Response 98: The additional environmental review was prompted by extensive public comment on the March 2007 document. Federal agency decisions will be issued subsequent to this EIS in the form of a Record of Decision for each agency or as a letter of concurrence, no sooner than 30 days after this Final EIS is available. DEQ may not make a final decision sooner than 15 days after the final EIS is available and may time a decision on whether to issue a certificate to coincide with the decisions of the Federal agencies.

Response 99 to 101: Your comments are noted.

Response 102: Comment noted.

March 11, 2008

Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality Mgmt Bureau
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: Support of MATL

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 102

I am writing in support of the MATL. I support the MATL because it benefits both consumers and generators through additional connection with markets in demand of energy. It also will allow additional purchasing options for Montana utilities resulting in lower rates for consumers. MATL is an economic opportunity for Montana by providing additional transmission capacity.

My name is Vanessa Bucklin, and I support MATL.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Y. Bucklin

11

My name is Katrina Martin. I live on a farm east of Dutton. I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this hearing process, and to acknowledge the hard work done by the staffs of the US Department of Energy and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality in preparation of the joint EIS. Your mandate under Federal and State law is a complicated one, and I'm grateful for your efforts. Comment 103

I want to first emphasize: I do not rise in opposition to the MATL project. Never have I stood in support of the no-action alternative. I rely on electricity, and acknowledge the need for more transmission facilities. Comment 104 What I am not willing to support is to have one company's short term economic gain take precedence over long term negative impacts to the farmers whose land is taken pursuant to the construction of this line. Comment 105

More than two years ago, a group of the affected landowners in Pondera and Teton Counties met with MATL officials. These farmers were unanimous in expressing to the company their willingness to partner with MATL in this project Comment 106

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406-442-8262

The following responses are to comments received at the public hearing in Great Falls.

Response 103 to 104: Your comments have been noted.

Response 105: Comment noted.

Response 106: The information about your past work with MATL is noted.

12

if the company were just willing to use a route which followed field lines and was built with monopole structures in crop land and CRP. This willingness was reiterated at every subsequent meeting or communication with the company. Comment 106 (Cont.)

These farmers accepted that they need to cooperate in economic development for the region, even though it meant dealing with permanent structures placed in their crop land.

Somehow these farmers, in standing up for themselves and their families, seem to have been painted as bad guys by the supporters of this project. Such a characterization is incredibly unfair and counter-productive. The requests of these farmers are not unreasonable. Comment 107

Placing power poles on a diagonal running through crop land and CRP should be a thing of the past. New farming techniques and larger equipment make such transmission structures environmentally unsound, and too economically burdensome. I do not begrudge this company and its investors the chance to make a handsome profit from filling a well-recognized need for increased electric transmission. More power to them, no pun intended. Comment 108 Comment 109

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Response 107: Your comment is noted.

Response 108: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. Since publication of the Draft EIS MATL has proposed an alternative dispute resolution process to be used in conjunction with its compensation package to help alleviate the economic burden to farmers since publication of the Draft EIS. See Section 2.3 has been changed to reflect this revised proposal.

Response 109: Your comment is noted.

13

1 Comment 110 To see the extent of that profit, simply
2 visit the Tonbridge web site, where it is reported
3 the company projects revenues of nearly a billion
4 dollars from the 25 year contracts now in place.
5 It thus defies the imagination to take as credible
6 the company's current claim it cannot possibly be
7 expected to spend around $5 million extra dollars
8 to implement the alternative, Alternative 4, which
9 the agencies have analyzed as being, "The most
10 protective alternative for the maintenance and
11 enhancement of long term productivity of the
12 environment, while benefiting socioeconomic
13 resources."
14 Comment 111 Our state has accorded MATL many
15 advantages since its application was filed. From
16 the outset, the economic development staff of the
17 Governor's Office has worked closely with the
18 company to help it achieve its goals. The 2007
19 Legislature created an Energy Infrastructure
20 Promotion Office, with a $330,000 annual budget,
21 whose sole mission includes assuring MATL the MATL
22 project gets built.
23 Comment 112 The Legislature also enacted a 75
24 percent property tax cut for the company, from
25 which it will reap nearly $800,000 each year. A

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Response110: Your opinion is noted.

Response 111: The economic development staff has been actively involved with the MATL project.

Response 112: See the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

14

tax break for property owners whose land is taken amounts to $40,000.

Comment 113 With all this help from the government, it seems impossible to view this company as persecuted, because the farmers who will forever bear the burden of the line are not willing to just let the company build the line as cheaply as possible. Over a fifty year life of this facility, the property tax break dollars by themselves will nearly pay for the construction of the line in Montana, projected at approximately $40 million. It is not unreasonable for farmers to push for the option of Alternative 4 when that agency alternative clearly recognizes the validity of the producer's position, and mitigates serious adverse affects on production agriculture.

Comment 114

Comment 115

Comment 116 But let's return for a moment to the advantages accorded to this company by our state. Looming over every affected property owner is the knowledge that this Canadian company, building a for-profit merchant line, has the power to condemn the land it says it needs. This company, with its billion dollar revenue projection, has the authority to invoke eminent domain over property owners. These farmers' private property rights

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Response 113 to 116: Comments noted.

15

can be extinguished to make way for this merchant line, a line which is not regulated by the PSC, because under the law, it does not constitute a public utility from which Montana consumers are guaranteed to benefit.

Comment 117 Is it any wonder these landowners hope the regulators will at least ensure that the chosen alternative reduces negative environmental and economic impacts to those owners.

Comment 118 Not long ago, I came across a clear policy statement issued by the Montana Legislature that seems relevant to the current permit application. "It is the policy of the State of Montana to promote energy conservation, production, and consumption of a reliable mix of energy sources, that represent the least social, environmental, and economic costs, and the greatest long term benefits to Montana citizens."

Comment 119 Alternative 2 does not represent the least environmental and economic costs to Montana citizens. Instead, it represents the least cost to the company. Alternative 4, the agency's alternative, does represent the least social, environmental, and economic costs, and the greatest long term benefits to Montana citizens.

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Response 117: Comment noted.

Response 118: Comment noted. The policy statement appears in Section 90-4-1001, MCA, of the state energy policy goal statement.

Response 119: The Department must apply the criteria set forth in the Administrative Rules of Montana 17.20.1604 in determining whether a proposed facility serves the public convenience and necessity. In general terms, it requires the Department to determine that the benefits of the proposed facility are greater than any other reasonable alternative based on the following:

a. The Department's determination as to the need for the facility discussed in Sections 1.2 and 3.17.
b. The cumulative environmental impacts of the facility discussed in Chapter 4.
c. The benefits to the applicant, the state of Montana, the applicant's customers, and any other entities benefiting from the facility as discussed in Chapters 2, 3, and 4.
d. The effects of the economic activity resulting from the proposed facility as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.
e. The costs of the facility including internal costs of construction and operation and mitigation costs, plus other external costs and unmitigated environmental costs as discussed in Chapter 3.
f. Any other relevant factors.

16

1 Comment 120 I do not oppose this project, even
2 though I can't say I look forward to having yet
3 another large transmission line in my
4 neighborhood. I do support the issuance of a
5 permit based upon Alternative 4. This line, and
6 the future lines which we know are coming, need to
7 be built on an orientation with field lines, and
8 the use of monopoles in crop land and CRP.
9 Comment 121 Farmers who have been stewards of these
10 lands for generations should not have to bear the
11 burden of unsafe, costly structures in their crop
12 land and CRP simply because a company wants to
13 keep a bit of extra money in its pocket. That
14 should not be the way we do business in Montana.
15 Good public policy prescribes the choice of
16 Alternative 4 as the basis for the permits at
17 issue here. Thank you for your consideration.
18 MR. COMO: The next person signed up is
19 Allan Underdal.
20 Comment 122 MR. UNDERDAL: Hi. My name is Allen
21 Underdal. I am a Commissioner with Toole County
22 in north central Montana. And we would like to
23 say as Commissioners that we do support this line.
24 We feel that power lines obviously are important
25 to economic development in our region, and we are

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Response 120 to 121: Comments noted.

Response 122: Comments noted.

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in support of it for that reason. There are Comment 123
impacts to consider, and I think that what we just
listened to is one of the impacts, and I think we
have to certainly do consider those, and how long
term impacts from that will affect the land owner
that has those power lines right near their land.

Comment 124 We do feel, though, that we, I guess as
a county, that these power lines are necessary.
Obviously there is more power needed throughout
our United States, even though Montana is an
exporter of power. You know, there is a vast
quantity of power being consumed and needed to be
consumed in the near future. So we realize that a
power line like this is definitely necessary.

Comment 125 We know that there is proposed about 600
megawatts of power, wind power in our county and
the neighboring counties that would be put on this
line and sold both north and south. So that is a
positive to our area, and I guess we would like to
say that we do support this.

MR. COMO: Thank you. The next speaker
is Mike Koepke.

Comment 126 MR. KOEPKE: I'm Mike Koepke from Cut
Bank. I wear many different hats. I'm actually a
producer in Glacier County. I'm in support of the

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Response 123: The costs of farming around structures have been updated and changed in Section 3.13.3.2 of the EIS. The amount of cropland crossed is discussed in Section 3.1. Also see the discussion of `Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 124: Comments noted.

Response 125: Your comment regarding 600 MW of wind generation in the area is noted.

Response 126: Comments noted.

Response 127 to 129: Comments noted.

18

MATL line. It's going to be going through my property, but I feel it's my position or responsibility to help bring economic growth to Glacier County, and it's going to be an inconvenience, but it's something I'm willing to deal with in order to bring economic growth to Cut Bank.

Comment 127 I also manage another farm, my parents' farm, and the MATL line is going to go through that farm, too, about 12 miles away; and the farm has decided that they're in support of the MATL line also.

Comment 128 I'm also the Executive Director for Cut Bank Development Corporation, and we're in favor of the MATL line because of economic possibility of growth in Glacier County. We, the Cut Bank Development Corporation, basically asks that all of the farmers be treated fairly and just.

Comment 129 I'm also the Chairman of the School Board in Cut Bank, and we see this as an opportunity to help build the tax base for Glacier County, which will help kids in the long run. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you very much for your comments. Harold Olson.

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Response 130 to 131: Comments noted.

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Comment 130 MR. OLSON: Members of the committee, I'm Harold Olson from Conrad, President of the Pondera Economic Development Corporation, one of the oldest economic development groups in the state.

We have encountered lots of economic development projects in the past, and as we see the diminishing opportunities of coal, gas, forestry, mining, and so many industries that Montana has been dependent upon in the past, no longer being available to us, this opens up an opportunity for resources that have only begun to be developed in our area. So our group is very strongly in favor of the MATL line. We think that it will be a spring board to greater opportunities in the energy crisis that we sometimes see. Thank you for your consideration.

MR. COMO: Thank you, Mr. Olson. We have Gordon from Shelby. I can't read the last name. Could you spell your last name.

Comment 131 MR. SMEDSRUD: Smedsrud, S-M-E-D-S-R-U-D. My name is Gordon Smedsrud. I'm partnership in an agency, insurance agency involved in Conrad, Cut Bank, and Shelby, all of the towns that are affected. We believe it is

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Response 132: Comment noted.

20

Comment 131 (Cont.)

very important for our community, in that it brings new jobs, and new jobs mean new customers for us. And that's real important in a community of -- real important to us. We have the gift. This is a green industry. You can't ask for more than that. I just don't believe that we can do any better than this. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thanks so much for coming tonight. Jesse Parks.

Comment 132 MR. PARKS: My name is Jesse Parks. I'm a business man from Conrad. I've been there for 35 years. And a lot of my friends are farmers, and some are against, and some are for. But this is -- What we're talking about here is energy, which we're short of, and we'll get shorter of as the years go on. -- (inaudible) -- and the way we want to create more energy for our area, and it also is something that we can hook on this wind energy, which is a big thing in northern Montana. If this wind energy comes into our area, and we have this line, it is going to be a big plus for that company to want to come in here, and that creates more energy, again, and more jobs, and that's what we need in our country. So I speak for this MATL line, and thank you for your

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consideration.

MR. COMO: Thank you very much. Joe Christiaens. I'll ask you to spell your name, too.

MR. CHRISTIAENS: It's Christiaens, like the Christians and the lions. My name is Joe Christiaens, and I'm a Pondera County Commissioner in Conrad.

Comment 133 And we support this very much because of the economic development, and also for tax purposes that we've got going on in our county. We're getting really close to being stretched clear to the end.

Comment 134 We also support the fact that we would like to see the company get along with the farmers. We understand what their condition that is going along, and it's getting the poles out there, too, and we want that to also be addressed.

Comment 135 But when you look around at all of the counties in this area and also here, what I heard on the radio is morning, Great Falls is losing 200 students every year. I think this is a bit of a problem, and we've got the same problem, too, but not in the large numbers.

But you look at that, when our equipment

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Response 133: Comment noted.

Response 134: See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 135: Comments noted. See Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 136: Comment noted.

22

at the county level is stretching the limit, the cost of fuel that we have coming up right now, everybody knows where it's going to go. It's going to limit a lot of the growth and work that we're going to be able to do. And in our schools also. Everybody throughout the country is talking about schools, and more money, and that they're going to be needing it, and go back again for the legislation as it has been put, everybody is in need of more money.

Comment 135 (Cont.)

We need to have something to stabilize where we're at, or we're just going to continue to drop down.

Comment 136 I come from a family of ten. All ten of us grew up on the farm. I was born and raised right where the line is going to go through. There is one left on the farm now. So it says something that something is going to change somehow. And we do support this very much, and hope that it will do something for all the communities. Thank you for your time.

MR. COMO: Thank you. Cheryl Curry.

MS. CURRY: I'm Cheryl Curry. I'm the Executive Director for the Pondera Regional Port Authority. And a port authority is defined in the

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Response 137 to 138: Comments noted.

23

law, and is created by resolution and public vote for the purpose to promote, stimulate, develop, and advance the general welfare, commerce, and Comment 136 (Cont.) economic development, and prosperity through its jurisdiction, and of the state and its citizens.

A port authority also acts in cooperation and in conjunction with other organizations to develop industry, manufacturing, natural resources, services, agriculture, health care, and other economic activities.

Our goal is to help create a vital community for future generations of rural Montanans.

Comment 137 The Pondera Regional Port Authority supports the Montana-Alberta Transmission Line. The construction of this line will have strong, positive economic impact in the area, and creates the potential to develop wind power in the future. The power lines and associated wind development will add jobs and tax base to our struggling economy. It is clean, and has low impact on the environment.

Comment 138 I have read the Environmental Impact Statement, and believe that economic benefits outweighs the few minor environmental concerns.

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Response 139 to 140: Comments noted.

1 There are inconveniences to affected farms and
2 ranches, but they are compensated to a certain Comment 139
3 extent by -- (inaudible) -- and payments from
4 MATL, as well as by tax reductions on the affected
5 land.
6 Comment 140 As a nation, our energy demands are
7 ever increasing, and our options for production
8 unlimited. The development of clean wind power
9 and the lines to transport it make sense for this
10 area and for the nation. Please support the
11 construction of the MATL transmission line. The
12 environmental impacts are minor, and the economic
13 benefits are great. Thank you for your
14 consideration.
15 MR. COMO: This goes for anyone. If
16 you're reading something that you're already
17 prepared in addition to speaking, if you'd like to
18 leave it with us, so that we make sure that we get
19 every one of your words, that would be great also.
20 Lorette Carter.
21 MS. CARTER: Hello. My name is Lorette
22 Carter, and I am the Economic Development Director
23 for the City of Shelby. But I'm not here tonight
24 as a city official, I'm here as a parent.
25 We are very fortunate here in Montana to

Response 141 to 143: Comments noted.

25

have exceptional colleges and universities for our children to receive a good post secondary education. I have three sons, one who has graduated, and two that are presently attending Montana Tech. These boys are receiving an incredible education, yet we are educating them to leave the state.

In 2006, statistical information for Montana Tech School of Mines and Engineering graduates, 76 percent went to work out of state. My son is an occupational safety and health engineer in Paramus, New Jersey; and my second son is now pursuing a second degree in the hopes to remain in Montana after graduation.

Comment 141 Projects such as the Montana-Alberta Transmission Line have the potential to create opportunities and employment for all our children. The project may have limited permanent employment opportunity, but has tremendous potential to open the doors to other clean viable industry in our state. Projects of this magnitude require Comment 142 numerous secondary services in project related employment. It will generate tremendous tax reductions and wealth within our communities that may translate into new industry and new job Comment 143

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creation.

Comment 144 Ultimately it announces to all that Montana welcomes clean viable industry, and that our best and brightest need not leave the state to find good jobs. Outside interests have many voices, but I hope you will consider the voices of those who live, and work, and raise our families in this region. Help us keep our small rural communities alive, so that our children and others can return to the state, and it will benefit generations to come. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you. Steve Sheffels.

MR. SHEFFELS: My name is Steve Sheffels. We farm just north of the termination point in Great Falls. We have several concerns that were not addressed by the draft proposal, and the concerns that have arisen since our last opportunity to comment. Some of these concerns we feel need to be addressed are as follows:

Comment 145 Long span mono poles with 6.5 foot wide concrete foundations should be required for any portion of the transmission line that cross or border farm fields. It has been reported that the Alberta portion of the proposed Montana-Alberta Tie Line is being required to use single poles Comment 146

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Response 144: Comments noted.

Response 145: Your comment regarding long-span monopoles is noted. Details of the types of poles proposed are in Figure 2.3-5.

Response 146: In Canada, monopoles are being used only in areas with center pivot irrigation, not along the entire line.

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through farming lands. Is this true?

Comment 147 Although the initial costs might be somewhat higher, these lines are built to last a long time. We've been farming around existing lines for over 70 years. Less land is removed from production, and it's much easier to maneuver around a single pole than a double pole design.

Comment 148 Very serious consideration should be given to weigh the difference in short term up-front costs against the long term costs to the farmer who will be living with these decisions for generations. What justification could be used to treat farmers differently on each side of the border?

Comment 149 How will the alternate routes of MATL be evaluated? Will there be a public open process? How will the weighting of various factors be decided? Who decides the weighing factors? Who decides between the alternatives?

Comment 150 House Bill 3 of the May 2007 special session permanently reduced property tax breaks from 12 percent to 3 percent for new investments in transmission lines that are constructed after June 2007. For Alternative 4, this change has reduced the total property tax income for the

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Response 147: Transmission lines do last a long time. Some of the oldest transmission lines in the state, 100kV lines from Great Falls and the powerhouse on Ennis Lake to Butte, are 100 years old this year. Monopoles are proposed for all diagonally crossed cropland and CRP land. See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 148: A new analysis comparing the costs of farming around the transmission line under Alternative 2 to the costs of constructing the line to minimize farmer impacts (Alternative 4) has been added to the EIS. See Section 3.13.3.2. Different laws govern siting on each side of the border.

Response 149: In their decision documents, the agencies will indicate the alternative selected and the reasons for the selection.

Response 150: See the discussion of Tax Issues and Economic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. The costs and benefits of the project will be weighed in the agencies' decisions.

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state of Montana from $3,157,952 to $789,488. Cascade County's income is reduced from $435,360 to $180,840.

Comment 150 (Cont.) How does this new rate affect the approval process of the MATL line? What, if any, taxes will MATL be paying to the State of Montana for the revenue they receive from doing business in the state above and beyond the property taxes?

Comment 151 Landowners of wind towers are being compensated approximately $2,500 per tower per year. How does this compare with what is being proposed for transmission line easement owners? It seems that the wind tower owners are receiving much more. Both project types are being funded by private investment; both project types impact landowners in similar ways. Why isn't MATL required to pay market rates for the land use like wind power projects owners are?

Comment 152 Does MATL comply with Federal Energy Regulation Commission Order 890? If not, why not? What changes occurred or would be required for compliance? Will the EIS be updated to reflect these changes/requirements?

Comment 153 MATL claims in the EIS that they will be responsible for damages to land and crops from

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Response 151: MATL would compensate landowners for the acquisition of its easement in a manner that is consistent with normal industry practice in Montana and other North American locations. A unique component of the compensation structure that has not been used before in Montana is an annual payment. The differences in computation of payments to landowners between the MATL line and wind farms is that for wind farms the landowner is paid a royalty based on the amount of power generated while for MATL the proposal is to pay the landowner for costs incurred.

In a letter dated June 19, 2008, MATL proposed an alternative dispute resolution process that has a bearing on the issue of compensation. It is more fully described in the EIS, Section 2.3.

Response 152: Order No. 890 is administered by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and establishes the requirements for Open Access Transmission Tariffs that are filed by public utilities. The issues of whether or not this order applies to MATL and whether MATL has complied with the provisions of this order are issues that are out of scope for an EIS.

Response 153: Soon after repairs to the line are completed, MATL would contact landowners and payment for damages would be made. Alternatively landowners could contact MATL and a MATL land agent would respond, inspect the damage, and pay for damages. Also see revisions to Section 2.3 in the EIS regarding MATL's compensation package.

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emergency repair operations. What will the process be for making these claims? If there is a dispute, what recourse will the land owner have? Comment 154 What will be the differences in dealing with a Canadian corporation versus a US corporation? Comment 155 Comment 156 Should some sort of a bond be required of a foreign corporation to guarantee these obligations? What will happen if MATL goes out of business? Who will own the line? Will all of the obligations that MATL is entering into upon Comment 157 building the line transfer to whomever buys it?

Comment 158 MATL has received numerous comments suggesting farm machinery can reach 25 feet in height. Has MATL changed their plans to account for this information? What is MATL doing differently?

Comment 159 It is reasonable to expect that farm equipment will be used under the line that will require 20 to 25 feet of clearance. Current air drills have a travel height of 19 feet. The current models are not large enough to be of economic use on our property. We expect that larger equipment will be available in the future, but we will use it. If further restrictions, i.e., limiting equipment height under the line on

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Response 154: See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. In addition, Section 2.3 has been changed in the EIS to provide information regarding MATL's compensation and alternative dispute resolution process.

Response 155: See the discussion in Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 156: DEQ's administrative rules, ARM 17.20.1902(10), allow the department to hold a bond and monitor reclamation for up to 5 years. Also see the response to comment 49.

Response 157: Yes. All commitments MATL makes to the agencies would transfer to any new owner of the line. The commitments made to landowners may transfer depending on the arrangement made between MATL and the landowner.

Response 158 and 159: Yes, MATL has changed its proposal to reflect comments about minimum ground clearance in cultivated areas. See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. MATL's current proposal for ground clearance is described in Section 2.3. The certificate would specify that MATL must comply with the National Electrical Safety Code.

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our land use are required -- further restrictions on our land use are required, will there be additional compensation?

Comment 160 Market forces have significantly changed the cost of -- (inaudible) -- described in Attachment DL of the EIS. For example, Roundup has gone from $21.50 to $37, an increase of 77 percent; crop prices have gone from $6 to $12.50, an increase of 108 percent; seed has gone from $16 to $28, an increase of 75 percent. In some places, Roundup is now currently over $50 a gallon.

Comment 161 Dramatic changes in costs can occur in relatively short time frames. Our families have been farming our land for over 90 years. How will farmers be compensated for changing costs over the life of the power line? Comment 162 Will the EIS be updated to reflect current costs? What changes will result in MATL signing policy as a result of this new information? Will annual per pole compensation be adjusted?

Comment 163 There are a number of planned projects bringing power to the Great Falls area. The Rainbow Dam upgrade will result in a 25 megawatt increase. The MATL line could potentially bring

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Response 160: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section; Section 3.13; and Appendix N.

Response 161: See Section 3.13.3.2 for a description of how farmers would be compensated over the life of the project. See Section 2.3 for a description of MATL's revised compensation package and alternative dispute resolution process.

Response 162: Section 3.13.3.2 has been updated to include farming costs as of early 2008.

Response 163: Because the proposed MATL line would not depend on additional transmission capacity south or west out of Great Falls, and there are no proposals before the agencies to increase such transmission capacity, the construction of additional transmission capacity south or west of Great Falls is not within the scope of this EIS. However, the potential impacts of some of the activities mentioned in the comment are considered in the cumulative impacts analysis in Section 4.

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300 megawatts to Great Falls; the Highwood Generating Station, 250 megawatts; the Cut Bank wind farm is projected to be 210 megawatts, some of that will be coming towards Great Falls.

Where is the Environmental Impact Statement/analysis of the construction needed to move the power out of the Great Falls area? These projects alone could cause an 80 percent increase in power, exported power in Montana. What is the environmental/economic impact of not having the process for planning changes to power infrastructure? Comment 164

Comment 165 With the withdrawal of federal funding from the Highwood Generating Station, will MATL be responsible for determining the impact of transmission lines required to move the power from Great Falls? If not now, then who?

Comment 166 Why bring the MATL line to Great Falls? With the projects noted above, there will be little or no capacity to transfer the power south of Great Falls, already noted as constrained by the EIS. Where is the benefit to Montanans? As noted above, the power is likely to flow from Montana to Alberta a vast majority of the time.

Comment 167 If the purpose of the line is to export

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Response 164: One possible result of poorly coordinated and sized projects might include building two undersized lines rather than a single line large enough to handle anticipated generation projects.

Response 165: MATL would not be responsible for determining how power would be moved out of Great Falls unless it chooses to consider another business venture to address such a need. Under FERC regulations, generators submit interconnection requests to the operators of transmission systems and then the transmission operator addresses these requests. NorthWestern Energy operates transmission lines southeast, south, and southwest out of Great Falls. Independent, non-utility transmission service providers also hold open seasons to solicit customers for new transmission projects.

Response 166: MATL justifies building the line down to Great Falls in several different ways—not just based on additional tariffs. With agreed upon upgrades, MATL's shippers would be able to move some power south out of Great Falls, especially on a non-firm basis (where moving power is allowed during those times when there is room on the line). As stated in Section 1.2.1, "The purpose for the proposed MATL transmission line 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." Great Falls is the most feasible connection point economically and from an engineering perspective. See Section 2.8 for a

more detailed discussion on why terminating the line at Shelby would not be feasible.

The system south and west-bound from Great Falls is contractually congested in that parties have pre-existing rights on the lines, but these parties do not necessarily use their full rights. When these rights are not fully used, the capacity could be used by other shippers.

Response 167: The need for the line is outlined in Chapter 1. The purpose of the line is to provide a path to transmit power between Lethbridge and Great Falls. Power can flow in either direction on the line. 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.

The Mid Columbia trading hub (Mid-C) is a commonly used location where electricity prices in the Pacific Northwest are compared. 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. 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 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 using 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 MW) and exports each year (over 1,000 MW). 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 since it would result in less of a chance of volatile spot market prices as well as less of a chance of electricity suppliers using their market share to increase prices. Also see the response to comment 166.

Comment 167 (Cont.)

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1 power, why not say so? Is it in the best
2 interests of Montanans to ship our clean, Comment 168
3 renewable hydro and wind power to Canada? If the
4 purpose of the line is to make money for MATL --
5 which it should be -- why shouldn't MATL be paying
6 market rates for their easements like the wind
7 farm owners? Comment 169
8 Comment 170 Are there other power line connections
9 between the US and Canada? How did local power Comment 171
10 prices change after they were connected? How can
11 MATL justify building 100 miles of transmission
Comment 172
12 line just to avoid tariffs at the Cut Bank or
13 Shelby substations? Do MATL's profits weigh
14 higher with regulatory authorities than all of the
15 impacted landowners to the south? Comment 173
16 Comment 174a The attitude seems to be, if the project
17 was described correctly, eminent domain can be
18 used to take the required right-of-way and
19 maximize profits for the corporation. 174b With the
20 Cut Bank wind farm, there probably won't be any
21 capacity to move power from the Cut Bank
22 substation to the south. However, that is true
23 for Great Falls as well.
24 Comment 175 With the new wind farms, is there enough
25 capacity at the Cut Bank station to supply MATL

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Response 168: The need for the line is outlined in Chapter 1. See the response to comments 166 and 167. The state has no legal control over where electricity produced in Montana goes. Also see Economic Issues in the Consolidated Response section.

Response 169: See the discussion in Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 170: Currently there are 79 Presidential permits that have been granted for transmission lines that cross the U.S.-Canadian border.

Response 171: DOE has no information on the effect that international transmission lines have on local power prices. Local (retail) electricity rates are established and regulated at the state level.

Response 172: In the MFSA application, MATL documented a number of factors it considered in reaching the conclusion that it was not feasible to terminate its project at either the Glacier Electric substation near Cut Bank or the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) substation near Shelby. These factors included:

(a) The addition of the WAPA tariff would almost double the total tariff paid by MATL shippers,

(b) The NorthWestern 115kV line from Cut Bank to Great Falls has a maximum capacity of 130 MW under the best conditions and already carries electricity for other customers,

(c) The WAPA 230kV line from Shelby to Conrad and from Conrad to Great Falls has a capacity of 240 MW under the best conditions. Further, all of the WAPA lines in the region have firm commitments for available capacity.

Response 173: The DEQ Director will consider information in MATL's application and the EIS, including public comment and agency responses, when making the findings required in 75-20-301, MCA, before the project could move forward. Section 3.18 describes the information considered by DEQ to approve a transmission line facility. The findings will be made in the record of decision.

Response 174a: See the discussion of eminent domain in Legal and Regulatory Issues of the Consolidated Responses. 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 174b: With agreed upon upgrades to the NorthWestern system, MATL's customers will be able to move some power south out of Great Falls, especially on a non-firm basis (where moving power is allowed during those times when there is room on the line).

Response 175: The MATL line is not proposed to connect to the Cut Bank substation. MATL is proposing to build a new substation. See Section 2.3.

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with 300 megawatts into Alberta? If MATL connected near Cut Bank, would there be enough capacity for the Cut Bank wind farm to complete their Phase 3 plans?

Comment 176 Power poles on farm land will be hit by farm equipment. Farmers are expected to maneuver their 30 to 130 foot wide implements around these poles five to ten times per year for decades. Getting too close risks impact. Being too far away takes land out of production, and invites weeds.

Comment 177 What plans are being implemented to ensure the safety of farmers, their equipment, their crops, and power consumers? At what point do farmers become liable for hitting power poles? A nick, a scratch, a dent, damaging requires the replacement of a pole. How much force would damage each of the proposed pole designs? If a farmer lost control of his tractor, say he had a heart attack or a stroke, and it took down a pole, how much liability could the farm have?

Comment 178 Comment 179 Comment 180

Comment 181 Poorly maintained power lines have been known to cause fires. Will MATL be liable for any damage caused by their line? What limits will there be?

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Response 176: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 177: See the discussion in Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 178: A farmer may be liable if damage was caused by an intentional act of the farmer or by the farmer's negligence in farming around the pole. The easement agreement between MATL and the landowner would have terms that would absolve the landowner of all liability for accidental damage to MATL's facilities. A nick, scratch or dent caused by the farmer would be de minimis damage and not justify replacement of the pole.

Response 179: It depends where and how this force is applied. The transmission structures are designed to meet NESC Medium loading, NESC 50-year return period wind loading (144 km/hr), 50mm radial wet snow with 70 km/hr wind, rime (in-cloud) ice (40mm radial ice) loading, broken OPGW loading as well as construction loads. These are very strong structures that would require a lot of force to bring them down.

Response 180: See response to comment 178.

Response 181: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. MATL may be responsible for damages resulting from a fire if the fire was caused by MATL's negligence in designing, constructing, operating or maintaining the transmission line.

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Comment 182 Should portions of the line near terminations be constructed to enable additional capacity for multiple lines? We are interested in encouraging some intelligent design and future planning with regards to the clutter now existing around substations. The line itself should be designed for an increased capacity to avoid the necessity of adding new poles in the future. Comment 183

Comment 184 Is the provision for 230 kilovolts enough? MATL suggests that the capacity could be increased to 400 megawatts in each direction. What changes need to be made to increase this capacity? Comment 185 Comment 186 Will easements need to change? How will the landowners be compensated? Comment 187 Was MATL a party to the Northwest Wind Integration Action Plan? If not, why not? Who was MATL's representative? What, if any, action does MATL plan with regards to the Northwest Wind Integration Action Plan? Comment 188

Comment 189 As the MATL line is behind schedule, what is the current state of the TSR's that have been awarded thus far? When do the bids expire? Comment 190 How is it that MATL has accepted bids for 300 megawatts north to south, when there is not Comment 191 capacity to move this power from Great Falls?

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Response 182: The agencies are considering the possibility of MATL building double circuit structures for about 4.2 miles north of the Great Falls switchyard. Lines for one circuit would be constructed now and used by MATL, and space on the structures would be available for a second circuit. The future circuit could be used by a firm other than MATL.

Response 183: See the discussion of Line Capacity Issues in the Consolidated Responses.

Response 184: The proposed line would be large enough for MATL's current customers. If all the possible wind and other generation that might be built in the area were actually constructed, the proposed line would not be large enough. See the discussion of Line Capacity Issues in the Consolidated Responses.

Response 185: See the discussion of Line Capacity Issues in the Consolidated Responses.

Response 186: Transmission of up to 400 MW in each direction would not require any changes in the proposed easements.

Response 187: Compensation to landowners would be based on the physical size of the transmission line, not on the amount of electricity transmitted on the line. Similarly, compensation to landowners for construction of a highway is based on the acreage required for the highway, not on the traffic volume.

Response 188: MATL was not a party to the Northwest Wind Integration Plan. MATL is a party to the Montana Wind Working Group and has contributed funding towards wind modeling as directed by the working group. MATL decided to participate in the Montana Wind Working Group because that group is focused on Montana whereas the Northwest Wind Integrated Plan is focused on the Pacific Northwest.

Response 189: MATL's transmission service request (TSR) contracts accommodate the current schedule for construction of the transmission line either explicitly or in side agreements. The MATL line would provide a conduit for power transmission between two points. It is the responsibility of the contracting shipper to make the necessary commercial arrangements and ensure the capacity exists to get power to the MATL line and to ship it from the line terminus to the intended customer.

Response 190: The bids submitted by prospective shippers did not include expiration dates. Bids were either accepted or rejected at the conclusion of the capacity auction process. Contracts were executed with the successful bidders (Williams 2008c)

Response 191: See response to comment 189.

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Comment 192 We are sure that the average person does not understand how difficult it is to farm around obstacles such as power poles. We will probably always object to having them forced upon us. That said, our objection would be reduced significantly by receipt of a fair, annual, cost adjusted compensation, and by having a reasonable plan for future development that optimized impact to our land, the state, and our community.

Comment 193 We are extremely concerned that there is not a plan, nor did there seem to be a planning process for transition line development. We currently have four lines running across our property, and the MATL transmission line would be the fifth. Without a comprehensive plan, it is difficult to know how many there will be built in the future. Given this lack of planning, and given the lack of capacity out of Great Falls, we believe that Alternative 1 or the status quo would be the right alternative for now.

MR. COMO: Thank you, Mr. Sheffels. Jerry McRae.

MR. McRAE: My name is Jerry McRae. I'm a farmer on the proposed MATL line near Dutton, Montana.

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Response 192: MATL has updated its proposal regarding compensation. It now includes an alternative dispute resolution process. See Section 2.3.

Response 193: No comprehensive transmission planning process exists in Montana. MATL complied with the FERC process. Individual processes include but are not limited to: the Northern Tier Transmission Group, Integrated Resource Plans required of NorthWestern Energy and Montana Dakota Utilities, and other independent multi-state efforts such as the Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study. 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.

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One of the major conclusions reached by all this EIS work concerning the cost of farming around poles was found on Page 3168, and states that the annual net monetary effect and the 50 year effect to all land owners are positive for all three alternatives. This is the conclusion that was on the front page of the Great Falls Tribune immediately following their release of this Environmental Impact Statement.

It seems we are all to believe that farmers are being paid more to have these poles than we are spending to farm around them. I would ask the DEQ to reconsider this conclusion, based on the following points:

Comment 194 Number one: DEQ derives half of its estimated annual payments to farmers as being received from the property tax rates we were given. Is it fair to say that the property tax break should be used to pay for farming around the pole, while leaving the issue of reduced property values uncalculated and valued at zero as the cost for farmers? Is it fair to say that this property tax break, which is $40,000 per year for all of the landowners in Montana on the line, should be used for farming around these poles, when the MATL Comment 195

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Response 194: The effect on property values from the MATL line is discussed in the EIS, Section 3.13.3.2. The effects are expected to be minimal based on available studies of actual property values near transmission lines.

Response 195: What landowners and MATL choose to do with their property tax incentive is beyond the scope of the EIS. The DEQ will balance costs and benefits of all parties in its decision.

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1 property tax break of $800,000 per year is not
2 earmarked to pay for anything but MATL increased
3 costs?
4 Comment 196 Number two: DEQ has used inaccurate
5 costs for farming around the poles. They're in
6 excess of 100 percent too low, and should be
7 revised in the final EIS. I'm submitting tonight
8 a study just completed by Hydro Solutions, in
9 which Mr. Faringer (phonetic) provides more
10 accurate and fair estimates of the true costs of
11 farming around poles.
12 Comment 197 DEQ continues to support a 45 foot
13 easement as a workable proposal for MATL. The 45
14 foot easement will not provide the necessary
15 safety zone required, and it does not provide
16 enough work room to complete the construction.
17 MATL is required to obtain the full 105 foot
18 easement on the Canadian portion of the line.
19 Farmers in Montana should not have to continue to
20 fight for the same 105 foot deal.
21 Comment 198 DEQ has underestimated the environmental
22 impact caused by the lack of access to the project
23 when it runs so much diagonal line. DEQ continues
24 to support the idea that this is construction --
25 that there is construction access from field roads

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Response 196: The farming cost estimates have been revised to reflect recent costs of inputs and commodity prices. See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and revisions to Section 3.13 and Appendix N.

Response 197: MATL has revised its proposal to use a 105-foot easement.

Response 198: As discussed in Chapter 2 of the EIS, much of the construction equipment would move along the right-of-way as construction proceeds because so much of the project area consists of relatively level ground. Existing roads would be used to the extent practicable and in a few areas, such as on the south side valley wall of the Teton River, MATL proposes to construct a total of about 3.5 miles of new roads on Alternative 2 since the moderately steep side hill will not allow safe movement of construction vehicles. Alternative 3 would require about 3.8 miles of new roads and Alternative 4 about 7.6 miles of new roads.

MATL might also have to purchase some off-right-of-way access to avoid sensitive features. Typically equipment can move on side slopes up to about 5 to 7 percent. On very steep slopes such as the cliff on the north side of the Marias River and at the Teton River crossing there would be no through access. In these areas access to structures would be from each direction with a skip in the middle.

Temporary and permanent roads or trails might need to be used to allow for construction and maintenance of the transmission line. The location of these features can only be precisely determined after the centerline is selected and the siting of individual structures has been determined through detailed design including consultation with landowners to minimize impacts. Wherever temporary or permanent roads are constructed, the landowner would be fully compensated on the basis of loss of use, general disturbance, and adverse effect.

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in from fields. Field roads are not diagonal, and they're private roads. A diagonal line runs six to eight miles with no access to reach county roads in the Dutton area.

Comment 199 The destruction of soil by compaction, grass land by destruction of native sod, erosion to all coulee crossings by the number of trips necessary to construct the line between county roads is inaccurate, should be reconsidered and restated.

Comment 200 Once again, field roads -- which are essentially just a trail of two tracks -- are private property, and not public access.

Comment 201 The height above the ground that MATL is proposing to build this line at does not meet safety standards. Drain carts with the augers in field positions, trucks with the boxes raised filling air drills, are just a couple of examples of equipment which will operate in excess of 20 feet in height, way above the 14 foot maximum height that MATL continues to use.

Comment 202 Building taller for just some farmers means unsafe height allowances whenever the land is sold or leased to a farmer whose taller equipment must have the higher allowance. A safe

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Response 199: See the discussion of Soils Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 200: Comment noted. MATL would have to obtain easements for use of off right-of-way field roads.

Response 201 and 202: MATL has changed its proposal regarding minimum ground clearance. For more information, see the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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line should be the only choice for MATL to build in all locations.

Comment 203 For all of you who are here to support the economic value associated with building this line, please understand that as a land owner, I can join with you in applauding economic progress in our state. You should know that MATL continues to propose paying the farmer a one time payment, once in my life, once in my farm's history, $500 per structure. That is the easement payment, $500 once. Then they're willing to pay the farmer $59.08 per structure on an annual basis to help us farm around the poles. The cost of going around the poles is at least $250. $59.08 doesn't cut it. This offer is just completely unacceptable.

Comment 204 Please join me as a farmer in asking MATL to present landowners with a realistic offer for the use of our land. Thank you.

MR. COMO: John Shevlin.

MR. SHEVLIN: John Shevlin, S-H-E-V-L-I-N. I come before you tonight as the Mayor of Conrad, Montana, also a business man, owner in Conrad. I would like to thank you for the opportunity of speaking tonight.

Comment 205 As Mayor of Conrad, I strongly support

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Response 203 and 204: Comments noted. MATL has updated its proposal regarding compensation. It now includes an alternative dispute resolution process. See the EIS, Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.2.

Response 205: Comment noted. Economic impacts and benefits of the proposed transmission line and potential wind farms are discussed in the EIS, Sections 3.13 and 4.14. Also see the discussions of Economic Issues and Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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the Montana-Alberta Transmission Line. The economic benefits to our community would be very substantial. Benefits from the line and resulting wind farms would go a long way in easing the tax burden on our county and city levels. An example would be the large infusion of tax money from the Judith Gap wind farm.

Comment 206 Due to unemployment, permanent workers with families and children would relocate to our area. This would greatly help our school system. Currently the school system is looking at remodeling the local high school and elementary school. The additional tax money would ease the burden on existing taxpayers.

Comment 207 In this area, we do not get a lot of opportunities for economic development. When the projects like the MATL line and wind farms come along, they should be embraced and supported by the whole community.

Comment 208 I would like to take this opportunity to encourage both the land owners and MATL to come to some kind of a conclusion to make this work for everybody involved, and the DEQ and the DOE to give favorable status to this project. Thank you very much.

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Response 206 and 207: See the response to comment 205.

Response 208: Comment noted.

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MR. COMO: Thank you. Peggy Beltrone.

Comment 209 MS. BELTRONE: Thank you, Mr. Como and Mr. Ring. I'm Peggy Beltrone. I rise as yet another County Commissioner to represent the County, along with MATL line group. I'm a Cascade County Commissioner. I'm here tonight on behalf of Lance Olson and Joe Griggs, my co-workers, my co-Commission mates, if you will, who are also in support of this line.

Comment 210 I would like to urge an expedited process. I've been concerned about this process and the delays that have occurred, and I would like for both the Department of Energy and the Department of Environmental Quality to redouble its efforts in getting to a solution here. We understand that there are outstanding issues between the company and the landowners, and we would like to see those resolved, but more than anything --

(End of side one)

Comment 211 Ms. BELTRONE: I just want to emphasize the fact that many projects are relying on a short time frame, and these wind projects that would be hooked up to the MATL line are also on that time frame. And as a member of the steering committee

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Response 209: Comment noted.

Response 210: The agencies are working as rapidly as possible under the circumstances.

Response 211: Comments noted.

Response 212 to 214: Comments noted.

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for Wind Power in America, which is the Department of Energy's program to promote wind in this country, I know how important it is for these projects to go forward.

Comment 212 We have in this country 17,000 megawatts of wind installed. Last year 5,000 megawatts were installed, making us the leading country in the world for installing in one year wind energy. We have only have 140 megawatts of wind in Montana. And so I have seen, over the years being involved in this program, other states with far less wind resource than Montana expand its wind portfolio much faster, and the reason is transmission.

Comment 213 I've been involved in the Rocky Mountain Area Transmission Study, and I've been involved in the government, the Western Governments Association Clean Energy Advisory Committee. In both of those instances, I have learned how important it is that transmission be sited so that we can get these valuable wind resources to market.

Comment 214 We have many compelling reasons in the west to have wind energy, the environmental reasons of saving water, of having no carbon footprint, of having an economic benefit to

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Response 215: Comment noted.

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1 communities. All of these things are important.
2 And I'm afraid that drawn out processes are just
3 going to keep Montana further and further behind
4 in the amount of wind that we are contributing to
5 the nation's energy portfolio. So I appreciate
6 the work that you're doing, and I would just like
7 to have the work done faster.
8 MR. COMO: Thank you. LeAnne Kavanagh.
9 Comment 215 MS. KAVANAGH: Good evening. My name is
10 LeAnne Kavanagh. I am the President of the Cut
11 Bank Area Chamber of Commerce. My husband and I
12 own newspapers in Cut Bank, Shelby, Browning, and
13 Valier. Thank you for the opportunity to comment
14 on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for
15 the Montana-Alberta Tie Transmission Line.
16 The Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce
17 would like to go on record once again offering its
18 full support for the electric transmission line
19 proposed by Montana-Alberta Tie, Limited. Our
20 organization is approximately 140 members strong,
21 and is dedicated to the promotion of the Cut Bank
22 area. We firmly believe construction of this line
23 will have a positive and lasting effect on not
24 only our community, but the Golden Triangle area.
25 We applaud the steps taken by MATL

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1 officials to respond to the concerns raised by Comment 216
2 landowners whose property would be affected by the
3 line. We support the new law which provides the
4 property tax break to land owners whose land is
5 crossed by the line, and transfers the Comment 217
6 responsibility for the tax on the affected land to
7 MATL.
8 Comment 218 The chamber supports MATL's decision to
9 use mono poles instead of H-frame structures along
10 the 53 miles of cultivated lands, though the land
11 crosses the fields diagonally, thereby lessening
12 the impact of the line on farm and ranch
13 operations. The Cut Bank Area Chamber of Commerce
14 is not insensitive to the ag producers whose
15 operations are affected by this project, or to
16 those who have expressed concern over the Comment 219
17 project's impact on the environment and historic
18 agriculturally significant areas. We are hopeful
19 changes to those by MATL officials will result in
20 a win-win situation.
21 Comment 220 The Cut Bank Chamber believes the
22 transmission line holds the key to the development
23 of a number of wind farm projects in this area,
24 most notably the McCormick Ranch, which will be
25 located in both Glacier and Toole Counties.

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Response 216 to 218: Comments noted.

Response 219: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and information about MATL's revised compensation package in the EIS, Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.2.

Response 220: Construction of the NaturEner Glacier Wind Project (referred to in the Draft EIS as the McCormick Ranch project) is underway. However, only portions of the former project are being constructed. The agencies understand the project would initially use capacity of existing transmission lines. The agencies understand that additional transmission capacity may be necessary to fully complete the project. NaturEner still holds agreements with MATL for 300 MW of capacity to the north and may build additional wind farms or may market this 300 MW capacity.

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1 Comment 221 The development of wind power is a clean
2 and green renewable energy source that will
3 greatly enhance our stagnant tax base, potentially
4 reducing property taxes for all our residents,
5 whether they be farmers, ranchers, small business
6 owners, or individuals struggling to make ends
7 meet on a fixed income.
8 Comment 222 Due to the nature of this project, we
9 are well aware the number of permanent jobs
10 created will be limited, but any increase in job
11 opportunities trickle down into our communities by
12 way of increased school enrollment and additional
13 consumer buying power.
14 Comment 223 Thank you for the opportunity to express
15 our support for this project. We look forward to
16 hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has
17 been issued for the project, and we urge the
18 Montana DEQ and BLM to issue the needed
19 certificates of compliance and right-of-ways.
20 MR. COMO: Thank you very much. By the
21 way, what my colleague -- is not the people
22 signing, so the poor penmanship is not the result
23 of the people signing in, so I'm going to butcher
24 this name, too. So it's Sandra B-R-O-E-S-D-E-R.
25 MS. BROESDER: Hi. May I name is Sandy

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Response 221 and 222: Comments noted. Also see the discussion of Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 223: Comment noted.

Response 224: Comment noted.

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Broesder. I'm a Pondera County Commissioner. I'm also an ag producer.

Comment 224 I have maintained from the first time I heard of this proposed package: This is a line that needs to be built; it's a line that needs to be built right. I think at this point I would probably echo the same issues, the economic potential, growth in our tax base, that my fellow commissioners have urged. I wasn't really planning on speaking tonight. I will have comments for you in Conrad. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you very much. Lewellen Jones.

MR. JONES: Good evening. My name is Lew Jones. I am a representative from House District 27, which is Cut Bank, Conrad, and Shelby.

I'm also a land owner. My family has been involved in agriculture since the 1890s. We have several thousand acres, and we have our share of power poles, and this is nothing new to us. Sometimes we farm in oil fields, and we have lots of power poles.

But that being said, I was also the person who carried the energy bill last session,

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and I do want to try to comment on a few items that haven't been touched tonight.

Comment 225 Discussion came along is the energy bill did drop the rate of the lines, new power lines, after June of 2007, from 12 to 3 percent. That leaves it about twice the rate of the surrounding states. 100 percent of zero was zero. And so our concern there was that we weren't having any lines built. In fact, the rate we dropped it to is currently the same rate that all of the co-ops in the state of Montana pay; and given that the co-ops represent about 50 percent of the lines in the state, it is not an unusual rate.

Comment 226 I also was a party to the -- (inaudible) -- where we made the quarter mile strip tax free property under the lines, and to be honest, our intent was in that case to recognize that the value, or the decrease in the value of the property associated with the lines upon that land.

Other items that haven't been touched on. Most folks touched on a lot of things I was going to say, and so I don't feel it necessary to repeat myself.

Comment 227 The greatest respect for the land owners -- obviously this is an ag state -- is the long

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Response 225 to 227: Thank you for your insight into the legislative process.

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time stewards of the land, and I do recognize we have to achieve a win-win. MATL has evolved a long ways from the first time that I've seen it discussed, and it recognizes the need for annual payments. There may need to be discussions to the amount. It recognizes the need to have more monopole structures, and it recognizes the need to run north and south and east and west along fields, which is more appropriate.

And I think that's to be applauded, in that they recognize the fact. They've also hired a more positive crew that seems more willing to negotiate with the farm folks to -- {inaudible} -- and we seem to be going that way, and they seem more to what the needs are of the landowners.

We know that this project does represent great amounts of economic development. Again, I would point out that they have to pay $1.2 million in taxes. This is a potential to be five times larger.

Folks talk about limited employment opportunities. By my calculations, this represents a potential for 60 to 100 employees. There are in Great Falls between 60 to 100 employees, let alone in Conrad and Cut Bank and

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Response 228: Comment noted.

Response 229: MATL's proposed alternative would use H-frame structures on about 38.4 miles of cropland or CRP crossed parallel or perpendicular to the cropping pattern. See the discussion of Line Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.2 for information regarding MATL's revised compensation package.

Response 230 and 231: MATL would pay about $700,000 per year in property taxes in Montana under the 3 percent tax rate.

Response 232: Projected employment from the MATL line is in Section 3.13.3.

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Shelby. It is not so limited in that sense, not to mention that there is a great economic spin associated with any person, more kids in our schools, something we struggle for. Just the spin alone would be enormous. This also represents, at a time of $110 oil, a good source of clean energy. Comment 233

Comment 234 I was at Bonneville Power in the Northwest Area Wind Integration Plan, and I spent two days out in Bonneville Power, and heard significant discussions about the Northwest Area Wind Integration Plan, their intent to add 6,000 megawatts of wind, geographically diverse wind, to their grid to basically compare with their hydro energy. In this plan, they recognized Montana as a huge potential source of wind, and they also recognized, or in this discussion that I had, they recognized that Montana has a huge potential. They also recognized that there was huge transmission limits.

Interestingly enough they had the -- (inaudible) -- at that seminar; and at that seminar that I attended, there were seven lines being proposed in Wyoming, three lines being proposed in Idaho, and I guess there was 2.5 kind of being discussed in Montana. So it isn't that

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Response 233: Comment noted.

Response 234: DEQ is aware of early planning efforts to add another 500MW or more of transmission capacity west out of Montana. Some of this capacity may come from improvements to existing lines rather than construction of new lines. No applications for new transmission lines to the Pacific Northwest have been received to date. NorthWestern Energy submitted an application for a new 500 kV line from the Townsend area south into south central Idaho.

The Western Governors Association is also beginning a new transmission planning effort to integrate new generation from renewable resources into the western grid.

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Montana is breaking speed records with the creation of power lines. We tend to do stuff as slow as any other state out there.

Comment 235 Your know, exports always come up. I'm in the cattle business, the sheep business, the grain business. And we export grain on trucks, on trains. We -- (inaudible) -- to foreign markets. Our Senators and Representatives, I read about it in Japan, I hear about -- (inaudible) -- actually there's a group in China, now that I think about it -- looking at it and surpassing our markets. We do the same with cattle. We see export as a good thing.

Comment 236 Here there is an opportunity to be on line, to export clean, renewable energy, to help us become less dependent, to provide in part the potential and the structure, the tax paying structure in employment -- (inaudible) -- in Montana. I have a tough time wrapping my mind around that -- (inaudible) -- and I would say that's a good thing.

Comment 237 Yes, we do need to work towards a win-win, the long time stewards of the land, the long time taxpayers, those of us that have been in ag a long time. We don't need another negative to

Comment 238

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Response 235 to 238: Your comments regarding exports are noted, and the agencies recognize that transmission lines have been proposed infrequently.

Comment 238 (Cont.)

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1 deal with, but we do need to find a way to deal
2 with this, because these opportunities don't come
3 along every day. I don't want to hear two years Comment 239
4 from now, as I so often hear, "Why not here? Why
5 not us?," because we are going to choose, not
6 hoping, will choose to find a win-win -- as in my
7 friend LeAnne's vernacular, which I will now to
8 tend to borrow.
9 Comment 240 With that, thank you for the chance to
10 comment. I appreciate all of the hard work you
11 folks do.
12 MR. COMO: Thanks very much. How about
13 William McCauley.
14 MR. McCAULEY: My name is William
15 McCauley. I'm a Native American of Irish descent.
16 I am a Director of our Cut Bank Local Development
17 Corporation, and also a City councilman in the
18 city of Cut Bank.
19 Comment 241 I grew up on a homestead between Choteau
20 and Augusta, at a crop star property with a line
21 that was put in there by the now defunct Montana
22 Power. We had no problem going around that line.
23 Of course in those days, an eight foot --
24 (inaudible) -- hole was pretty easy to work
25 around, and I don't think that's the same today.

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Response 239 and 240: Comments noted.

Response 241: Comment noted.

Response 242 to 245: Comments noted.

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But the one thing that we didn't have was Comment 242 electricity. And the power line went through, but until the electric cooperatives came through in 1952, we had no power.

Comment 243 As we look at this today, and see the greater that the population gets and everything else, it is only prevalent that we be on the winning end of producing this power for other people, and if exporting is part of it, so be it.

Comment 244 I would like to see the agricultural people be taken care of in the proper manner. I also feel as a local businessman that that cut in our tax structure by the additional taxes that will come from this will be a God send.

Comment 245 And as I listened to people like the gentleman from Dutton, as you go down their street, you can see what happens when that is gone and those buildings close. So to keep Montana the way that it should be, we support it in every manner. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you, Mr. McCauley. We have a Jeff, the first initial of his last name is "K," and he's either from Laurel, Montana, or Laurel, Maryland. That's not even close. Does anybody have any idea? Which side are we talking

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about? Jeff K. from Laurel someplace.

The last name looks like K-N -- I'm sorry.

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Is there anybody here this evening from Laurel who wishes to speak? No? If not, we'll come back to this name at the end, and we'll try to decipher it as we listen to another speaker.

MR. COMO: We have only three more names that are just signed up here. We have this room at least until 9:00, so after these other three people are given an opportunity, we'll take a five or ten minute break or something like that, and we can meet, chat, or whatever, and we can get back on the record. Oh, I'm sorry. How about Conrad? Jeff from Conrad? Does anybody from Conrad want to speak?

MR. KRONEBUSH: My name is Ted Kronebush, K-R-O-N-E-B-U-S-H.

MR. COMO: Okay. That works.

Comment 246 MR. KRONEBUSH: I'm a private electrical contractor. I live in the Conrad area. Many of the people that are here from the agricultural side are long time customers of mine. It seems to me that the problems that they need solved are

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Response 246: Comment noted.

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based upon an economic issue or a private land issue. They all seem to be problems that are easily solved, and it's a negotiable deal. The economic trickle down for them and for the private business sector is astronomical, and so I would hope that the people will still keep coming to the table, and the issues are solved. As a private business man I strongly support the MATL line. Comment 247 Comment 248

MR. COMO: Before you -- could you just spell your last name for us so we could make --

MR. KRONEBUSH: Think of two kinds of beer, Corona and Busch.

MR. COMO: Ray H. from Brady, last name starting with an "H" from Brady, Montana.

Comment 249 MR. HOLLANDSWORTH: Hollandsworth is the last name. I'm from Brady, and I farm, and the power line isn't close to my place. You have my permission to move few miles east and build it there. It would be a God send, because wind power is what's coming, and I would like a chance to have a wind farm on my place. We're all involved with wind power. When you came here today, and you opened your door of your vehicle, you were involved with wind power. So it's here to stay. Comment 250

Comment 251 But you've got to really compensate the

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Response 247 and 248: Comments noted.

Response 249 and 250: Comments noted.

Response 251: Comment noted. See the EIS, Sections 2.3 and 3.13 for a discussion of MATL's proposed compensation package and alternative dispute resolution process.

Comment 251 (Cont.)

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farmers. It doesn't matter to farmers. It's the money, it's what everybody is talking about. But I can tell you the farmer is going to spend it all anyway, so it doesn't matter, because that's what farmers do, and they don't keep any for themselves. I would think there is way more benefits than there are -- I don't like farming around poles, but the technology is there. Comment 252

Comment 253 And I just thought of something when I listened to everybody. There could be a whole business start, and it would be, "I'll farm your power lines," there would be somebody that would do it for you. So don't think it's impossible to get that done. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you. Jerry Black.

Comment 254 MR. BLACK: For the record, my name is Jerry Black. I'm a member of the State Legislature representing Senate District 14. That includes Toole, Pondera, Glacier, Liberty, and Choteau Counties. First I would like to thank the DEQ and the Department of Energy for the excellent job that you've done in preparing the preliminary Environmental Impact Study. I thought it was very well done, and certainly addresses and answers a lot of the issues.

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Response 252 and 253: Comments noted.

Response 254: Comment noted.

Responses 255 to 258: See Socioeconomic Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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Comment 255 To say that a majority of my constituents within the counties that I represent are in favor of the MATL power line is certainly a huge under statement. They enthusiastically for the most part support the MATL line. We're all concerned and want the farmers and landowners to be treated fairly and with respect.

Comment 256 The MATL line is the key to the development of a $1 billion wind energy project. It will be a huge economic benefit for north central Montana and the entire state. Our area, north central Montana, has suffered through extreme drought, declining enrollments in the schools, loss of tax base, and this would be one of the things that would help turn it around, and would certainly be beneficial. Sixty employees may not sound like a lot in a larger view, but it is a huge amount for our area, and the ripple effects are tremendous. Comment 257

Comment 258 Wind is our natural resource in northern Montana, and as you noted, we have plenty of it, both outside and inside. Without transmission to move electric power, green and clean wind energy cannot be developed.

I believe that MATL, after a rather

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Comment 259

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1 rough start, is demonstrating a great willingness
2 to work with the affected landowners to address
3 concerns regarding the routing of transmission
4 lines, the placement of poles that would be
5 potentially destructive to their agricultural
6 operations. This includes the use of mono poles
7 rather than H-poles wherever it's practical, and
8 we understand that MATL has entered into multiple
9 land owner agreements should this project receive
10 final approval and concurs with recommendations in
11 the DEQ report.
12 Comment 260 The MATL line would certainly improve
13 the reliability of electric transmission in both
14 Alberta and Canada by making these regions less
15 vulnerable to outages, creating a greater
16 opportunity to import as well as export
17 electricity, all of which could be of benefit to
18 consumers and suppliers. Just as we export grain,
19 cattle, coal, oil, and other commodities, all of
20 these exports benefit a growing economy, not only
21 in Montana, but throughout the nation. Comment 261
22 Comment 262 The increased tax base, the construction
23 jobs, royalty payments from wind generators, along
24 with the permanent monitoring and maintenance
25 jobs, will provide increased tax revenues for

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Response 259: See the discussion of Line Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the response to comment 229.

Responses 260 to 262: See Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 263 to 265: Comments noted.

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Montana, and even more importantly, the badly needed local tax dollars for our schools, fire departments, law enforcement, county roads, parks, and other services that have suffered due to that declining population and loss of tax base.

Comment 263 It should be noted that MATL is the merchant's line, and in that a capital investment and risk is made by the banks and private investors rather than by local taxpayers in Montana and Alberta.

Comment 264 It is imperative that we develop all of our country's green energy resources for our generation and, of course, for future generations to come. There is already a great concern about brownouts throughout various parts of the United States. By working cooperatively with all stakeholders, including the landowners, state agencies such as DEQ, our county governments, and others, we can move forward without costly delays that could very well jeopardize the entire project.

Comment 265 We certainly urge your approval of the MATL line application that will benefit Montana and Alberta consumers and suppliers. It's much like connecting power cables to a huge battery

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that moves the economic engine of development.

Comment 266 We believe that in your decisions, there must be good balance in your decisions that are fair to all parties, that makes sense economically, and addresses the most sensitive issues in a reasonable and proper manner.

Comment 267 I'll be submitting a written statement of my remarks, along with the support of other state senators and state representatives in Montana, who strongly supported the clean and green energy bill, and support the MATL line in Montana. We feel it's absolutely essential for the development of clean energy.

Comment 268 I would like to thank you once again for providing this time for these remarks. I think the input has been extremely good, and I know you'll weigh those with good judgment and good balance. Thank you very much.

MR. COMO: Thank you, Mr. Black. Doug Ray.

Comment 269 MR. RAY: My name is Doug Ray, and I'm here to represent Glacier Electric Board of Directors and management. Glacier Electric Cooperative, Incorporated would like to offer its unequivocal support to the Montana-Alberta Tie

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Response 266 to 268: Comments noted.

Response 269: Comment noted.

Response 270 to 274: Comments noted.

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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.

Comment 270 Construction of the line and the associated wind generation facility will have a positive impact in our area in many ways. As a utility, we're offered 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 271

Socially it will create jobs both during the construction phases and after completion and maintenance and operation stages. The activity associated with construction itself will create additional businesses for local merchants and suppliers. Comment 272

Comment 273 Economically, it will help our country, which has been suffering from a severe economic recession for many years, by improving the tax base, which will associate with all local revenues. Last but most significantly, it will benefit the entire state of Montana by providing a desperately needed transmission path to power Comment 274

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Response 275: Comment noted.

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created by new generation facilities that will develop in the vicinity of the new line and also in Montana and in Alberta.

Comment 275 We congratulate the Montana-Alberta Tie Line group on their innovative and progressive approach, and wish them success for construction and operation of the transmission line. Sincerely, Jason R. Braunich (phonetic), general manager.

MR. COMO: Thank you. We've gone through our list of people that have already signed up. We'll take about a ten minute break, and then we'll reconvene, and give us a chance to meet some of you, and some of you might have some other thoughts that you want to throw on the record. So we'll just take a pause in the proceedings for awhile.

(Recess taken)

MR. COMO: If you'll take your seats, and we'll get going just as soon as you can do that. We understand that some of you have some transportation that's desperately waiting to leave. We don't want that to happen.

The next gentleman that's signed up to speak is Tom Shock.

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Response 276 to 278: Comments noted.

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Comment 276 MR. SHOCK: I'm Tom Shock of Cut Bank. I'm a city council person. And I'm a person who has studied this power requirement thing that we have in this country for quite some time. I believe that the population of our country is growing bigger every day, and for whatever reason, we're doing all sorts of things to reduce our energy input, but our energy output requirements continue to increase. And I personally am in Comment 277 favor of nuclear power plants, but once you say that word in one sentence, then everybody thinks they're going to turn green and glow in the dark.

Comment 278 And so my family is mostly back east. They talk about having clean water, clean fuel, and clean energy. The other day on television -- which requires energy to view -- I looked at a map of the wind areas in the United States.

Now, it turns out that from the northern tip of the Rocky Mountains at the border of Canada, to the southeast corner of the state of Montana, and also to include North Dakota and South Dakota, is one of the highest velocity wind energy, the most constant velocity wind energy areas in the United States. So I feel like the wind farms that we have today are just the

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beginning of mega wind farms. We're probably going to be coming to Montana to see the wind farms before this is all over with.

Comment 279 Listening to what I have heard today, I really believe that since we have not gotten this project finished yet, or started really, that we need to put some time and effort into tuning up the contracts with all of the individuals involved, putting together safeguards for things like increased energy consumption. For instance, this one gentleman from Dutton I believe was talking about farming around things that he felt would cost $250 a year to do, so if it gets down to where it cost $350, then they should be adequately compensated for that.

Comment 280 So we have need to have what I would call living documents, something that is reviewed by a commission of all of these people together or their representatives, so that we can continue to feed these people and allow them to have their operations at the proper placements for poles, and various things like that. And we need to do this correctly this time, because I believe we're going to have a lot more of these, and there is no sense in creating a mess for ourselves the very first

Comment 281

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Response 279: Comment noted. See the discussion of MATL's revised compensation package in the EIS, Section 2.3, Rights-of-Way.

Response 280: In June 2008, after discussions between DEQ and MATL, MATL proposed an alternative dispute resolution package, as described in the EIS, Section 2.3, Rights-of-Way.

Response 281: Comment noted.

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time out of the gate.

I would like to thank you for allowing me to speak. I'm sorry. I didn't check the right thing. Thank you so much.

MR. COMO: Thank you very much. We've sort of used up all of the people that registered at the door, but we've got the room for at least another hour. So yes. Just come on up and give us your name.

Comment 282 MR. DALTON (phonetic): Good evening. My name is Steve Dalton. I think the last gentleman kind of -- with his remarks, so far just listening to this, again, kind of to reiterate what Katrina, our first speaker, indicated. And I was one of the producers in the Dutton area that had met, and at our first meetings with Montana -- (inaudible) -- nobody was against it. And so far I haven't heard anybody that really is. It just goes back to the implementation of how us, as the ag producers, how they are going to be supporting this needs to be done.

Comment 283 So with that, I am a fourth generation ag producer in the Dutton/Power area. First, with regard to the power poles. They should be all of the single monopole design throughout the whole

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Response 282: Comments noted.

Response 283: MATL has proposed to use monopoles on all diagonal crossings of cultivated and CRP land. See the discussion of Line Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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project. But at the least -- and again I say -- the least, it would be all crop land and CRP. I would also like to see a provision that Comment 284 Where applicable, they are placed on or just off of the property line, especially when located between two different property owners.

Comment 285 If the proposed route is utilized, our operation would be included as a carrier of the transmission line. The proposed right-of-way allowance will not give us an allowable amount of clearance to circle any of the power poles between us and our adjoining land owner, thus creating a considerable amount of non-productive farm ground in a highly productive area.

Comment 286 The old option for this unfarmed area would be to plant a grass species for erosion control. For this reason, I will not present the cost at this time to implement this, because our operation has no intent to seed this grass, maintain weed control, chemicals, etc., since this would have to be an additional cost incurred by the transmission line. An H-frame designed power pole would only increase this cost even more. If monopoles were to be utilized and placed on or near the property line, then the loss of our crop Comment 287

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Response 284: DEQ typically approves constructing a line within 250 feet on either side of a reference center line. Certificate holders then negotiate with landowners on exact structure placement.

Response 285: Comment noted.

Response 286: Comments noted. See the discussion of MATL's revised compensation package in the EIS, Section 2.3, Rights-of-Way.

Response 287: Comment noted.

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land, the cost of the transmission line would be minuscule.

Comment 288 Regarding safety. I know there was a little bit touched on this. Our farm equipment is not getting any smaller, and in time will probably continue to increase in height, width, weight, and etc.

Comment 289 You read about the loss of birds, but what about the increased risk of death or serious injury for the humans that are driving this large farm equipment? Would you like to send your family members, younger nieces and nephews, into potential harms way, especially at harvest time, driving -- (inaudible) -- with lift augers or high -- (inaudible) -- grain augers themselves. There was an incident not too long ago just north of Great Falls where a young man pulling a grain auger got close enough to a power line, the electricity arced, and this young man was seriously injured.

Comment 290 Again, this is why it is absolutely necessary to utilize the higher power pole lines of the monopole design. We utilize aerial spray. Have you taken into consideration the increased risk to those -- (inaudible) -- I have

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Response 288: Comment noted.

Response 289 and 290: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the EIS, Section 2.3, and Table 2.3-1.

Comment 291

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1 yet to hear our pilots complain about a line being
2 too high. Give them the option of plowing under
3 these lines if they have to as a last resort.
4 Comment 292 Briefly in closing, I would like to say
5 that if all it takes is a few extra million
6 dollars -- which in my opinion is minuscule when
7 dealing with a project of this magnitude -- to
8 prevent human tragedy from occurring, then you
9 have no choice but to do what is right the first
10 time. Why not be the one to set an example for
11 any further transmission lines in the future?
12 Thank you.
13 MR. COMO: Thank you very much.
14 MR. McFARLAND: My name is John
15 McFarland. I'm from Conrad. I was born and
16 raised on a farm and ranch. I am a friend of
17 agriculture for sure. I'm currently a small
18 business owner in Conrad, past president of the
19 Conrad Chamber of Commerce, and a board member on
20 the Pondera Regional Port Authority.
21 Comment 293 Having said all of that, it is
22 imperative that we move forward with the project.
23 I am very much in support. But we also need to
24 turn our attention to our friends in agriculture,
25 make sure that MATL is willing to shoulder the

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Response 291: Your comment is noted.

Response 292: Comments noted.

Response 293: Comment noted.

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1 additional cost to fairly compensate our folks who
2 have had the negative impact on their land, and to
3 take the least invasive route possible to ensure
4 minimal amounts of invasion. Thank you. Comment 294
5 MR. COMO: Thank you.
6 Comment 295 MR. SEIFERT: I'm Dale Seifert. I'm a
7 land owner up in the area that the line is going
8 through. They are not proposing going through me,
9 but I'm strongly in favor of it.
10 Comment 296 One thing that happens in our area is
11 we're a larger gated area, and with the water
12 rights situations like we're having, and the low
13 moisture levels, the economy around is hurting.
14 As far as I'm concerned, the MATL line itself will
15 not benefit me directly, but it opens up the
16 possibility for wind farms, which generates
17 income. As Mr. Hollandsworth said, farmers spend
18 money. It will help.
19 Comment 297 You can look at the businesses in
20 Conrad, which is an irrigated area, compare it to
21 Chester or Shelby. That is the same type of land,
22 farm dry land. The farmers are struggling.
23 They're not spending the money. The local
24 businesses are closing down.
25 Comment 298 I believe the farmers should be fairly

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Response 294: Comments noted.

Response 295 to 297: Your comments are noted.

Response 298: Comments noted. See the discussion of MATL's revised compensation package in the EIS, Section 2.3, Rights-of-Way.

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compensated, and that could be done through negotiation. If they use eminent domain to close it down, I'll fight it all the way, because that isn't what that was meant to do. Thank you. Comment 299

MR. COMO: Thank you.

Comment 300 MS. JONES: My name is Carol Jones from Conrad. I am a business person in support of the MATL line for reasons that have already been stated. And I also have a letter from someone who couldn't be here tonight that I would like to read and submit.

Comment 301 "I am writing in support of the MATL. I support the MATL because it benefits both consumers and generators through additional connection with markets and demand of energy. It also will allow additional purchasing options for Montana utilities, resulting in lower rates for consumers. MATL is an economic opportunity for Montana by providing additional transmission capacity. Comment 302 My name is Vanessa Buckland, and I support MATL. Sincerely, Vanessa Buckland."

MR. COMO: Could we have that? Thank you.

Comment 303 MR. BREDING: My name is Everett Breding. I'm from Conrad. On behalf of myself

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Response 299: Comment noted. See Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 300 to 302: Thank you for your comments and the comments in the letter from Vanessa Buckland.

Response 303: Comment noted.

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privately, and I am part of the Conrad Area Chamber of Commerce, among all of the other things stated, we are in support of MATL. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you.

Comment 304 MR. LEE: Good evening. My name is Robert Lee, and I'm a banker/lender, and very sympathetic to the issues of the power lines not being placed correctly. I circled them in my youth. And that being said, I am very much in favor of this proposal moving forward for the economic benefits that have been talked about before and the tax base situation. Thank you. Comment 305

MR. COMO: Thank you.

Comment 306 MR. HARBUSH: I'm Ralph Harbush from the Conrad area. I farm in that area. I support the line because of the possible economic benefits to all of the communities in our area. We have the real possibility of a couple wind farms in our area, and that would be non-existent without a power line close by. I support the line if it is a safe line, and it addresses the property lines and single pole construction. Comment 307 So I would urge you to admit this facility if you address the concerns of those farmers that were presented to you Comment 308 tonight. Thank you.

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Response 304 and 305: Comments noted.

Response 306 to 308: Comments noted. See the discussion of Farming Issues and Line Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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MR. COMO: Thank you.

Comment 309 MR. WILSON: My name is Del Wilson. I just had one question. With all of these proposed or potential wind farms, how do you get the power from the wind farm to the transmission line? Who builds the substations that would accept that power? Comment 310 And are the lines from the wind farms to this transmission line overhead or underground? Comment 311 How do you take that into account from a property owner's standpoint? Comment 312

MR. ELMAN: My name is Brad Elman. I farm about seven miles north of Conrad. However, the line will not cross my property. I've been a producer for 38 years now, ten in Lake County and 28 in Pondera County. Over those 38 years, I've farmed around a lot of power poles, both double and single REA Montana Power.

And what's even better than the power poles -- and some of you would be familiar with this -- were those missile posts out in the fields that the missile cables pointed the directions the missile cables went to. I've farmed around numerous ones of those, plus irrigated ground.

Comment 313 With all due respect to the previous testimony I've heard, -- {inaudible} -- farmed

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Response 309: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 310: See the discussions of Line Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 311: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 312: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 313: Comment noted.

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around anything. Having said that, I do support the line, and I do support the producers' attempts or need to find a reasonable amount for compensation for this. However, negotiation is a two-way street. MATL is in business to make a profit, as are they. And I believe the negotiation has to take place, but it is a two-way street. I do support the line. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you.

MR. FLYNN: Good evening. My name is Dan Flynn. I'm with the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. I represent the people that build power lines. I'm not the guy that's going to sum up this meeting. I'm sure somebody else will. I think there has been a pretty good discussion tonight. I think there is some farmers concerns that need to be addressed.

Having said that, if those things are taken into account, I think everybody here pretty well recognizes the value of a power line through this part of Montana, as far as what it's going to do for economic development with these wind farms and such. With that, of course we're in favor of it. We build power lines. There is not a power line we haven't ever not been in favor of.

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Response 314 and 315: Comments noted. MATL has updated the compensation package and proposed an alternative dispute resolution process. These are described in Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.2 in the EIS. Your comment regarding negotiation is noted.

Response 316 and 317: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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in two weeks late, are we going to throw it away? Of course not. If you send it in a month late, yes, we'll probably still be able to -- if you hand it in like three months late when we've got the final document on the press, we're probably not going to be able to do anything about it. So yes, it's not a hard and fast legal deadline, but the closer you get your comments in to that, the better chance we can guarantee that we'll be able to consider them in our final document. Thanks.

Joe Christiaens.

MR. CHRISTIAENS: Thank you very much. My name is Joe Christiaens. I'm a Pondera County Commissioner, Conrad, Montana, and I represent the western district.

Comment 318 We commented about a lot of things, and one of the things that -- the schools bothers me considerably. We lost a school here about three or four years ago. We were able to get it back open a little, not a lot; but we were able to get it up some. We are going to lose the Brady School next year because of the lack of students and a lack of money. The money is just not there to keep that little school open, and that creates a real problem for us, too.

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The following responses are to comments received at the public hearing in Cut Bank.

Response 318: Comment noted.

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1 Comment 319 Again, I want to echo the thought that
2 we are really sympathetic with the farm problem,
3 too. We do want the people that they're working
4 with, the line is working with, that they keep
5 those people first in mind of everything that
6 they're going to do, and work on.
7 Comment 320 So we've let a lot of things go by us in
8 the past, and I think we need to make sure that we
9 don't let something like this go past us again,
10 because I think it's going to be of utmost
11 importance to all of the counties in this area
12 really. I think it will help them considerably
13 with road maintenance, equipment, anything that is
14 out there in the field. So again, thank you very
15 much. I appreciate the time.
16 MR. COMO: Thank you. Roy
17 Hollandsworth.
18 MR. HOLLANDSWORTH: I'm Roy
19 Hollandsworth. I was in Great Falls last night,
20 and I've got to say the bus load of people coming
21 down was great. Numbers do matter, and it was
22 really quite supportive, because the meeting
23 turned out well in Great Falls.
24 Comment 321 But I farm by Brady, and I have no power
25 lines on my place, but I'm here to support it from

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Response 319: Your comments regarding farming around poles are noted.

Response 320: Comment noted.

Response 321: Comment noted.

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the economic development end. And we can't let this go by this time. And we talked earlier. The wind turbine thing may not be part of this, but Freelander (phonetic) isn't building in Butte to not use turbines. We have wind blow every day. Comment 322 This line might not be used 100 percent for turbines, but if this goes through smoothly, other lines will develop in different places.

Comment 323 Wind turbine energy is, I think, another crop that we can harvest, and we need it, and we want to really turn around the down slide in all of our communities. Brady is one. Conrad, you could shoot a rifle or race a car down the street most days, and you wouldn't even know anybody is around. And Conrad used to be a going concern.

Comment 324 So I'm glad everybody is here, and I hope everybody is behind it, and I want to show my support. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Johnel Barcus.

Comment 325 MS. BARCUS: Mr. Chairman. Browning Area Chamber of Commerce, although it's roughly on the Blackfeet Reservation, and we're not touched by this, this affects our whole area. A lot of the potential that we have in our area this close to Glacier National Park are tourism; and on the

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Response 322 and 324: Comments noted.

Response 325: Comment noted.

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reservation, unlike a lot of rural Montana, like they mentioned with Brady and lack of enrollment, we have a large growing population on the reservation, which is pretty particular of all Indian communities in the state. So the potential is here, and this is only going to further it.

Comment 326 Along with that, economic development, jobs, and our transmission system throughout this area, throughout our state, is very -- It's going down. It needs this upgrade, and we need this line in.

Comment 327 And yes, you're right. That Butte center, they're not going to be building them that close in North Dakota, they're not building them that close unless they have some projects moving there. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you. By the way, if any of you have anything that you're reading from, it would help us if you left it with us.

Dave Brownell.

Comment 328 MR. BROWNELL: I'm from Conrad, and unlike Roy, we won't see any poles on our place. I've farmed around oil wells, power poles; I've worked for Custom Crop Care in Conrad running a big ninety foot boom sprayer, and I've worked --

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Response 326 and 367: Comment noted.

Response 328: Comment noted.

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I've gone around H-frames, and single poles, and yes, they are a bugger.

Comment 329 But my concern is -- and I've had people I've talked to -- and I said, "You've got to look at the tax base for one thing it is going to bring to us." And they said, "But they'll raise the taxes anyway," and I said, "Property taxes, well maybe they won't raise them quite so much." I think a million dollar tax base to start with in Pondera County just off the line -- and that's not counting any wind turbine farms that go in Pondera, Teton. Toole is already going to get one started, Toole and Glacier. It's going to make a lot of difference. Comment 330

Comment 331 You've got people that will be coming in working on those jobs. It's going to help the economy. You're going to have certain many guys that have got to be around to maintain them towers. And it's like it said, that turbine that's going to be built in Butte, they're going to go somewheres, and you know that they're already planning down there at Judith Gap to expand that wind system down there.

Comment 332 But I still think you've got to consider the tax base that's going to happen. We lost our

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Response 329: Comment noted. Also see Socioeconomic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 330: Taxes are discussed in Sections 3.13 and 4.14 of the EIS.

Response 331 and 332: See Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

13

missiles out of Pondera County, Teton, Glacier, and Toole, I think, and a little bit out of Lewis & Clark, but I think Pondera County was hit the hardest. My family farms both in Teton and Pondera County. Our biggest mostly is in Teton. But anything that can help our tax base, I think we should look at. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you. Mike Koepke.

Comment 333 MR. KOEPKE: I'm Mike Koepke of Cut Bank, Executive Director of the Cut Bank Development Corporation. I have four letters that were sent to me. These individuals were not able to show up. The first was from Triangle Land and Livestock Company.

Comment 334 "We are sorry we are not able to attend the hearing in person, but we are in the midst of calving. We would like to express our strong support for the Montana-Alberta Tie Line. It is imperative that this region develops infrastructure and business opportunities to bolster the economy and expand the tax base. It is increasingly difficult for the existing small business owners to bear the burden of business and rural property taxes.

Comment 335 "This is a tremendous opportunity to

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Response 333 to 335: Thank you for bringing comments from people who were unable to attend the meeting.

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open the doors to new and responsible development.

We encourage all parties to work together to mitigate any problems with the placement of this line, and offer our strong support for proceeding with the Montana-Alberta Tie Line. Sincerely, Colleen Gustafson." Comment 336

Comment 337 Next one: "Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana-Alberta Tie Transmission Line. Billman's Home Decor would like to go on record offering its full support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana-Alberta Tie, Limited.

"Our business is located in Cut Bank, Montana, and is dedicated to the promotion and growth 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 338 "Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this project. We look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project, and we urge the Montana DEQ and BLM to issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as

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Response 336: Comment noted.

Response 337 and 338: Comments noted. Also see Socioeconomic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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1 required. Sincerely, Valerie Vermohlen
2 (phonetic), President, Billman's Home Decor."
3 Comment 339 "Thank you for the opportunity to
4 comment on the draft Environmental Impact
5 Statement for the Montana-Alberta Tie Transmission
6 Line. Billman's, Incorporated would like to go on
7 record offering its full support for the electric
8 transmission line proposed by Montana-Alberta Tie,
9 Limited.
10 "Our business is located in Cut Bank,
11 and it is dedicated to the promotion and growth of
12 the Cut Bank area. We firmly believe construction
13 of this line will have a positive and lasting
14 effect on not only our community, but the Golden
15 Triangle area.
16 "Thank you for the opportunity to
17 express our support for this project. We look
18 forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential
19 Permit has been issued for the project, and we
20 urge that the Montana DEQ and BLM issue the needed
21 certificates of compliance and rights-of-way as
22 required. Sincerely, Rick Billman, President of
23 Billman's, Inc."
24 Comment 340 "Thanks for the opportunity to comment
25 on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for

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Response 339 and 340: Comments noted.

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the Montana-Alberta Tie Transmission Line. We would like to offer our full support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana-Alberta Tie, Limited. Our family owns several rental businesses in Cut Bank, making us dedicated to the continued growth of the area. We firmly believe construction of this line will have a positive and lasting effect on not only our community, but the entire Golden Triangle area.

"Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this project. We look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project, and we urge the Montana DEQ and BLM to issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways. Sincerely Rick Billman, Jeff Billman, Valerie Vermohlen of R&G Rentals, J&C Rentals, B&V Rentals."

Comment 341 And I'd just like to reiterate for Cut Bank Billman Corporation that we're in support of the MATL line project. And as a producer, I farm in Glacier County and Toole County, and I would like to be on record as in support again for the MATL line.

Comment 342 And also as Chairman of the school

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Response 341 and 342: Comments noted.

Comment 342 (Cont.)

17

1 board, I would like to show support for the MATL
2 line, and the increase in tax base is going to
3 help kids. Thank you.
4 MR. COMO: Bill McCauley.
5 Comment 343 MR. McCAULEY: As a local business
6 person, and City Council person, I wish to go on
7 record as supporting the project, but would
8 request that the farmers and ranchers that the
9 line crosses are taken care of both financially
10 and by future agreements in writing for all
11 parties.
12 Comment 344 This project is a great boost to our
13 overburdened tax base. I have heard the argument
14 that we are allowing the line owners too much
15 short term tax break, but I ask you: What is 100
16 percent of nothing? And that's what we have at
17 this time.
18 Comment 345 Our local cooperatives, rural
19 cooperatives, are the backbone of the electrical
20 rural America, and that they feel that this is a
21 good deal, which they have. Once again, on behalf
22 of myself as a taxpayer for many phases, I fully
23 support this project. Thank you.
24 MR. COMO: Thank you. Joni Stewart.
25 MS. STEWART: My name is Joni Stewart,

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Response 343: See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 344: See Socioeconomic Issues and Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 345: Comment noted.

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and I'm the Mayor of the city of Cut Bank. And on behalf of the City Council, I'd like to read this letter.

Comment 346 "The purpose of this letter is to indicate the City of Cut Bank's full support for the electric transmission line proposed by MATL. We have reviewed the draft Environmental Impact Statement, and find this project to be of great benefit to Glacier County and the surrounding areas.

Comment 347 "We believe that MATL's response to the current concerns raised in previous public meetings have been thoroughly addressed, and commend MATL officials on their efforts to create a positive situation for all involved.

Comment 348 "Wind energy projects are one of the most viable answers to developing clean and green industry for northern Montana. On behalf of the City of Cut Bank, we urge DEQ and BLM to issue the required permits, and look forward to hearing that a Presidential Permit has been issued. Thanks."

MR. COMO: Roxy Gillespie, you had down maybe.

Comment 349 MS. GILLESPIE: I just wanted to say for my husband and I, Rimrock Cattle Company, that we

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Response 346 to 348: Comments noted.

Response 349: Comment noted.

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support this, especially in view of the number of drought years that our counties have had. Just having a better tax base would improve everything agriculturally and also in the urban communities.

MR. COMO: Thank you. We've got a whole another page and a half of people who have given us their names and their addresses, but haven't checked that they want to speak. So if it's okay, I'll just go down -- who are you?

MS. COOLIDGE: Jackie Coolidge. I'm from Sunburst, Montana, and I'm on the council there. But I came to speak from my heart.

Comment 350 We're trying to bring our community back to life, and this is an opportunity that will help our community get on its feet again. We have several things that are happening there, and it's exciting for us.

Comment 351 We have lost quite a bit of our population, our schools, our student population, and we would like to get that back again; and the way to get that back again is to attract people to our town and have them stay there. And if this program comes in, there might be jobs. They would boost our school system, which is very important.

Comment 352 Also we have a lot of small businesses,

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Response 350 to 352: See Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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like everyone else in every other community; and with the workers that come in, they support the restaurants, they support the schools, they support the person that sells groceries, whatever. Every little bit helps the population and the tax base, of course. Comment 353

Comment 354 Another thing is: When this comes in, our youth don't know anything about the wind, the turbines, everything like that. This is another career opportunity that they would have or be exposed to. They may get into it. If it grows here, maybe our children won't have to leave Montana to make a living. Maybe they won't have to leave this area. They might want to stay here and raise their families here. We need to look at that. We don't want to have to have our children leaving, and having a dead Montana. Nothing left. The land is great, but it's not worth anything if we're not on it. So that's an important thing to me.

Comment 355 And also we're in the construction business. This is an opportunity for my husband's and my company to maybe work here, instead of having to travel 100 miles each direction from our home. So this is really important to me, and

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Response 353 to 355: Comments noted.

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these are just comments from my heart.

MR. COMO: Thank you.

Comment 356 MR. IVERSON: I'm Gary Iverson. I'm the Mayor of the town of Sunburst, and I wanted to be here tonight to show the support of the City Council -- of course, Cathy is one of our council members -- the people of the town of Sunburst, the businesses of the town of Sunburst, the schools of the town of Sunburst, and the whole area; the support for business because we need industry, we need business.

Comment 357 This wind farm that's going to come in on top of this power line is a tremendous asset to our community. And we need the tax base. And I understand the problems with the power lines crossing land, and those type of things; and those need to be worked out, and they need to be worked out fairly. But we do not want to miss an opportunity like this to have this power line and to have the things that will come along with it. And that's all I've got.

MR. COMO: Thank you. Yes, sir.

MR. SITZMAN: My name is Tony Sitzman, and I represent the Glacier County Regional Port Authority as Chairman. I just want to read our

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Response 356 and 357: Comments noted.

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mission statement.

"The mission of Regional Port Authority is to promote, stimulate, and advance the general welfare, commerce, and economic development, and prosperity of our region."

Comment 358 Our region is Glacier County, the majority of which lies on the Blackfeet Indian reservation. The MATL will have a tremendous impact on the region, and will assist in potential wind development projects. The MATL will pump needed revenue into the tax base of our region, and will assist in our struggling economy.

Comment 359 The Glacier County Regional Port Authority supports the Montana-Alberta Transmission Line, and views it as a means of reaching our vision, which is to have a quality rural community with living experiences, opportunities, and amenities of urban living.

Comment 360 We are encouraging you to support the line, which has little environmental impact, but large economic benefits. We appreciate the attention you have given our request.

Comment 361 And along with this, I just want to thank everybody for coming. We were at the meeting last night, and in comparison, this is a

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Response 358 to 361: Comments noted.

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that 30 day cooling off period -- that's what we call it -- after we publish the final. So thanks. I'm sorry.

Comment 362 MS. CAVETT (phonetic): My name is Becky Cavett, and I'm on the Board of Directors of the Northern Rockies Medical Center here in Cut Bank. And as a member of the Board of Directors, we would like to pledge our full support to this economic opportunity for our area, so that we can of course increase our economic base, and provide jobs, and also improve any services that we can provide for the community and the area. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you. Anybody else? Mr. Jones.

MR. JONES: I was wondering when the politicians are going to get going.

Comment 363 I guess I would share that I'm pleased. First of all, I want to thank MATL for addressing a whole bunch of the issues that they had earlier, including per pole payments, trying to work with their landowners, squaring up their lines, and trying to deal with a bunch of the land issues.

Comment 364 And there is a couple of things I always like bringing up. I always hear employment is

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Response 362 to 364: Comments noted.

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limited. And I guess in our rural areas, given that this system, when the windmills were fully in, employ potentially 60 to 100 people. That's not limited for us. That's probably a huge employer in a rural area. And when you consider the spin associated with it, the multiplier effect, it's even more than that.

Comment 365 And I guess a couple other items. I was asked today about the number of birds that would be damaged in the area, and I guess I wanted point out -- and as has been in your statements before -- the new wind mills turn very, very slow, and the number of bird deaths associated with it are entirely limited. I've heard folks say that it's less than when driving a car. So in fact I see numbers of 1.5 to two, and that's a good thing. And so I don't think for those folks concerned with the sports issue, this is a problem.

Another comment that came up after last night's hearing that I didn't mention -- and I'm trying to skip stuff that we've mentioned before so you don't have to go through it over and over again.

MR. COMO: We normally do this. The issue of bird strikes, that was come up from the

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Response 365: Comment noted. See the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the revisions to Section 4.9 in the EIS.

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sportsmen, it was primarily from the sportsmen?

Comment 366 MR. JONES: Yes. There were just some concerns about that, and I know during talking with folks, and I'd actually researched some of those issues, it was not a huge number anymore. The old mills turned far faster, etc.

Comment 367 There was some issues that Alternative 4 came up, and they wanted to make sure it was pointed out there are several substations south of Conrad that Alternative 4 would bypass; and that there is a potential development straight to the west of Conrad referred to as the Sam George Hill that has some leasing going on along that area. And it would definitely increase the distance lines would have to be built from the Sam George Hill to interconnect with MATL by companies that currently own space on the MATL line.

Comment 368 Then just exporting. Montana, we export grain, and the benefit stays here. The farms stay here. We export beef, and the ranches remain here. And now we export or have the opportunity to export kilowatt hours, to export electricity, and have the tax base, the jobs and everything, remain here.

Comment 369 And so with that, thanks, all of you,

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Response 366: See the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the response to comment 7.

Response 367: Comment noted. MATL does not propose to interconnect to the two substations south of Conrad and has indicated to DEQ that there will be one point of interconnection at the Marias substation. DEQ is aware of an anemometer on Sam George Hill but is not aware of a planned wind farm there that would connect to the MATL line. Numerous parties are considering wind farms in the area, and it is difficult for the agencies to ascertain which wind farm is proposing to connect to which transmission line. MATL's customers include NaturEner, Wind Hunter, and Invenergy. NaturEner is beginning to construct initial phases of a wind farm southeast of Cut Bank but may have options in other areas. Invenergy has announced plans for a wind farm or wind farms north of Conrad and in the Cut Bank area. It is unclear where Wind Hunter may be proposing a wind farm or wind farms. See the discussion of Line Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 368 and 369: Comments noted.

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for all your hard work, all of you folks for Comment 369 (Cont.)
showing up on this. And actually one of my
reasons to get up was to point out that we had a
bus riding contest last night, and LeAnne lost.
WOMAN SPEAKER: I was a graceful loser.
Comment 370 WOMAN SPEAKER: Sam George Hill is
proposed for wind farms? Mr. Jones? Wind
turbines are being proposed in this area called
Sam George Hill?
MR. JONES: Yes. There is an area
straight west of Conrad that we call the Sam
George Hill. I don't know if that's what it is
called on the map.
WOMAN SPEAKER: Thank you.
Comment 371 MR. REYNOLDS: Hi. I'm Marty Reynolds.
I'm with Border States Electric out of Billings,
Montana. We employ about 30 people. We do a lot
of work with the electric utilities. We hope to
be involved in this project because we have a lot
of jobs in Billings, that with our down turn in
the economy, this would help. Anytime we can
utilize our natural resources in Montana and
create more jobs here, I think it's a good deal
for everyone. Thank you.
MR. COMO: Last time when there was sort

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Response 370: Comment noted. See the response to comment 367. Last year, DEQ noted the anemometer on Sam George Hill, and it is shown on Figure 4.1-2.

Response 371: Comments noted.

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of a lull in the action, we said we could take a little break and wander around.

WOMAN SPEAKER: I actually have a question, and Lew Jones asked me to ask this question. But he would like to know where the cookies are.

MR. BLACK: For the record, my name is Jerry Black. I represent Senate District 14, which includes most of Glacier County, Pondera County, Toole County, Liberty County, and Choteau County.

Comment 372 This wind project is extremely important to all of the area, not just in Glacier County and Toole, but the entire area. I think this is probably one of the greatest economic development opportunities since the discovery of oil in northern Montana, since the building of the Burlington Northern Railroad. There are so many spin offs. When you talk about over $1 billion in investment, that is a huge amount of money. That's going to have a great impact on the total area.

Comment 373 You've all heard everybody testify why we need it: Declining school enrollments, loss of tax base, loss of jobs, devaluations of land.

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Response 372 and 373: Comments noted.

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Well, this could very well turn that all around, and I think it will.

Comment 374 MATL is demonstrating a willingness to work with the landowners to address concerns regarding the routing of transmission lines and placement of poles that would be potentially disruptive to their agricultural operations. It kind of got off, if you will remember, to a rough start at the very beginning; but since that time, they have changed their attitude. They're willing to work with people, address those concerns.

Comment 375 Now, you are never going to make everybody happy. I don't care what you do, somebody is not going to be happy with it, whether it's MATL or whether it's some landowners. We know that. But this line will improve the reliability of electric transmission system in both Montana and Alberta by making these regions less vulnerable to outages, creating a greater opportunity to import and export electricity, all of which can benefit consumers and suppliers.

Comment 376 The MATL line could very well provide another opportunity for some of our energy companies in Montana, electric co-ops, to find another bidder for electricity when they need one.

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Response 374 and 375: Comments noted. See the discussion of MATL's revised compensation package and alternative dispute resolution process in the EIS, Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.

Response 376: That may be true, but it would depend on the transmission line owners and other external factors. Potential impacts of the proposed line on electrical transmission system operation are discussed in Section 3.17.

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The increased tax base, construction jobs, and Comment 377 royalty payments from wind generators, along with the permanent monitoring and maintenance jobs, will provide increased tax revenues for Montana, and more importantly, right for our area. We know that.

Comment 378 It should be noted -- they mentioned last night -- this is a merchant line; and in that the large capital investment required for this line is made by banks and private investors, rather than by local taxpayers in Montana and Alberta.

Comment 379 You know, it's imperative that we develop our green energy resources. The United States is going to be facing a severe energy crunch in the years to come. You've seen what's Comment 380 happened with coal. There are about 60 plants in the US that have cancelled their plans to build coal fired generators. We're going to need a cheap, clean source of energy if we're going to compete, and if we're going to be able to keep the rates down for people like you and me all across the country. So this is very important that we develop this clean energy.

And Montana is absolutely a huge

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Response 377 and 378: Comments noted. See Section 3.13 and Economic Issues, Tax Issues, and Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 379: One objective of the proposed action is to support development of wind power, which is a green energy source.

Response 380: Comment noted.

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resource for wind. It's one of the best sources in the North American continent, and we have to use that wind energy. I think it's very Comment 381 important, when these decisions are made on routing and the alternative routes that are going to be taken, that they display a very sound balance between the landowners and MATL. You know, they both have to have their concerns met.

Comment 382 One of the -- I think Option 4, if I read in the EIS, concerned me because it said Option 4 could increase the cost to MATL by $7 million, and delay the project for up to one year. I think that's very disturbing. And MATL has said, you know, that option could very well jeopardize the project. So that's why we have to strike an equal balance between what MATL needs and what the landowners need, and that's their decision that they'll be making as to which of those options they will decide upon.

Comment 383 I believe we've got to be fair to all of the parties involved. We want to take care of the landowners. They should be compensated fairly and respectfully for the cost of farming around those poles. There is no doubt about it. And that is one of their great concerns.

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Response 381: Comment noted.

Response 382: Comments noted.

MATL outlined its concerns regarding Alternative 4 in its letter to the DEQ of March 28, 2008, and summarized those concerns as follows: "Of the route options proposed, Alternative 4 is materially longer in length. As a consequence: it impacts more landowners; has a larger footprint; may span more unstable soils; may have a greater potential of encountering archaeological and heritage resources; and has higher energy losses."

Response 383: See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section as well as the discussion of MATL's revised compensation package and alternative dispute resolution process in Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.

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Comment 384 This was a big issue in the Legislature session in the last session. Lew carried it through the House, and I and several other senators nurtured it through the Senate, and this had wide support. And I'll have a letter to submit that will have a lot of senators and state representatives sign on supporting this project. We definitely need it. We want it. It's good not only for our local area, but for the state of Montana, and for the whole nation for that matter, and we're going to see a lot of this being done across the country.

Comment 385 So thank you very much. I want to compliment the DEQ and the Department of Energy for the great job on the EIS that you prepared, was excellent, and for holding these hearings. Thank you very much.

MR. COMO: Thank you.

Comment 386 MR. KEMMITT (phonetic): For the record, I'm Marvin Kemmitt. We farm and ranch southeast of Cut Bank. MATL line will go across us. I'm here to show support for it. The impact to us will be very slight, and the impact for Glacier County and the state would be very great.

I also sit as Vice President of Glacier

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Response 384: Comments noted. Your comments and those of the other legislators in the letter are noted.

Response 385 and 386: Comments noted.

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Electric Cooperative; and through board Comment 387
discussions, we would like to confirm our support
for the MATL line. Thank you.

Comment 388 MS. KAVANAGH: I'm LeAnne Kavanagh. I'm
President of the Cut Bank Area Chamber of
Commerce. I was one of the ones who went to Great
Falls last night. I read the letter of support
from the chamber at that meeting, so I won't go
over it again tonight, but it was a pretty good
letter. What I do have here, though, is
approximately 20 letters of support from various
chamber members, retired citizens of our
community, local small business owners, and some
ag producers who would offer their support to the
MATL project. I'm not going to read them all.
I'm just going to enter them into the record.
Thank you.

MR. COMO: By the way, everybody, if
some of you represent like a lot of developers and
large groups of people, if you want to help us get
a decision out quicker, okay, a letter -- getting
a single letter with 200, 300 people signing it,
that's the most efficient way, assuming everybody
wants to say the same thing. I'm not telling you
what to do. But like if everybody is going to

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Response 387: Comment noted.

Response 388: The letters were accepted as individual letters, entered into the record, and responded to along with all other letters received.

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that's not how this country was meant to work. And you folks are here, and you're doing a great thing, and I just want to send my appreciation to you for that fact.

It's been reinvigorating a little bit for me to be here and see some of this, and not just go, "Well, I don't know if I'll have any impact, so I might as well not be here." The fact that you're here tonight is doing great things, not only for yourself, but for the future generations of us up here in north central Montana.

So I just wanted to say thanks to everybody in the audience tonight, and if there is anything I can do for you, catch me at the end. I'll be floating around. So thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you.

Anybody else? Yes, sir.

Comment 389 MS. HARRISON: I'm Shannon Harrison with Sweetgrass Development, I'm the Executive Director there. And I won't bore you by repeating all of the wonderful positive things I've heard tonight, but I do want to offer Sweetgrass Development's full support on this project.

MR. COMO: Would anybody else like to --

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Response 389: Comment noted.

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Go ahead.

MALE SPEAKER: I have one -- This question is just killing me, and I need to ask it.

Comment 390 Everybody in this room is probably my age, or some is younger, some is older. How many of us have kids that work out of state? Could we have a show of hands? There is the reason we need the power line, okay? Thank you.

MALE SPEAKER: Most are younger.

MR. COMO: I recognize you, but I can't remember your name from last night. I'm sorry.

MS. BROESDER: I'm Sandy Broesder. I'm Pondera County Commissioner. And I'm not going to speak as a Commissioner tonight. I want to speak as a land owner who owns land west of Conrad. Our farm is called Broesder Ranch, Incorporated.

Comment 391 We've a number of wind experts come around our area, and they tell me that they look for certain geographic formations, that if they can catch the wind at the apex of a hill, it has more energy than wind that's blowing across a flat surface. That's one of the reasons for the interest in areas like the Sam George Hill and the Belgian Hill.

If we look at Alternative 4, while it

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Response 390: Comment noted.

Response 391: At their closest, Alternatives 2 and 4 are about 3.5 and 7.6 miles, respectively, from the anemometer location on Sam George Hill. See the response to comment 367 for more information and the discussion of Line Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Comment 391 (cont.)

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1 does have the appeal of being a straighter line
2 and cutting across more range land as opposed to
3 going through farm land, we need to remember that
4 this is going to move it further away from those
5 geographic formations where the wind farms
6 ultimately probably will be located, and it also
7 takes it further away from the substation that's
8 located just at the bottom of the Sam George Hill.
9 Comment 392 I think if we end up going with the No.
10 4 option, we are going to ultimately end up with
11 yet more power lines traveling a further distance
12 to take the power from the generation point to the
13 ultimate transmission point.
14 Comment 393 MATL is making great strides in land
15 owner relationships. It seems to me that maybe
16 that should be the realm of private business, and
17 I would strongly urge the DOE and the DEQ to issue
18 any needed permits as expeditiously as possible
19 and let business happen. Thank you.
20 MR. COMO: Thank you. Anybody else?
21 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Like somebody standing
22 in the back that wants to stretch their legs and
23 walk all the way up here.
24 MR. COMO: Well, we've got a little
25 dilemma. On the one hand, we're sort of committed

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Response 392: See the responses to comments 367 and 391. Also see the discussion of Line Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 393: See the discussion of MATL's revised compensation package and alternative dispute resolution process in Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.

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yourselves -- if you want to leave, fine. If you don't, we'd rather have you stay -- and then open the record again, and if there are any additional questions --

MR. COMO: We could take a 15 minute break, at a quarter after seven we'll reconvene. You can leave if you want before then, and if not, then we'll just close it up then. Thanks.

(Recess taken)

MR. RING: For those of who came in a little bit late, the purpose of the meeting is to take comments on the Environmental Impact Statement that's being circulated. We're going to ask -- There is a general guideline that comments be submitted to us by March 31st, and we can assure you those that get in by that date are going to get the most attention.

So I believe we had one gentleman during the break indicated he wanted to speak, so if you could take the floor. And if there is anybody else, we'll take you one at a time, and after these are done, we'll close out the hearing for tonight.

Comment 394 MR. PEARSON: Hi. My name is Gabriel Pearson and I'm from Oilmont, Montana. Forty

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Comment 394 (cont.)

years ago, I was in a little country called Vietnam. I had two real close friends that were killed right next to me. And you know who was taking all our draft dodgers at that time was Canada.

Now, a few questions I want to come up with. I understood by the news last night Ronald Ontario, Canada will be in charge of this project. Where is our side of the story in the United States? I think it should be equal and fair. I'm all for making money, but I'm not for making money over Veterans that have spilled their blood. And we have what -- the position in our country right now, we can't drill it, we can't mine it, we can't log it, but we'll let her burn, and we've got to put a stop to this sometime.

I know everybody is for this project. I'm for making money, but not on the backs of people that give their life for this country. I'm one of them. I'm a totally disabled American Veteran. It's not too fun to go through cancer or heart ailments. It's very important for me to stand up for those Veterans that died. They says, "If you ever make it back to the United States, you let those people know what we went through in

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Vietnam." I'm letting you know.

I grew up with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, her name was Beverly McLaughlin, her maiden name was Beverly Yeats (phonetic) out of Benger Creek (phonetic), Alberta, Canada.

They have a very liberal government up in Canada. Alberta, the crown lands, support most of Canada. If we get tied in with them, we're going to support the same government which I'm definitely against: Gays, homosexuals, lesbians. Money is good to be made; but on the wrong reason, wrong objective, and wrong motive, we'd better watch what we're doing. I'm just -- There is always opposition to things, as Jerry Black said, but what the deal is, what is our end goal.

Now, I understand this transmission line will take all of the electricity and stuff that people put into it, but there is a lot of other things that can be developed in eastern Montana. We have oil wells that are making millions of dollars a day. My Grampa is from Lake Night, North Dakota, which is Burke County, and what the deal is, we have the same position here.

We have the environmentalists that --

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it's too pretty to drill, and there is one little problem. We already drilled it. If you look at Dupuyer, they have all these pump jacks that go up and down, and they're not pumping air. The other place we drilled was at Black Leaf Canyon. In the news the other day, it says, "This mountain front has not been touched." Well, if you check the geological records and the drilling permits, you will find that Pearson No. 1 Texaco was drilled right in the Black Leaf Canyon, and there is a lot of gas there. But we won't develop this because it gets too pretty to drill.

We have coal plants that can't be put in because they're creating emissions. And when I was a kid, I rubbed dimes and stuff with the mercury that we had as kids. And what the deal is, the mercury that comes out of this coal plant is less than what we are accustomed to, what we grew up with, but it doesn't get both sides of the story.

And what I'm standing up for is: Let's make certain we get our fair share, instead of giving the control to Canada. Thank you.

MR. KRONEBUSH: My name is Ted Kronebush. I'm from Pondera County. As a private

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Response 394: Comments noted.

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citizen, I think it is also important that we utilize the available taxable assets that will be generated --

(Flip the tape)

Comment 395 MR. KRONEBUSH: -- the taxable assets that will become available with a project of this with spurn the other activities that will come along with this, are also important to all of our communities. I think that there isn't a person in here that doesn't understand what the value of lowering our personal property taxes are, and how important it would be for us to do that. And with that, thank you very much, and I would support the MATL line.

MR. COMO: Anyone else?

Comment 396 MR. SITZMAN: I have a question. Tony Sitzman. I hear about farming around these uprights that are going to hold the line. What would be the problem of moving them? The shortest distance between two points is a straight line, but what difference would it make if the straight line was over on a section line rather than running down through the middle of someone's property? If the person didn't own both sides of the section, all they would be doing is going

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Response 395: Comment noted.

Response 396: As the agencies understand Mr. Sitzman's suggestion, it is to place the structures on section lines rather than in the interior of fields because the landowner would typically farm around only one side of the structure when placed on section lines. MATL is prepared to work with landowners to achieve a similar benefit by placing interior structures along field strip boundaries where the landowner farms that land in strips that are narrower than a full quarter section (Williams 2008d).

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around it. It wouldn't be going around it, it would just be pulling into the field aways.

Comment 397 I'm no engineer or anything else, but it just seems to me that if you stayed away from the center of the property, and stayed to the property lines, it would make a lot more sense.

Comment 398 FEMALE SPEAKER: I'd like to ask one more question for those of you who are left. Based on what everyone has heard tonight about Alternative 4, could we have a show of hands of the people that are here tonight, that understood those four alternatives, that would be against Alternative 4?

MALE SPEAKER: Against Alternative 4?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Against Alternative 4. Six people.

MALE SPEAKER: How many people do you think we lost?

FEMALE SPEAKER: A lot. At least 16.

MALE SPEAKER: How many people would be undecided?

FEMALE SPEAKER: Undecided, would you like to raise your hands? There is one undecided. And those who didn't raise their hands, does that mean you're for it? Do a count down.

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Response 397 and 398: Comments noted.

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MALE SPEAKER: You know, another problem we could solve is had we just divided US and Canada on the Mississippi River, we wouldn't be having all these problems. Tony, you wouldn't be here. We'd just have the DEQ. You'd be lonesome, Tom.

MR. RING: Well, I could get along.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Do you have to address that comment? You don't do that.

MR. COMO: Probably not. The way we -- "Commented noted."

MR. RING: Are there any other comments on the Environmental Impact Statement?

MR. COMO: I'd like to -- we'll probably just close the record now. This is not --

Comment 399 FEMALE SPEAKER: I should have clarified this. They don't have to go with just one alternative, right? You can use a combination of the four alternatives. So just for clarification for the audience, you can say you're against Alternative 4, but they still may use one, two, or three, and a little bit of four. So am I correct in that, Tom?

MR. RING: Well, I believe one is the no-action alternative, so we probably wouldn't use

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that in combination with the others. But Alternatives 2, 3, and 4, and the local routing options that we've identified in the document, more or less bracket the range of possibilities. If in your comments you come up with a new idea, an adjustment in alignment, submit that, and we'll try to take care of it.

Under the State process, if there is something new that is not proposed by MATL, we have to notify the affected owners of that property, so we'll be making those contacts if any such suggestions do come in. But yes, what's laid out there brackets a fairly large range of possibilities of segments connecting each other, interconnecting one to another, and there is all sorts of permutations that could occur. We'll try to pick the alignment that minimizes adverse effect, while still keeping cognizant of the costs involved both to the landowners and to MATL.

MR. COMO: That was a good point. And from the federal point of view, anything, any decision that's made, we are probably going to be looking primarily towards the State. Okay? In every one of these things, the State, they're sort of where the rubber meets the road. They know the

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local community much better than us, their siting and approval criteria is a lot more extensive than ours is.

So obviously we're going to give a great deal of deference to any kind of opinions that DEQ has; and anything that they might come up with, or that any of you might further suggest, that already is studied in the EIS in some way, or shape, or form, would be fair game. We don't necessarily have to go back to the drawing board. If we've already covered the environmental impacts of something, and there's little variations on it, and what we've studied is already encompassed in that, that's really no problem.

Well, with that, I guess we'll close the record. I just want to thank everyone.

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Response 399: The agencies could combine elements of Alternatives 2 through 4 or the local routing options. Alternative 1 is the No-Action alternative, so the agencies could not use that alternative in combination with elements of other alternatives.

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So then we'll start calling people. Roy Hollandsworth. I've butchered his name all week long.

Comment 400 MR. HOLLANDSWORTH: Thanks, Tony. The reason you got it right, I printed it this time, so that makes a difference.

I've been to all three of these, and this is round three. I'm going to give you an overview of what I've seen. In Great Falls, there was -- there is almost as many here as we had in Great Falls. But the meeting was mixed, I thought. It could have went either way. There was some grumbling from the farmers that the poles weren't in the right place, and they wanted money, and that seems that will be addressed in this thing.

But what really turned the meeting around in my mind was the bus that came from Cut Bank, Shelby, and Conrad, and went down there. Everybody was positive, and you could see the meeting turn around. And the best one liner at Great Falls was the guy from Cut Bank, an elderly gentleman, that says that says, "I'm a Native American of Irish descent."

So then we went from there, and last

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The following responses are to comments received at the public hearing in Conrad.

Response 400: Comment noted.

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night was Cut Bank. And I have to tell you, I've never seen a community -- I'm proud to be part of the Highline. That whole community, 100 percent, wants this project. They know what it means to the town. The farmers said, "I know it's -- I've got a farm under those power lines, but we're doing it for the community," they know what it's going to do.

Comment 401 So keep all this in mind, because the benefits far outweigh -- and I don't like farming around poles, and I have none of them on my place. I wish the line was going out there, because then I could put a wind farm in, and that's going to be the spin-off. But you guys are going to have your work cut out here to make it as positive as Cut Bank did. They were really good. So more power to you guys. Thank you.

MR. COMO: The next one that is signed up -- By the way, we're calling up people who have checked that they want to speak. We'll go through those checks, and then that doesn't mean that that's not your only bite at the apple. So as we go through the evening, you change your mind, and you want to say something, just come on up, tell Ellen, tell myself, just step up to the microphone

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Response 401: Comment noted.

Responses 402 and 403: Your comments are noted.

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when everybody is done. And just because you've spoken once doesn't mean you can't speak again. So this is pretty informal. All right?

Brett Doney.

Comment 402 MR. DONEY: I'm Brett Doney with the Great Falls Development Authority. We're a regional economic development group based in Great Falls, but we provide services in the entire eleven county central Montana region.

We're very much in support of this project. We have a couple of concerns. First of all, with regard to the draft EIS, a very thorough job, took longer than any of us wanted, but we think it covered all of the issues. We do believe that the process has gone on much too slowly.

Comment 403 In terms of the need from an economic development standpoint, energy is a target industry of ours. We think there are tremendous opportunities here in central Montana. You can't have wind energy development without transmission, just like you can't have agriculture without highways and railroads to export the product. We think energy can be a wonderful export product.

There does need to be a balance between property owners and the transmission, and we think

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there's a balance that's possible here to have.

Comment 404 We have been down to west Texas and seen what they've done down there. Now, west Texas has an average wind speed of nine miles an hour. We have average wind speed of 15 to 17 miles an hour. We want to know -- and this is primarily directed to the State -- why in west Texas they have 4,500 megawatts of installed wind power.

Comment 405 The twelve counties of west Texas, their economies have been completely transformed. Their county budgets have been turned around 180 degrees, their schools, their economic development, their tax base. They've had a -- Right now it's about a million dollars per megawatt in terms of tax base. Imagine. They've got four and a half billion dollars of investment. They've got another 4,000 megawatts under development. And Texas did it by putting together a transmission plan and getting their act together.

Comment 406 We have a better wind resource here than they do, and there is no reason, if we can't work together, set standards, treat property owners right, that we can't have 8,000 to 10,000 megawatts in central Montana, and this is just a

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Response 404: In both states businesses that use, manufacture, or install wind energy generators can receive franchise tax deductions and/or exemptions. There are also property tax exemptions involving wind energy generation for business installation or for the construction of such systems.

Probably the largest differences in wind development between Montana and Texas are in the states' respective populations, renewable portfolio standards, and prices paid for electricity. Montana has a population of about 950,000 and consumes about 28,000,000 MWh/year while Texas has a population of about 24,000,000 and consumes about 400,000,000 MWh/year. Montana has a renewable energy portfolio requirement of 15% or about 450 average MW applied to its utilities in the year 2015. In 2005 Texas passed a renewable energy portfolio requirement of 2,000 MW by 2009. This has been expanded to 5,580 MW by 2015.

Lastly, the price paid for electricity is higher in Texas than it is in Montana as shown below. Higher prices could make it easier to attract investors in Texas than Montana.

Average Retail Prices (cents/KWh)		
	Texas[1]	Montana[2]
Residential	12.86	8.28
Commercial	9.85	7.44
Industrial	7.82	5.12
Transportation	8.42	NA
All Sectors	10.34	6.91

Source:
[1]http://www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/electricity/st_profiles/sept08tx.xls
[2]http://www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/electricity/st_profiles/sept08mt.xls

Responses 405 and 406: Comments noted.

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part of it.

Comment 407 Our region is far too dependent on defense and agriculture, two wonderful industries that we want to see continue, but let's face it. We have very little control over what the Department of Defense does, and we don't have any control over the weather or what rural commodity prices do. Right now, things are looking very good, but we lost a missile squadron, and that's going to be a tax hit on the rural counties.

We formed a diversification project working with Sweetgrass Development that we're kicking off. We're targeting two industries, agri processing and energy. We think there is a lot of potential, and there is cross over with bioenergy and things like that. But the best opportunity that we have right now for immediate tax base is wind development. So we've got to figure out a way that we can all sit down and work together and make it happen.

Comment 408 Lastly, on the need from the transmission grid standpoint, this line will add quite a bit of reliability and flexibility to the transmission grid that we have now. And the transmission grid, something to keep in mind is

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Response 407: Comment noted.

Response 408: NorthWestern has announced plans to construct a new gas fired generation plant near Anaconda, MT to satisfy its load balancing challenges. While the MATL line would certainly open new possibilities for load balancing for NorthWestern, NorthWestern may have other options available for load balancing. Also see Line Capacity Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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that NorthWestern has had problems. They are out of balance a number of times, and there is a safety margin, and they have dipped below the margin. So having this opportunity to share power with our neighbors in Alberta will strengthen our overall regional grid, which is important to all of us.

Comment 409 So just I want to close. Thank you for the opportunity, but please expedite the process, issue a decision. We like what we've seen in Alberta. They've issued a decision with conditions, and MATL is now working to meet those conditions up in Alberta, and take care of the property owners. We think the same could be done here.

MR. COMO: The next person is Ted Crawford.

Comment 410 MR. CRAWFORD: I just wanted to say that I'm not against the line, but I would like to see where the -- (inaudible) -- power goes. I would like to have it go straight down the fence line, single pole, and that would be fine, because my son and grandson are here, and they farm to the farmer, and we have all big equipment, and we can't be turning around and missing the ground

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Response 409: Comment noted.

Response 410: Also see Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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that we can't see. So with single poles, we can swing around them without any trouble, and that's my comment -- (inaudible) -- big equipment.

MS. Como: Sandra Broesder.

MS. BROESDER: Last night I spoke a little bit, and I said I didn't have my Commissioner hat on, but tonight I do have my Commissioner hat on. I am speaking on behalf of our entire Board of Commissioners. Cindy Johnson is currently in China. She won't be here tonight. Joe Christiaens has been at the meetings, both in Great Falls and in Cut Bank. He had a medical procedure today, and he won't be here tonight. So you're stuck with hearing from me.

Comment 411 The Board of County Commissioners strongly supports construction of the Alberta Tie Line. There are plenty of reasons to support this construction. If environmental concerns were your only criteria, the minimal trade-offs imposed by this new construction would be well worth the value to our society and to the environment, simply for the capability to transmit clean green power.

Comment 412 Given the fact that most of the carrying capacity of the line has already been obligated to

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Response 411: Comment noted.

Response 412: Because the capacity rights are a commodity that may be resold or traded, the original purchasers may not be the power suppliers that use the line. MATL has indicated that capacity rights contracts do not require the use of any particular form of power generation (Williams 2008b).

Response 413 and 414: Comments noted.

20

1 wind developers, transmission of renewable energy
2 seems assured.
3 Comment 413 As Commissioners, we are responsible for
4 the fiscal operations of Pondera County. We look
5 to the construction of this line and the
6 associated wind generation facilities as a way to
7 broaden the tax base, or simultaneously alleviate
8 the tax burdens on our existing taxpayers. The
9 approximately $260,000 in property taxes that
10 would come directly from the line would be a more
11 than welcome addition.
12 Comment 414 The transmission line would also be
13 catalyst for wind farm developments such as that
14 in Judith Gap. MATL project pays approximately
15 $1.2 million in taxes to the county in which it is
16 located. To put that into perspective, Pondera
17 County's entire budget for fiscal year 2008 was
18 right at $7 million. This is a big impact, folks.
19 From an economic point of view, factoring in
20 additional people, businesses, and support
21 services, both for line itself and for
22 accompanying wind towers, the positive fiscal
23 impact of this project could be critical for the
24 sustainability of our communities.
25 As Commissioners, we also have a duty of

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1 care towards all of the residents in the county,
2 which includes a variety of businesses, as well as
3 agriculture. With all three Commissioners
4 involved in business, and two of our three
5 Commissioners actively involved in the production
6 agriculture, it is a duty we take seriously.
7 Comment 415 There is no denying that farming around
8 power poles is costly, inefficient, and there are
9 a whole variety of politically incorrect
10 adjectives that can be used to describe the
11 process. It follows logically that it's much
12 simpler to farm around single pole structures that
13 are located on section lines, as opposed to double
14 pole structures that were initially proposed in
15 the diagonal crossings. To the extent practical,
16 monopoles should be utilized. This line needs to
17 be built right, but it must be built.
18 Comment 416 All stakeholders need to recognize that
19 both MATL and farmers face serious financial
20 consequences based upon these placement decisions,
21 and an equitable balance has to be achieved.
22 Many of the concerns that we have heard
23 regarding compensation for poles should be
24 business negotiations between MATL and private
25 landowners. To that end, we would urge both the

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Response 415: Comment noted.

Response 416: MATL has proposed a revised compensation package and an alternative dispute resolution process. They are described in Sections 2.3 and 3.13.2.

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DOE and the DEQ to issue any and all necessary Comment 417 permits as expeditiously as possible, so that MATL may finalize those negotiations and begin construction. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Doug Ray, please.

Comment 418 MR. RAY: Thank you. I'll be brief. I represent Glacier -- (inaudible) -- and I'm here on behalf of the Board of Directors and the management. And we just want to throw our support behind this project. It means a lot to a lot of people, and we'll do whatever it takes to get it going. Thank you.

MR. COMO: The next speaker signed up is Chris Berg.

MR. BERG: My name is Chris Berg. I live in the northwest, Conrad, and I'm a citizen of the United States, and a member of Pondera County.

Comment 419 MATL's Alternative 2 would pass just west of my property in Pondera County, and may additionally affect the western view from my property. However, I'm in favor of the project for the following reasons.

A very clear Environmental Impact Statement study has been completed. It means a

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Response 417: Comments noted.

Response 418: Comment noted.

Response 419: Your comment is noted. See the discussion of Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 420 and 421: Comment noted.

very minimal impact on the -- (inaudible) -- environment of both farm. Several designs and construction methods have been incorporated into the project to minimize the environmental impact at the cost of MATL. I believe MATL has gone to great lengths to meet the concerns of persons and entities at the top of the line, including changes in pole types, and monetary compensation for those affected.

Comment 420 MATL's project is good for the state and local economies of Montana. Rural communities will benefit from the construction, future maintenance, and tax revenues paid by MATL, which could be critically important for rural areas of Montana now and in the future.

Comment 421 This project will enable several wind turbine farms to operate in north central Montana. Wind energy is a very environmentally friendly electrical generation resource that without this line would not be possible. This project, in combination with wind generation, will be seen by other investors, and will help Montana become recognized as a place to develop renewable energy resources.

In the end, I do believe there is some

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sacrifice by those who farm lands or are crossed by those lines. However, many of those concerns have been met. This line is critically important for Montana and its rural communities, including Conrad. Comment 422

Comment 423 Furthermore, I'm extremely disappointed that I was not contacted by MATL as a land owner whose land would be bordered by the line. Just this evening looking at the new map, I made this discovery. I believe it's due process that I be contacted as part of the process. The new alternative is an alternative to Alternative 2 northwest of Conrad, and I was not aware it may cross or border my property.

I am, however, still in favor of the line, but I would like to be better informed. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

MR. COMO: Harold Olson, please.

Comment 424 MR. OLSON: Tom, Tony, and the rest of the committee here, we thank you for giving us this opportunity to tell you our feelings about the MATL line. I am Harold Olson of Conrad, and I represent the Pondera Economic Development Corporation, and the corporation has been in the economic development business for over 30 years.

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Response 422: Comments noted.

Response 423: See the revision in Section 2.6.5.

Response 424: Comment noted.

Response 425: Comment noted.

Comment 424 (Cont.) This is one of the greatest economic development possibilities that we have. We have seen the demise of lumbering in Montana, mining in Montana, the demise of many energy sources; and with that, we need alternate energy transmission lines, so that development of wind power becomes more feasible. So I speak on behalf of the Board in favor of this project. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Chris Stephens.

MR. STEPHENS: Hello. My name is Chris Stephens, and my family farms in the county where this line is being built. We will have at least a mile to a mile and a half of this line, depending upon the route.

Comment 425 I myself was personally disappointed in all the County Commissioners and local businesses, who are more concerned with the needs of MATL than they are of long time faithful taxpayers. We aren't asking for much. We are asking only for a design of this line in a manner that the local cooperatives have long recognized as the proper design for the power infrastructure. It is not a coincidence that the resistance of this line begins with the start of the diagonal at Conrad, and continues south to Great Falls, and sets the

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diagonal.

Comment 426 One has to remember that along this portion of line, we aren't talking about one diagonal line, we are talking about two diagonal lines. There is already a diagonal line that we have had to live with for thirty years.

Comment 427 The northern portion of this line has all of the benefits, the north/south orientation and the wind development; the southern all of the impacts, the diagonal, and no wind development.

Since I have owned my farm east of town here, I have had two power lines, a gas line with a pumping station, and a fiberoptic line cross this farm, and none of them provide service to my farm. I did not oppose them. I am not against progress.

Comment 428 We talk about the tax base and the economic development MATL brings to these communities. Let me share the tax base and the economic benefits my family provides. We pay $26,539 in taxes in Pondera County; $64,210 in Teton County; $39,896 in Cascade County; $2,783 in Choteau County; for a total of over $133,000 annually property taxes.

By -- (inaudible) -- to have a line

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Response 426: The agencies realize that an existing 115 kV transmission line already crosses fields on a diagonal.

Response 427: Comment noted.

Response 428: Comment noted.

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built on its property on Teton County, spend Comment 428 (Cont.) $315,000 at front line angle over the last three years for an average of almost $79,000 a year. I myself have spent over $80,000 in the last two months -- (inaudible) -- my day. This is just one business.

We support many other businesses in Conrad. I am disappointed and angered by the lack of support of the Conrad community. We're asking only for this line to be built so it doesn't negatively impact the people that supported the schools and businesses before MATL arrived, and will be here long after MATL leaves.

Comment 429 The State of Montana, through the generosity of its tax policy, have given MATL a tax break of between $2.1 million and $2.3 million annually, over $100 million over the projected fifty year lifetime of this project. It's time that MATL shows generosity, and to agree to spend the $4 million to $7 million to build Alternative 4 monopoles. After all, they're actually using our money to build it with.

Comment 430 MATL could also show its generosity by purchasing the entire 105 foot easement that they will exercise complete control over, not just the

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Response 429: See Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 430: MATL has changed its proposal and would purchase the 105-foot easement. See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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45 foot piece, not just the 45 foot. The Alberta Utilities Board is requiring this in Canada. Why not here in Montana?

Comment 431 The economic benefits of the wind farms are documented in the EIS, but the impact never mentioned is that these projects do not stand alone. There has to be a network of additional power lines to connect to this merchant line. Are these lines going to be allowed to take off any direction cross country to get to MATL, possibly using eminent domain against those who oppose these additional power lines?

Comment 432 MATL is more than willing to use eminent domain to get where it's going. In fact, there are people in this room who have already received such letters telling them this. If you live between a windy ridge and this line, you, too, may share in the unpleasant impacts of power development, with none of the money from the power, the profits are not shared, only the problems.

Comment 433 I for one am not interested in maintaining around these poles for MATL. That responsibility lies solely with MATL, and the EIS states this, but this company is trying to pass

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Response 431: See the discussions of Wind Farm Issues and Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 432: See the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 433: Under DEQ administrative rules, MATL could contract with landowners for reclamation and weed control; however, this is not a requirement and certain landowners might wish to have MATL or its contractors perform weed control.

Response 434 and 435: Comments noted.

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this duty off to the farmers -- (inaudible) -- such payments, including in the farming impact payments. If MATL thinks that it is profitable to do this for the small amount being offered, let them hire an independent contractor for this duty. I do not want to become an employee of MATL in any capacity.

Comment 434 In closing, I have been a member of a group of landowners who have been meeting with MATL for over two years. We have never said that we didn't want this built. We have chanted the mantra: Field lines, section lines, monopoles; field lines, section lines, monopoles. MATL has not listened. They have always said, "Too much money, too much money, too much money."

I have to wonder how much money is enough for these people. Is the $1 million tax relief that the taxpayers of Montana will have to replace enough? Is the projected revenues of over a billion dollars in the first ten years of operations enough? For the profits from next fine lines of President Johan promises to stockholders enough?

Comment 435 I want to thank the DEQ and Tom Ring for designing the agency alternative, Alternative 4

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and the work they have done, and I want to thank Ellen Russell and her co-workers for being curious and concerned enough to actually ride on a 120 foot sprayer, and experience first hand the difficulty these structures are in conducting agriculture. The same invitation was extended to MATL officials two years ago, but they didn't find interest in it until they saw your example. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Shawn Dolan.

Comment 436 MR. DOLAN: Hi. My name is Shawn Dolan. It would have been Hayden, Idaho. My family owns 400 acres, a little over half a section near the Belgian Hill area. The MATL line has three proposed crossings on our property, one of it guts the center of the property, which is the area of the field, right down the center; Alternative 4 crosses the north part of the field line; and then Alternative 2 cuts diagonally, and then runs along the road.

We're not opposed to the MATL line. However, we feel that they need to make some design changes. And to the previous fellow that spoke, all I could say is, "Amen, hallujah." His sentiments pretty much echo ours as we go through

Comment 437

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Response 436: In response to this and similar comments, DEQ has learned that the Dolans and Andersons have purchased shares in the Pondera County Canal and Reservoir Company for water to be used to irrigate the affected parcel of land. Thus, the local routing option designed to move the line farther away from two houses is not workable.

DEQ, MATL representatives and engineers, and an independent transmission design engineer under contract to DEQ reevaluated local routing options in the Belgian Hill Road area. A local routing option previously dismissed was revisited when it was learned that an existing side roll irrigation system could be spanned. This would enable the line to be located along the western edge of property owned by the Dolan family, as indicated on Figure 2.6-7 in the Final EIS. This alignment would allow for one or two center pivots to be constructed on this parcel of land. This alignment also remains about 0.5 mile from houses along Belgian Hill Road. However, it would increase the amount of cropland crossed by approximately 0.42 mile and adds 0.35 mile of total line length to the previous Belgian Hill local routing option.

Response 437: Comment noted.

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that.

Comment 438 One of the previous speakers talked about, "Get the process over so MATL can negotiate with the land owners." I hope that is indeed the case. What we've experienced was a right-of-way agent showed up on our doorstep, said, "Sign this or I'm taking your property through eminent domain," which kind of poses an interesting question. I know they assert that they have eminent domain rights, but I wonder if a class action suit should be taken to the Supreme Court. I don't return the Canadian company's stealing US citizens' property.

Comment 439 And the 105 foot for the full right-of-way is a standard practice in the utility industry.

If you want a little background about myself, since some of you may not have been here at the last meeting, I am a registered professional engineer in the state of Montana. I'm chief engineer for an electric cooperative in Idaho, and have been working in the utility industry for over twenty years building power lines, transmission lines, and the like.

Comment 440 To talk about the EIS, I read the

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Response 438: Comment noted. See the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 439: MATL has revised its application indicating that it would purchase an easement for a 105-foot-wide right-of-way.

Response 440: Comment noted.

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1 documents early. I thought it was fairly well
2 done, covered most of the issues. I was Comment 440 (Cont.)
3 appreciative that the staff took into account my
4 comments previously about the pie-in-the-sky
5 claims that a lot of people getting thousands of
6 jobs and everything like that, toned it down to
7 more realistic economic impacts. I think the
8 numbers they have in there now are pretty close to
9 probably what they'll see, maybe a little bit
10 optimistic, but I don't know -- (inaudible) --
11 I did notice in the EIS in the Comment 441
12 Regulatory Restriction Analysis in Section S.7,
13 the preparers seem to be a little bit more
14 concerned about the MATL's private property rights
15 than the land owners' property rights. I don't
16 know about the rest of you, but MATL is offering
17 us an option to purchase right-of-way at pennies
18 on the dollar, and then when they got further Comment 442
19 along, they were going to pony up the money for
20 the 45 feet of the 105 foot wide strip a mile long
21 that they wanted to take of our property.
22 Comment 443 So they really don't have a huge amount
23 invested unless they went out to actually sign
24 checks for the full easement out to some folks.
25 They certainly did not offer that option to us.

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Response 441: In addition to determining impacts to the environment, MEPA requires the regulatory restrictions analysis to disclose the economic impact on the applicant of additional requirements imposed by the agency that are not absolutely required by law. 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. See the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 442: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 443: Comment noted.

Comment 443 (Cont.)

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They just offered us an option at this point. So I would say their private property rights are probably a little shakey at this point, and that the preparers should probably focus on the land owners' rights, as well as MATL's rights, and balance out that perspective. It did seem to be a little one-sided on that.

Comment 444 Regarding the routes through our property on Belgian Hill, we'd certainly be willing to talk to MATL about it if they want to make some changes to the design, but like the fellow said before, it goes section line, field line, don't cross diagonally, make square corners, and we'll deal with some guy wires, but we don't want you crossing diagonally or gutting the field. Our field is an irrigated half-section of land in that particular area, and it's going to be real hard to predict where we'll put our irrigation system in if we put those poles there. We would prefer to have an amount of poles along the section line or along the road line.

Comment 445 If MATL does decide to go with their alternative Belgian Hill option through the center of our field, our family has already decided we are going to file a lawsuit because it will in

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Response 444 and 445: The agencies have revised their evaluation of the Belgian Hill local routing option. See the response to comment 436 and Sections 2.6 and 3.16.

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effect make our property worthless for anything other than grazing. Right now it is in CRP, but with the recent IRS decision that CRP payments are counted as earned income for self-employment tax, it might come out of CRP sooner than it is scheduled to.

Comment 446 I guess I have general comments on the EIS. I know a number of engineers and professional people have worked on preparing this. As I've gone through it, the only engineering PE stamp I saw was from someone from California. I think that Montana state law requires that public facilities designed in the state have to be sealed by an engineer registered in the state with a Montana PE stamp, so you might check into that and make sure that they have that, or they probably just didn't use it.

Comment 447 And then finally, I'd like to further address the minimum line clearance issue. The EIS lists the minimum line to ground clearance as 21.2 feet. In Volume 2, the response to my previous comments, I believe DEQ talked to HDR Engineers in Billings, Montana, Mr. William Bowers (phonetic) who is a very talented and gifted transmission line designer, and he ran the calculations, and

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Response 446: An EIS is not an engineering design document requiring approval by a professional engineer. MATL and the agencies are currently in a planning and permitting process. If agency approval is granted, MATL would proceed with final design before constructing the line. If the project is approved, one of the conditions of approval could be a requirement that final design plans be reviewed and approved by an engineer registered in Montana.

Response 447: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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1 came up with a little bit higher number than I
2 have, because he assumed 4,500 feet in elevation,
3 and I assumed 3,300 feet. That was the
4 difference, the elevation error.
5 Comment 448 MATL contacted Maher (phonetic) and
6 Associates out of Missoula, Montana. As luck
7 would have it, I've worked with both of those
8 people, and have worked with the same company. I
9 had nice visit with Dave, and he said, "I can't
10 share the calculations." He was asked if the bare
11 minimum calculations are for a 230 line.
12 Comment 449 And my main concern that I have on the
13 line to ground clearance is that the 21 foot
14 level, 21.2, 21.8, depending on which page you
15 pick the number off, that's too low for a 230 line
16 to cross agricultural fields. The National
17 Electric Safety Code has provisions specifically
18 that states that you anticipate for height
19 equipment operating, such as combines, sprinklers,
20 etc., you should designed the line to accommodate
21 the height of these vehicles, and it's reasonable
22 to expect them to operate in that area.
23 I've got copies of that portion of the
24 code. It's Footnote 26, Table 232-1; and also the
25 National Electric Safety Code Handbook, Edition 6,

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Response 448: Thank you for your research.

Response 449: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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and it talks specifically about that.

Comment 450 One of the things that I found in reading MATL's comments, they said, "Well, we had three different engineers look at it. They all came up with different numbers. We're going to use our minimum, bare bones, because we don't know what type of vehicle is going to go across that."

Comment 451 If you read through the code, the term that they're trying to rely on, it says, "Vehicles under 14 feet in height." I called John Deere and said, "Send me an email with a diagram showing the height of your equipment, your combines," so they sent me the 9000 series combine envelope drawings, and they put some engines on it, plus the original printout that I got from John Deere, and down-the-road height of their combine is fourteen feet six inches in operation with no modifications to the combine, with the hopper out, sixteen feet seven inches, above the fourteen foot mark.

Comment 452 Now, there's one modification that most farmers make to their combine, and I've dealt with a lot of farmers through my transmission line construction and acquisition. I've -- (inaudible) -- their farmers. They usually add a two-way radio to their combine, or a CB. Right? Where do

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Response 450 to 452: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 453 and 454: Comments noted.

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they put the antenna? On the cab. So if you look at that 9000 Series combine whose cab height is twelve feet four inches, when you add a standard 180 inch CB with antenna to the top of the cab, the height of that vehicle when it's operating in the field is 21 feet four inches. Guess what? That's right at the conductor level.

What's going to happen to you if you run into a 230 KV line with your CB antenna on top of your combine? You're going to be dead.

Comment 453 Now, every three years I take an update on the National Electric Safety Code from the fellow that used to be the Chairman of the NESC code committee, that was Mr. Allen -- (inaudible) -- and this last fall, I took my update, and I sat with Allen after the class, and had a beer, and kind of explained why, and his response to me was, "The first farmer that hits it, the plaintiff's attorney will have no problem getting a multi-million dollar lawsuit, and they will own that transmission line company, because there is no defense for that."

Comment 454 His exact words that he's fond of saying is, "That's socially unacceptable behavior to put a 230 KV line at that level above worked

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agricultural ground." Above grazing ground where you don't expect a combine, it's fine to go down that low; but above agriculture ground, there's stuff that's perceived -- (inaudible) -- area is criminal.

Comment 455 Now, I did some quick calculations. MATL used Rule 232(d) out of the National Electric Safety Code to calculate their height, which is a reduced clearance based on switching surge factors of the transmission line. In that rule, there is an exception, or kind of a stop gap, and it says, "Minimum height shall be based on Rule 232(c) for at least 98 KV." It means you can't go below that calculated level.

Which points you back to Rule 232(c), and you go look at that, Column 4, and there's a Footnote 26. If you have the latest edition, it's in there. If you have an earlier edition, there is an errata sheet saying that Footnote should be Footnote 26, says if it's anticipated over height equipment, you have to add the difference of the height between that equipment and the 14 feet that's in the code.

And if you have a combine that's running down the field with a CB antenna that's at 21 foot

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Response 455: Comment noted. Under DEQ regulations, MATL must comply with the National Electrical Safety Code.

Response 456 and 457: Comments noted.

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1 four inches, subtract that 14 feet, add that
2 difference to the covered value, that line
3 clearance ends up closer to 29 feet you have to
4 meet, substantially higher than MATL is quoting.
5 I'll turn in my notes for you to look through.
6 MR. COMO: Gary Iverson, please.
7 Comment 456 MR. IVERSON: Hi. I'm Gary Iverson.
8 I'm the Mayor of the town of Sunburst, and I'm
9 here representing the City Council, the businesses
10 of Sunburst, the school system in Sunburst, and
11 all of the citizens of Sunburst, and their support
12 for the line and the potential industry that it
13 can bring into Montana.
14 We do understand those concerns with
15 where the line goes, and we understand the people
16 who live around it and work under it, and the line
17 has to take care of those problems. But this
18 opportunity to have this line and to have the wind
19 farms and the industry that go along with this
20 line are very incremental to this area, and keep
21 our populations, our schools, and keep some of our
22 kids home.
23 Comment 457 We had an interesting comment in Cut
24 Bank last night that Roy brought up, and he asked
25 the people how many people in the crowd have

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children who had to go out of state to find a job, and I'll to do that for Roy tonight, and raise your hands. How many people have kids out of state? They have to go out of state to find a job because there is no jobs in Montana. We don't have a lot of opportunities for a lot of different industries, that I see wind power as being one that's really incremental to us.

And we just wanted to pass on our support for this project. We want the project done right, and we want to see the wind farms come in, and everything else. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Curt Reis.

(No response)

MR. COMO: Melissa McRae.

Comment 458 MS. McRAE: Hello. For the record, my name is Melissa McRae, and I'm a fourth generation farmer out near Dutton, and I'm actually for the MATL project. But I'm also graduating as a Bobcat this spring with a biology degree, and this is an environmental impact hearing, and we haven't talked about that, so I would like to talk about environmental effects.

You must understand that farming around poles is inconvenient and financially burdensome,

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Response 458: The study of the costs of farming around structures that is included in the EIS includes consideration of the potential for reduced crop yields due to inadvertent over-application of herbicides and fertilizers. Effects of over-application of chemicals on groundwater would depend on the nature of the chemicals used. Selection of pesticide chemicals that degrade rapidly would minimize the potential for pesticide contamination of groundwater. Excess fertilizer application could be a problem in high groundwater areas. Fertilizer nutrients and long-lived pesticides have the potential to infiltrate to the underlying groundwater, but on dryland farms the potential for adverse effects would be low because little moisture infiltrates to the water table. With or without a transmission line, farmers should monitor their fertilizer and pesticide use to avoid overloading. Also see the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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but I would like to speak about this in detail. Much of the cost is incurred by the extra chemical and fertilizer used. 134 foot sprayers are not designed to turn sharply, and when you go around the pole, you lay down extra spray. It's inevitable.

This is a concern for the farmer because extra chemical can burn the crop, and it can cause production loss. It should also be a concern to everyone because extra chemical has potential to be very dangerous to our -- (inaudible) -- If you look toward the future, in fifty years the cumulative effect of this chemical could be even worse, and in areas like Valier, where the ground water is very high, you can expect that people may even start to feel these effects.

Comment 459 The best solution would be to keep the poles out of the fields, but the next best solution would be to minimize the number of poles in the fields, keep them to the edges whenever possible, and make sure they are monopoles.

Comment 460 We also would appreciate financial incentive to help us make sure that we farm the poles carefully, that we limit the damage we do. We are given incentives by the government to help

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Response 459: See the response to comment 85 regarding pole placement.

Response 460: MATL's revised compensation package is described in Section 2.3.

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pay for the extra costs of GPS and other systems that make precision spraying possible, lessening the amount of chemicals we use there. Shouldn't we also receive help for the burden of farming around poles?

Comment 461 I know that everyone is very excited about the economic -- (inaudible) -- these poles may bring, and I hope along with you that more business ventures like this will help keep towns together, and schools like the one I graduated from open. But we need to keep in mind that the ones said to profit the most from this transmission line is MATL, and they need to negotiate with landowners to make the burden for their for-profit merchant line more bearable for us.

I ask you all to please visit the company's website at Tonbridgepower.com to see for yourselves. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Cheryl Curry.

Comment 462 MS. CURRY: I'm again standing here in support of the construction of the proposed MATL line.

At the Great Falls hearing, it was mentioned that the proposed Alternative No. 4

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Response 461: Comment noted.

Response 462: Alternative 4 lies within the project study area. See the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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would be a preferred alternative. I'm standing to oppose this selection. The studies have been completed on the MATL proposal. Alternative 4 moves the lines significantly away from the already studied area, and also makes less sense.

The Alternative No. 4 places the line east of Comment 463 Conrad, a greater distance from the proposed wind development, and farther from the already existing substations.

In consideration of future environmental impacts, this is not a good choice. Lines from potential wind development areas and some substations that may eventually connect would be longer, and more obstacles would be encountered.

Comment 464 I support the project, and urge the DEQ to move forward quickly on this project in order that this area may see the benefits in our economy, rather than see another project go away.

Comment 465 I'm also carrying a letter signed by 25 people that says, "In an effort to show our support for the MATL transmission line and cut down on the number of responses you must make to our comments, we present this letter as a group of individuals. We support the line and believe that it is good for the area. The economic benefits of

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Response 463: Comment noted. There is no evidence on the record that a wind farm west of Conrad would interconnect to the MATL line. Other possible interconnections should a wind farm be proposed in the area include the NorthWestern Energy 115-kV line and the Western Area Power Administration 230-kV line. Both have substations just south of Conrad. Figure 4.1-2 sets out the locations of potential wind farms, based on field observations of anemometers. One anemometer location was found west of Conrad and west of Alternative 2.

Response 464 and 465: Comments noted.

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the line and the potential of wind development projects in the future will contribute in a positive way for our rural economy. We believe the environmental concerns are minor, and we welcome the enhanced tax base and the jobs that will be created. We ask you to move the process forward in an expeditious manner with thoughts of fairness to the affected landowners."

And I didn't identify myself. Cheryl Curry.

Comment 466 For those of you that weren't at the Great Falls hearing, and because I also am a friend of farmers, I want to make sure that you understand that I am also standing in understanding your concerns, and urging consideration of your concerns.

MR. COMO: Is it Mr. McFarland?

MR. McFARLAND: Forgive me if I turn my back to you. I came to talk to these guys, not you.

Comment 467 My name is John McFarland. I'm a small business owner from Conrad. I would just like to say with respect to all of our friends in agriculture, that we would like to see the MATL line go through. We're in favor of it, but doing

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Response 466: Comment noted.

Response 467: Any approved alternative alignment would generally be 500-feet wide and would allow for adjustments to better align with property lines, field edges, and strip-cropping boundaries. Also see the response to comment 85.

Response 468 and 469: Comments noted.

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so following property lines, section lines, township lines, etc.

Comment 468 We also respect the fact that the agricultural community is the greatest contributor to wealth in our area, but we would also like to see the additional impact created -- (inaudible) -- by the MATL line. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you. Of all of the people that have just signed our list just indicated that they wanted copies of the document. We've sort of run out of the names of people who said that they wanted to say something. So I'm sure everybody is sitting there -- we have plenty more names. Great. Well, some.

FEMALE SPEAKER: Wendy Judisch.

Comment 469 MS. JUDISCH: Thank you, Mr. Como. My name is Wendy Judisch. I am a resident of the city of Conrad, and a member of the Conrad City Council.

I welcome the opportunity for our area to use our natural resources. One of these natural resources is our wind, a great source of renewable energy. A transmission line through our area will not only help encourage the development of wind energy, but also help to spread the tax

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Response 470 and 471: Comment noted.

burden throughout our area. The economic boost and its inevitable spin-off will help benefit our area schools, our city, and our county.

Comment 470 I encourage you to help the proposed MATL line become a reality as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. The economic pros far outweigh any environmental cons. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you. We seem to have run out of names again. No. She's waving me off. Sir.

MR. STROM: So I want to thank you for this opportunity to appear before you. My name is Eric Strom. I live in Conrad. I was born and raised in Pondera County. I've farmed for 43 years, and just retired from that farming. And you can take the farmer off the farm, but you can't take the farmer out of the farmer.

Comment 471 So what I do, once I'm retired, I'm not retired. I run sprayers, 36 foot header combines. My biggest problem is going down the road, and hitting mail boxes.

But here is my comment. And I'm in support of the MATL line. I think it's a great idea. I know there is some problems that need to be resolved. But one thing I think is positive is

Response 472: Comment noted.

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that if we had a wind farm out this side of town would keep my plastic garbage cans from rolling down the street, because I know it reduces the velocity of wind. But thank you.

MR. COMO: We seem to have run out of names again. Good.

Comment 472 MR. DULLEM: Thank you, Tom and Tony. I will face you. I marked out -- First let me say that my name is John Dullem, I live in Valier, and I'm presently the Superintendent of Schools. I'm not sure how long that will last. -- (inaudible) -- items as they were stated, and I'd like to thank you, Tom.

There is one issue that I think that has not been mentioned, and I did talk to Tom on the phone -- and I just met Tony -- asked him to send me the document. It's over 600 pages. I can't remember if it was Page 491 or Page 2 that I fell asleep.

This is my second time through this. We moved from Oregon, and had the opportunity to represent a county that was very similar to this situation, to Pondera County, and all of the good impacts that come with wind farms have been stated, and there is only one that I would add

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that seems to have been missed, and this is all mixed up . I don't want to take your time.

Comment 473 And I did not see it in the executive summary either, Tom. And that is the value that this project has to our nation. Our utilities face some very complex decisions, one requiring trying to acquire power. Utilities are looking for a number of different sources and strategies. We're going to by 2010 be facing a serious power shortage, and the gross load that is coming will only intensify that shortage.

Comment 474 So I say to you: Besides the good that will come to my county, Pondera County, besides the tax base increase that will come to my state, it's my nation that will benefit from this. This program helps satisfy our need for power, and the plan meets the environmental tests. Of course, we have to realize those issues that impact our friends and neighbors. The plan moves this region and this nation forward.

Comment 475 So I say to you three gentlemen: Implement this plan and implement it promptly. Thank you very much for the opportunity.

MR. COMO: Thank you.

MR. REIS: I'm Ronald Reis, and I'm from

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Response 473 to 475: See Sections 3.13 and 3.17 for benefits from the MATL line, including some benefits that would extend beyond Montana's borders.

Response 476 to 478: Comments noted.

Conrad, and I'm a small business owner in town. Comment 476
And we've heard about all of the positive things that this project can bring to our community, and communities which this line travels through. I am in support of this project, providing that it passes the two "F" word rules, and them words are, "farmer friendly." If this project is not farmer friendly, and meets the needs and the operations of the farmers that this projects goes through, then MATL has more work to do. Thank you.

Comment 477 MR. COMO: Anybody else?

We've got one in the back and then --

MR. FETGER (phonetic): My name is Patrick Fetger, and I was born and raised in this country. And I can remember no electricity, no running water, no phones, not many paved roads. I don't want that again.

Comment 478 I remember when one -- (inaudible) -- REA came in, and no one was against that. Many people who had no electricity prior to that also got phones, or had no phones but no electricity. We have had boom and bust building, and drought, and flood, since the advent of power on demand. We have had creature comforts. We as an area affected by this transmission line may have a

Response 479 to 481: Comments noted.

future of steady growth. With power available, we are in a good area. We are on the transportation corridor with I-15, we would be on power corridor. We would be on -- With a water project in the works, the area is going to be looked at by other entities.

Comment 479 The inconvenience of the power poles affects everyone involved, the farming, and whoever has to move or build. I myself would not want a pole or structure on me property. That would be inconvenient for me, but I would not say no if it made sense.

Comment 480 I would hope that the changes made by the power line would help my children, grandchildren, and others stay in the area, so that they might have the opportunity to live and work in Montana as I have. Thank you.

MR. COMO: Thank you, sir.

Comment 481 UNKNOWN SPEAKER: Good to see you guys again tonight. I think we have got a bigger crowd than we had last night in Cut Bank. So far I as I know, -- (inaudible) -- Pondera County, both Pondera and Teton Counties. And I am in favor of this, but I think MATL has to work with the farmers, because it's no fun farming around oil

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wells, power poles. I have worked -- (inaudible) -- where I had -- (inaudible) -- poles, some monopoles in fields, and stuff, and I had to drive 100 foot sprayer again. So 134 foot sprayer -- (inaudible) -- to work around these -- spray around these poles.

The only comment that I've got to say, and that's to you, very few, that you alone with our combine any more proceedings. And probably your average -- (inaudible) -- would be between 24 and 30 inches -- (inaudible) -- but that's the only thing I can disagree with. But I am in favor, and I think that -- (inaudible) -- MATL can do a better job with the landowners. I think they've got to get up and do a better job of working with the landowners. Thank you.

Comment 482 MALE SPEAKER: I don't know you guys. I do know -- (inaudible) -- My name is George Tsonga (phonetic), and I'm the manager of the local -- (inaudible) -- theater here in town. I'm one of those people from the state of Montana that we're losing each and every day. We've got lots and lots of assets in this beautiful state of Montana. We have more resources than any other state in the nation. We're No. 6 in production. But we're

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Response 482: Comment noted.

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losing our young people.

I was gone for 35 years. I came back only because I have elderly relatives here, and I came back to care for them. But in that process, I got reacquainted again with why I was here in the first place. I love this state. I asked for and received the brand that my grandfather had when he homesteaded in this country. I still own that, and I'll pass it on to my children. I want them to have a piece of Montana.

But if we do not start to utilize these resources to create opportunities for our young people to come back and live in this state, and become active and vital members, we're losing one of the best raw resources that we have.

Comment 483 I'm not a farmer. I did, however, -- {inaudible} -- been able to catch a fence corner or two, because I was hired by local farmers when you guys could still go out and hire young men that wanted to work. We're getting rid of these people, and we need them around here. I did learn from those experiences, though. If you rebuild enough the fence corners, you can start missing them pretty quick.

So I only want to say that anytime that

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Response 483: Comment noted.

Responses 484 to 486: Comments noted.

Comment 484

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we can create opportunities for our young people to come back into this wonderful state -- I not only love the mountains, and the trees, and the animals that are there, but I'm a prairie boy. I love fields, I love grass, I love the Big Sky Country. I've lived in about 13 other states in the 35 years I was gone from here, and there is nothing like the Big Sky of Montana.

Comment 485 MR. BRANNING (phonetic): My name is Rich Branning, and I think I know 90 percent of the people in here. I've got offices -- that's the reason why -- I have offices in Cut Bank, Conrad, Valier, and Browning. I'm also a small farmer, for those of you who didn't know that little tidbit. So I'm kind of nervous about it. I don't farm the land, but listening to the gentlemen over here, I think they made some valid points, and I hope that MATL and the farmers can get together and work out those points.

Comment 486 But on another aspect, I'm also a business person, and I see the importance of this project, and I think all of the people that have spoken have spoke towards the progress of this project, other than there needs to be some more discussions.

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Response 487 to 489: Comments noted.

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The gentleman from Idaho, being a professional, very good. I appreciate that. But we're in Montana here, and I hope that things can be worked out in the long run.

Comment 487 I also have four children, and I really don't want to ship my commodities out. So I am very much in support of this, and I know a lot of other people that are in this room, too. So thank you.

Comment 488 FEMALE SPEAKER: My name is Jackie -- (inaudible) -- and I'm from Sunburst, Montana. I don't farm, and I understand that there is problems with farming. My husband is in the oil fields, and you know, things are inconvenient. If we go across someone's field, we compensate them for going across their field. When a line is laid -- my husband is on the board for more telephones -- when there is line laid, they're compensated.

Comment 489 I hear all about the taxes you're paying, and that's -- you know, we're all paying taxes, and golly, it's a lot. It's a lot today, especially if you have kids and everything else. The tennis shoes alone will break you by the time they're out of high school. But they're compensated.

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There is a lot of breaks that you get from the government that we don't get. And I'm very resentful to you for saying, "We will sue." Sue? You're from Idaho. We're from Montana. Okay. Sue -- (inaudible) -- No. I'm upset with you. These people are trying to work things out, and we're running up -- sue. Yes, you said you would.

Comment 490 But what I'm saying is: This is a business that's coming in here. They're getting money. Every one of you that went into business or are farming, you're there to make money. And if you do really well, you can hire someone. That's great. They can draw from that. That's what business is. You go into business to make money for yourself, and these people are, but they do have a responsibility. I'd love to see them buy the land from you to run that thing through, so you wouldn't have to farm it, so you wouldn't have to go around it. That would be great. They need to work with the farmer.

This is your land. This is your heart. And they have a responsibility to work with you, but you also have a responsibility to work with them, so that all of us can benefit. And that's

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Response 490: The agencies recognize the controversy over this project and the disagreement among people who might be affected. See Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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what I think we need to think about, not just ourselves. We all can benefit from this. But let's not -- (inaudible) -- and close our eyes, and say, "We won't talk about it unless it's 100 percent our way." We all have to compromise.

Golly. How many people are married here? How many people have to compromise? How many people have to compromise?

Things are really, really, really important to us, like our land, like our jobs, like our families. We all have to compromise. And I guess what I'm trying to say is this: Please, please. Sit down at the table; don't threaten each other; compromise; work this out so that everybody can benefit. Thank you.

MR. ANDERSON: I'm Ray Anderson, and I take offense to that. Shawn Dolan here is a very bright man, well educated, and he knows what he's talking about. But I'll tell you what. It's MALT plan that they compensated to the people to the north of us, and they compensated to the people to the south of us, and they want to go directly up the middle of our full half-section, right up the middle of it.

How many of you people would like to

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have a power line go right up the middle of your place? It's irrigated property, and it would eliminate the chance of a center pivot system, it eliminates the possibility of a side roll, and it would be value -- (inaudible) --

I think that when they make compensations to the north, they make compensations to the south -- and Randy Rummell, who was the land man that talked to us, I said, "My, gosh, Randy. You're beating us to death." Well, he said, "Yes, kind of." And that's just terrible. And that's why Shawn said that we're not going to stand still for that. We absolutely aren't.

FEMALE SPEAKER: But don't walk away either.

MR. ANDERSON: We're not. Believe me, I'm as much for progress for the state of Montana as anybody, I absolutely am, except that it absolutely has to be done right. But lots of times on school boards, and soil conservation districts, and stuff, and one of the things -- The last thing I said when I left the school board, I said, "You know, put off the project as long as you can; but when you do, do it as possibly as

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1 best as you can. State of the art." That's what
2 -- (inaudible) -- They weren't using state of
3 art. I mean do it first class when you do
4 something, and don't cut any corners.
5 And I said this to MATL before at about
6 four of these meetings that we have had here.
7 They said, well, they can't afford to go to the
8 single poles because of the fact that it was more
9 expensive, but their capacity has been sold out.
10 Now, that's a no-brainer, because if their
11 capacity has been sold out, and yet they can't do
12 it right for the farmers, they sold out too cheap,
13 didn't they? They missing -- (inaudible) --
14 missing in the process.
15 MALE SPEAKER: -- (inaudible) -- Is he
16 from Idaho, and Shawn Dolan, and he's from Idaho.
17 And I was born and raised in Montana, educated in
18 Montana, and left because --
19 FEMALE SPEAKER: His kids aren't going
20 to school here, are they?
21 MALE SPEAKER: No, they're not.
22 FEMALE SPEAKER: And this will help our
23 kids.
24 MALE SPEAKER: I said we're not opposed
25 to the line.

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ruin the value of the property, we're going to look at a lawsuit. If they work the edges, section lines, fence lines, we can work with that. That's what I said.

FEMALE SPEAKER: -- (inaudible) --

MALE SPEAKER: Yes, but sometimes you have to use legal process, and that's part of the legal process.

MALE SPEAKER: -- (inaudible)--

Comment 491 FEMALE SPEAKER: I'm -- (inaudible) -- and I represent House District 28. It's an honor to be here and support this project for economic reasons for this area, for adding a piece of the puzzle for clean energy.

But what I really would like to do is compliment all of you. It's been a long, hard process. You've put many hours of work and thought into this project. This is international. It can happen. I would urge MATL to make things right with the people that work the land, and let's keep working together. Let's make this a pattern for our future. Thank you.

Comment 492 MR. JONES (phonetic): My name is Lew Jones, and tonight I want to talk to you -- I've talked with the state rep a number of times today.

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Response 491: Comments noted.

Response 492: Comment noted.

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We'll talk about the farm boy. I guess I'll start with: I believe they can be -- (inaudible) -- work, and LeeAnne Kavanaugh, and so I won't take credit for it. She said there can be win-win here. There can be a way to settle these issues, and I kind of like that word, so I've kind of stolen it.

As a farmer, I'd like to share some names with you, and there is the Knowles, the Lewises, the Smiths, the Roushers, the Thomases, those are all places that the Jones Ranch now farms. What's happening is we are fairly large operators even in today's world, and unfortunately each time one of those families leaves, our school system shrinks, because there is huge equipment now. Everything is big now. What's happened with ag, it takes less and less numbers. With less and less numbers to control more and more land, Class B schools becomes Class C's, Class C schools go away.

You know, Conrad could become Valier, Valier could become Brady, and Brady could become Gallop City. Do you guys remember Gallop City? It's on the Jones Ranch as well. I don't advocate -- we all know the oilfields are out there. Jerry

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Response 493 to 495: Comments noted.

Comment 493

Christiaens -- I see him standing in the back of the room. I can tell you about power poles, too. I've spun a swather around, and unhooked a guy wire on a stupid corner pole on Sunday, and it cost me $5,000, because Jerry showed up on a Sunday, and -- (inaudible) -- Next time I'm going to leave the pole stay there until Monday. But they are a pain in the ass. There is no question about it.

Comment 494 As a business man in this town, I certainly do not advocate that the farmers and ranchers not be compensated. They remain here. They will be always be a significant part of the tax paying economy. Hopefully we'll be here. I have several sons. I'm hoping they can come home here. That's why I work on this.

Comment 495 We have to broaden our economic base. To do so, we have to achieve a win-win. We have to work this thing out. When the fighting gets nasty, and then it doesn't work out, then we lose. This is possible. There are no enemies here. We appreciate you shopping at Front Line -- (inaudible) -- I kind of like that. I do. And therefore I hope you continue to farm. That's a huge part of what we do.

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1 Comment 496 But I tell you what, we took a risk
2 having -- (inaudible) -- to stay here as well,
3 because it costs money and it was a risk. You
4 know, a lot of folks who said, money in the bank.
5 You've got to roll the dice and try. There are
6 folks here trying to make this work. --
7 (inaudible) -- wants to leave, nobody wants to
8 leave. The farmers wants to make it work. There
9 is only going to be failure when the fighting
10 starts. There can be a win-win here. That's what
11 we've got to achieve. To do that, we've got to
12 keep working on it.
13 Comment 497 MATL has changed their behavior since
14 the first time. They did have a group of land
15 agents that were not doing justice. There is no
16 doubt about it. We talked to Johan personally
17 about that. His phone number is not posted. He
18 is trying to work it and I believe we're
19 discussing the first per pole payments in the
20 history of easements.
21 Comment 498 Now, maybe the per pole payments aren't
22 sufficient. Maybe that needs to be talked about.
23 Maybe there are some adjustments that need to be
24 made. Let's get them done. This is three years.
25 What would happen if the grid -- (inaudible) --

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Response 496: Comment noted.

Responses 497 and 498: See the description of MATL's compensation package in Sections 2.3 and 3.13.2. DEQ is not aware of any other Montana utilities or electric cooperatives that are making annual per pole payments to farmers. Also see Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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and we will achieve what Montana can successfully do to itself a number of times. If we delay this long enough, it will go away. Then two years from now, we'll say, "How come we didn't get that? Why didn't we get it done?"

Comment 499 You know, I look out on this crowd, and there's a number of you that I pester mercilessly to show up at these meetings, because you've got to. If you don't become informed and participate, it goes away. And we need that.

You know, I know why folks don't talk. I heard it here tonight from -- (inaudible) -- We don't talk because we're afraid. We don't want to lose your business. But by the same token, if we don't talk, we lose everything. We have to find a way to work this out.

You know, I want the Jones Ranch to survive. I want the sheep on it to survive. I want this to be a Class B school. Let's find a way to win. Let's quit fighting and get it done.

Comment 500 MR. BLACK: For the record, my name is Jerry Black. I represent Senate District 14. That includes Glacier, Toole, Pondera, Liberty, and Choteau Counties. I want to thank all of the people who got up and spoke. I think this is what

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Response 499: Comment noted.

Response 500: Comment noted.

Response 501: Comments noted.

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we need to hear, this is what MATL needs to hear.

To say that the vast majority of the people in my district support MATL is really an under statement. They would like to see this project go forward. They realize there are great concerns by many landowners, and that these issues have to be resolved. I think it was very unfortunate that MATL got off to such a rough start due to the agents that represented them initially, and they realize that, too. They got started on the wrong foot. They seem to me to be very eager to now meet with farmers and landowners, and try to resolve those issues.

Comment 501 I think Johan said today that he was going out this afternoon to meet with several landowners in regards to their issues, and they want to work together with northern Montana and with the landowners to make this project work, and hopefully they'll be able to get that done.

I think, you know, we've got to realize that not everybody is going to be completely satisfied, landowners, and neither will MATL. They're going to have to make concessions that they really didn't want to do to or live with, and I think some landowners might be in that same

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position. It's kind of a give and take situation.

Comment 502 But this is extremely important. I think this is the largest economic development opportunity that this area has had since oil was discovered in northern Montana, and since all of the railroads were built across Montana, and to Great Falls, and interconnecting. This is an opportunity that we can't afford to miss.

Comment 503 We've talked about what it would do for the schools, the declining enrollments, the tax base. These are all things that we need to do, and work with, and improve upon, and MATL is certainly one of the answers to that.

Comment 504 As far as the need for MATL, it's predicted that the United States is going to have an energy crisis in the next few years, and already roughly sixty coal fired generation plants across the US have been cancelled due to environmental concerns. It's predicted that the price of energy is going to go sky high, and that will affect every one of us.

Wind energy is a clean and affordable energy that we must develop, and we have the best wind energy, one of the best on the North American continent. We have to develop that resource and

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Response 502: Comment noted.

Response 503: See Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 504: Comments noted.

Response 505 and 506: Comments noted.

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make it work.

Comment 505 And yes, there will be some sacrifices. Some landowners might be taking a hit for the team, as Johan said earlier today. But the direction this is going right now I think is in the right direction. I think MATL is listening very seriously to your concerns, they want to address those, and want to work with you, and they want to make this whole project work.

Comment 506 You know, somebody said at one of the other hearings that I was at, you know, the wind is blowing as strong outside -- or inside as it is outside, and I think he was referring to I and Lew at the time.

By the way if you do have any problems, I refer them all over to Representative Lew Jones. He said he would take those calls.

So it's my hope and wish that we work this out. If we can move forward -- and I think we can, if we're really willing to work together. It is an important project that must be done. Thank you.

MR. AIKEN: I'll speak up, get along with MATL quite well, which listening here I have a little advantage --

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MR. COMO: Could you give your name just for the record.

MR. AIKEN: Russ Aiken, C&S Farms.

Comment 507 My youngest grand daughter was there when they showed up to talk to us, and I said, "Well, whatever we do to get along with this, when I'm gone, I don't want her standing on that hill saying, 'What in the hell was Grandpa thinking with this thing?'" So I'm going to assume maybe that's -- (inaudible) -- We met with MATL. The people were nice to work with, and they were considerate to us, and well mannered. They moved the line to the east side of us, and that line could be put on grass land. The Alternative 2 aligned and Alignment 4 were the same on us on Township 30 North, four west, Section 24, 13 and 14.

Comment 508 But in your book of S-4-6, local routing options, Page 5-20, Chapter 3, Page 3-217, 316, 317 -- (inaudible) -- So locating route option would increase the land potential for soil erosion greatly. MATL and I looked at this option when they laid out the plan to cross us. There are several drawbacks to this option, and going down the hill, erosion was the first, weed control from

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Response 507: Comment noted.

Response 508: Since publication of the Draft EIS, MATL representatives and their engineers, a DEQ representative, and an independent transmission engineer under contract to DEQ reviewed the Bullhead Coulee South Local Routing Option. The steepest slopes crossed could be spanned by the transmission line and access for construction and maintenance equipment could avoid the steepest slopes for this local routing option. On the east side of this local routing option, access would be on relatively flat ground at the top of the hill where a structure would be located. Separate access to the base of the hill would be from the old county road. The line could be strung by hand or helicopter minimizing impacts to the steep slope.

The hill on the west end of the local routing option is much gentler but again access could be restricted in the span where the steepest terrain is crossed.

MATL would be required to implement a noxious weed control plan to reduce the spread of weeds regardless of the alternative alignment selected. Likewise, MATL would be required to implement Best Management Practices to control erosion caused by construction and maintenance activities regardless of the alignment selected.'

See the discussion of Vegetation, Wetland and Weed Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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construction, and servicing the line, plus extra expense of $100,000 to build it.

Comment 509 It is also close to an artifact that was left with the flooding in Canada. They asked if we would try not to have this line close to it. If we go down this hill and back up again, there is some 200 foot drop going down and up, and it would involve three more landowners, the MATL people and us as landowners, GPS line on top of the ridge to a gradual descent for a minimum of impact on the land. We will have one inch poles -- we can either farm around it, or include it into the grass next to it. We would like to have this line as it was proposed to us, and the Bull Head Hills curving south, routing off and dismissed.

MR. UNDERDAL: My name is Allan Underdal. I'm a Commissioner with Toole County in the Shelby area. And of course, my two colleagues are here, too. And when I was waiting for them to get up here, usually they're so talkative in the office, and I was wondering why they didn't get up first.

Anyway, we would like to state that in Toole County, we are very much supportive of this

LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR
406-442-8262

Response 509: The cultural resource would be avoided by both MATL's proposed alignment and the Bullhead Coulee South local routing option. See the response to comment 74.

Response 510 to 512: Comments noted.

70

project, and we think that this will be very positive, not only for Toole County, but for Glacier and Pondera County as well, and others.

Comment 510 I was very fortunate today to be standing, just kind of doing some things out in the area where the first wind farm will go in just a few weeks. That isn't dependent upon the MATL line. But we don't want to be the only one that has a wind farm. We see so much potential in this area. There won't be a second wind farm in this area, I don't believe, without MATL. You have to have some way of getting that power to market.

Comment 511 And certainly this is very, very worthwhile. As Jerry said, I think power is at a premium, and certainly it's not going to get any better as time goes on. So we would continue to say that we support this.

Comment 512 I guess one of the things I was thinking about was that when you get up in the morning, usually you get the wind blowing outside, and you don't think something positive; but maybe if you have a wind generator out there, you'll think differently about that, if we could make something negative into a positive, and that's what we'd like to do. Thank you.

LAURIE CRUTCHER, RPR
406-442-8262

March 10, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

I'm a producer in Glacier County. The MATL line will be going through my property. I want to be on record that I'm in support of the MATL line and wind generation in Glacier County.

This is an opportunity for me personally to help the economy of Glacier County and for myself. I have no mineral rights to the land that I bought in 1987. This will give me the chance to have an additional income source for my farm. Glacier County has been suffering through a drought. Comment 513

Change is hard to deal with but this is an opportunity for our area to bring in a new business that is clean and friendly for the environment. I'm willing to deal with some inconvenience to do my part to help bring new business to Glacier County. Comment 514

The MATL line and wind generation will increase the tax base for the County. This will help our tax bills, provide more for our schools, and help build our infrastructure. Comment 515

I support the MATL line.

Thank you.

Mike Koepke

429

Response 513 to 515: Comments noted.

March 11, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 516 The MATL line is scheduled to pass through Koepke Farms property. Koepke Farms is in support of the MATL line.

Comment 517 Tonbridge has been accommodating and has listened to the concerns that we may have had.

Comment 518 We believe that we need to be supportive of new industries that want to come to our counties. The increase in tax base will benefit all taxpayers. This is a rare opportunity for this area to have a clean industry come to our counties. We need to be supportive and take advantage of this opportunity.

Comment 519 Koepke Farms wants to be on record in support for the MATL line.

Thank you.

Koepke Farms by Michael J. Koepke

Koepke Farms
by Michael J. Koepke, President

L30

Responses 516 to 519: Comments noted.

March 11, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 520

I'm chairman for the Cut Bank Public Schools. I believe that the building of the MATL transmissions line will benefit the children of School District 15, the taxpayers, businesses in the area, and help the overall economy of Glacier County.

I wish to be on record in support for the MATL line.

Thank you.

Michael J. Koepke

Michael J. Koepke

431

Response 520: Comment noted.

Cut Bank Development Corporation

4 N Central * P.O. Box 1329
Cut Bank, MT 59427
(406) 873-2337
Fax (406) 873-2241
cbdc@bresnan.net

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

We would like to send this letter to you in support of the Montana Alberta Tie Line project. Comment 521

This project would be an economic boost to the City of Cut Bank, to Cut Bank Public Schools, and to Glacier County. The increase in tax base would be a benefit to all taxpayers in the county. Comment 522

The Montana Alberta Tie Line would be a positive, clean industry that this area should welcome. We all need to realize that there is a limited timetable and this opportunity may not always be here. We need to be supportive now for this project. Comment 523

Cut Bank Development Corporation is in support of this project. We ask that all landowners be treated fairly and equitable. Comment 524

If we can be of assistance to you with this project please contact us.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Koepke

Mike Koepke, Executive Director
Cut Bank Development Corporation
P.O. Box 1329 4 N Central
Cut Bank, Mt. 59427
(406) 873-2337

omoting a healthy business climate for the Cut Bank area."

L32

Response 521 to 524: Comments noted.

Hydro Solutions Inc

February 28, 2008

ORIGINAL ~~COPY~~

Mr. Jerry McRae
Mac's Farm
1810 19th Lane NE
Dutton, Montana 59433

Re: MATL Agricultural Impact Cost Estimate

Dear Mr. McRae:

Comment 525

Introduction

This report was prepared by Fehringer Agricultural Consulting, Inc. (Fehringer) in conjunction with HydroSolutions Inc (HydroSolutions) to update cost estimates for the agricultural impact due to the proposed Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) power poles installation on your farm.

Analysis

Attached please find our estimated costs of farming around MATL's proposed power poles. The attached sheets, DL-4 and DL-8, are for long span interior mono-pole (Layout D) and interior H-poles (Layout H) placements in a crop-fallow rotation, respectively. Layout D and H are the only placements that are projected to be on your property. These sheets were initially prepared by HydroSolutions and Fehringer for a Montana Department of Environmental Quality (Montana DEQ) study dated July 12, 2007. This study evaluated anticipated costs to farmers as a result of the MATL power poles. The original report's designated table names were retained so that these updated pages may be compared with the corresponding sheets in the original report. The footprint diagram, Figure 1, is attached as well. All eight the original poles layouts are shown on this page.

Table 1, listing your specific machinery size used for tillage, spraying, seeding, and harvesting, is also attached. "Footprint" amounts remain the same for these layouts as in the July 12, 2007 report. However, overlap areas increased for spraying and seeding since your sprayer is 134 feet instead of the 120 feet for the typical Conrad farmer. In the study, seeder width was 60 feet, whereas yours is 70 feet. Since the herbicide Maverick is

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Billings, MT 59108-0866
Phone: (406) 655-9555
Fax: (406) 655-0575

Helena Office
PO Box 1779
Helena, MT 59624
Phone: (406) 443-6169
Fax: (406) 443-6385

Sheridan Office
1043 Coffeen Ave, Ste C
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone: (307) 673-4482
Fax: (307) 673-4397

Red Lodge Office
PO Box 2446
Red Lodge, MT 59068
Phone: (406) 446-9940
Fax: (406) 446-1260

L38

applied for cheatgrass control and wildoat suppression, the "Fargo" application column was deleted in Table 1.

In addition to modifying implement widths, prices for inputs have significantly changed since the July 2007 report, and therefore have been modified as well. For example, RT3 (6 pound per gallon Roundup) is now $52 per gallon instead of $21.50. Price for phosphate fertilizer (11-52-0 or 18-46-0) has increased from $450 per ton to $800 per ton. It is projected that by the end of March, phosphate fertilizer will be $1,000 per ton. Urea nitrogen is now $600 per ton whereas it was also $450 per ton in June 2007.

Another modification to the cost analysis was to change the input to reflect your use of Maverick instead of Fargo herbicide. Cost per acre for Maverick is $10.01 instead of $15.00 for Fargo. Application expense was increased to $10.00 for spraying since you have to reduce your speed from 8 miles per hour to 4 miles per hour to go around the pole(s) with the 134 foot sprayer. This practice is currently used by you for spraying around power poles already in your fields. The speed reduction results in a 50% reduction in your acres per hour, thus doubling application cost. By not figuring a reduction in speed, even for a 120 foot sprayer in the July 2007 study, was an oversight.

Estimated harvesting expense increased due to projected diesel fuel prices of $3.50 to $4.00 per gallon by harvest time. In addition, combining expense was figured based on a 50 bushel per acre yield. Your long-term yield history for summer fallow winter wheat was estimated to be 60 bushels per acre. Harvesting cost is based on a base per acre fee plus a per bushel charge. The more the crop yields, the higher the combining expense. You stated that you paid $23 per acre in 2007; therefore $25 per acre is reasonable.

For crop loss, wheat value was modified to reflect increase in winter wheat prices, which is currently over $10 per bushel. In summer 2007, spring wheat price used for the original study was $6.00 per bushel. Winter wheat at that time was $5.00 to $5.50 per bushel. With increases in yield and price, the value of your crop in the footprint area is now estimated to be $600 per acre versus $300 in the 2007 study. The value increase also impacts the loss due to overlap. In the original study, overlap damage was projected at 20% of the crop value per acre.

The last modification to the cost of farming around MATL poles was in the cost of weed control. Currently, you have employees apply all the herbicides around current poles, and do not feel comfortable having them apply a residual herbicide that may result in damage outside of the poles' projected five foot buffer. As you stated, you now have your employees apply RT3 three times during the fallow season, and then apply Maverick and the "In Crop Spraying" mixture during the cropping year. This represents five applications of herbicides in two years.

Conclusion

In summary, the annual cost of farming around Layout D and Layout H were $107.98 and $120.57 per acre in the original 2007 study, respectively. With the revisions outlined above, your annual cost is now estimated at $225.50 per acre for long span mono-pole interior field placement (Layout D). For H-pole interior placement (Layout H), your annual cost is estimated at $255.12 per acre. Please refer to Attachments DL-4 and DL-8 for the derivation of costs as summarized in Table 2. The above referenced modifications reflect your current cost of farming around poles. These costs have substantially increased in comparison to the original 2007 study. The basis and foundations for the modifications to the estimating procedure have been outlined above.

Standard of Care

Services performed by HSI personnel for this project have been conducted with that level of care and skill ordinarily exercised by members of the profession currently practicing in this area under similar budget and time restraints. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made. Since this evaluation was developed specifically for your operation, none of the information contained in this revised report and attachments may be use against Montana DEQ.

HSI appreciates this opportunity to provide our services to Jerry McRae. If you have any questions regarding the content of this report, or if I can be of further assistance, please contact Neal Fehringer at 373-5985 or Shane Bofto at 655-9555.

Sincerely,

Neal E. Fehringer
Certified Professional Agronomist, C.C.A.
Fehringer Agricultural Consulting, Inc.

Shane A. Bofto
Senior Environmental Engineer
HydroSolutions Inc

Attachments:

- Figure 1 – Pole Configuration Footprint
- Table 1 – McRae Footprint Overlap
- Table 2 – McRae Dryland Cost of Farming Around Pole(s)
- Attachment DL-4
- Attachment DL-8

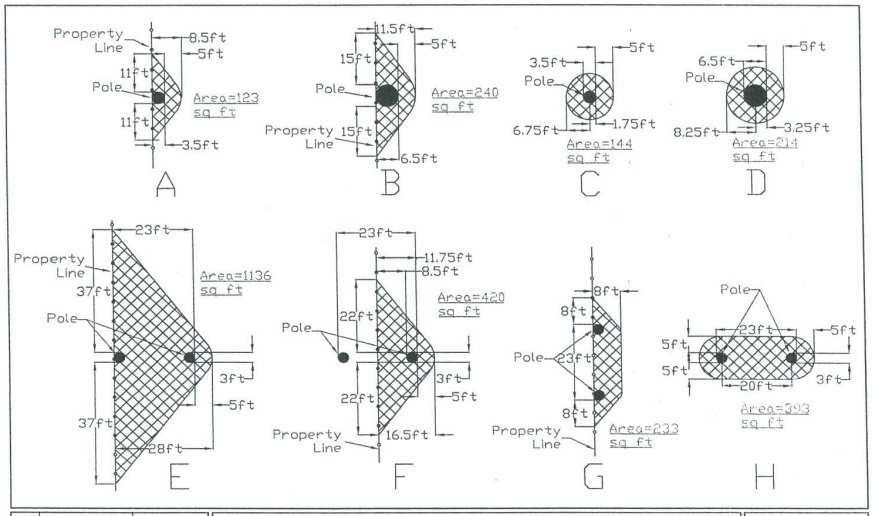

FIGURE #	INT	DATE
	DRAWN BY: sab	6/20/07
	APP'D BY: sab	6/20/07
	JOB No. DEQ Farming	
1	DWG. No. Drawing Pole	SHEET OF
	SCALE NA	

Pole Configuration Footprint
MATL Farming Cost Review

Montana Department Of Environmental Quality

Fehringer Agricultural Consulting
7933 Highway 312 • Billings, Montana 59105-9227 • (406) 373-5965 • Fax (406) 373-4435

Table 1. McRae Footprint and Overlap

Layout	Structure	Pole Diam. (ft)	Location	Minimum Buffer Distance From Center of Pole (ft)	Footprint (square feet)	McRae Implement Widths (feet)			
						70	134	36	70
						Overlap (square feet)			
						Harrow	Spraying	Combine	Seeding
D	Mono-pole	6.5	Interior	3.25	214	19,022	63,356	5,937	19,022
H	H-pole	3.0	Interior	1.5	393	21,511	68,086	7,237	21,511

Notes: Mono-pole: Long span are 6.5-ft diameter.
H-Pole: 3-ft diameter each, 20-ft separation center to center, 23-ft from outside pole to outside pole
5-ft safety buffer

Table revised by Neal E. Fehringer, Certified Professional Agronomist, C.C.A. on 2/25/08.

Fehringer Agricultural Consulting
7933 Highway 312 • Billings, Montana 59105-9227 • (406) 373-5965 • Fax (406) 373-4435

Table 2. McRae Dryland Costs of Farming Around Pole(s).

Layout[1]	Structure	Pole Diam. (ft)	Location	Farming Practice	
				Winter Wheat-Fallow	
				Information Source	Annual Cost (per acre)
D	Mono-pole	6.5	Interior	Attachment DL-4	**$227.50**
H	H-pole	3.0	Interior	Attachment DL-8	**$255.12**

Notes: [1]From Figure 1.
Mono-pole: Long span is 6.5-ft diameter.
H-Pole: 3-ft diam. each, 20-ft separation center to center, 23-ft from outside pole to outside pole.
Safety buffer: 5-ft.

Table revised by Neal E. Fehringer, Certified Professional Agronomist, C.C.A. on 2/25/08.

Attachment DL-4

Fehringer Agricultural Consulting

Dryland Wheat-Fallow Rotation

Long Span Mono-Pole in Field Interior (Layout D)

Operation	Cost	Unit	Rate/ac	Unit	No. of App	Cost/Ac	Oper. Total Cost/Ac	Overlap Ft²	Overlap Acres	Overlap Cost/Pole
Post Harvest:										
Heavy Harrow	$7.00	acre			1	$7.00	$7.00	19,022	0.437	$3.06
Chemical Fallow:										
Roundup (RT3)	$52.00	gallon	16	ounce	4	$26.00				
Dicamba	$71.00	gallon	4	ounce	1	2.22				
Ammonium sulfate	$6.00	gallon	16	ounce	4	3.00				
Application	$10.00	acre			4	40.00	71.22	63,356	1.454	103.58
Wildoat/Cheatgrass Control:										
Maverick	$15.00	ounce	0.667	pound	1	$10.01				
Application	$10.00	acre			1	10.00	20.01	63,356	1.454	29.10
Fertilizer:										
Phosphate[1]	$800	ton	60	pound	1	$24.00				
Nitrogen[2] (46-0-0)	$600	ton	210	pound	1	63.00	87.00	19,022	0.437	37.99
Planting:										
Seed	$30.00	cwt	60	pound	1	$18.00				
Seeding	$13.00	acre			1	13.00	31.00	19,022	0.437	13.54
In Crop Spraying:										
Affinity Broad Spectrum	$9.25	ounce	0.6	ounce	1	$5.55				
LV-6 (2,4-D)	$20.00	gallon	6	ounce	1	0.94				
Surfactant	$16.50	gallon	1	ounce	1	0.13				
Application	$10.00	acre			1	10.00	16.62	63,356	1.454	24.17
Harvesting:										
Combine	$25.00	acre			1	$25.00	25.00	5,937	0.136	3.41
Crop Loss:										
Quality/Quanity in Overlap	$10.00	bushel	60	bushel	20%	$120.00	120.00	63,356	1.454	174.53
Pole Footprint	$10.00	bushel	60	bushel		$600.00	600.00	214	0.005	2.95
Weed Control Around Pole:										
Roundup (RT3)	$52	acre	16	ounce	3	$19.50	19.50	214	0.005	0.10
Maverick	$15.00	ounce	0.667	pound	1	$10.01	10.10	214	0.005	0.05
In Crop Herbicide Mix (application figured below)					1	$6.62	6.62	214	0.005	0.03
Labor & Equipment	$50	hour	0.25	hour	5	$62.50	62.50			62.50
TOTAL COST PER POLE DURING 2 YEAR ROTATION										**$455.00**
ANNUAL COST OF FARMING AROUND LONG SPAN MONO-POLE IN FIELD INTERIOR										**$227.50**

Estimated Winter Wheat Yield: 60 bu/ac

[1]Banding 11-52-0 or 18-46-0 with seed.
[2]Applying a total of 100 actual units of nitrogen per acre.

Compiled by Neal E. Fehringer, Certified Professional Agronomist, C.C.A. on 2/25/08.

Attachment DL-8

Fehringer Agricultural Consulting

Dryland Wheat-Fallow Rotation

H-Pole in Field Interior (Layout H)

Operation	Cost	Unit	Rate/ac	Unit	No. of App	Cost/Ac	Oper. Total Cost/Ac	Overlap Ft²	Overlap Acres	Overlap Cost/Pole
Post Harvest:										
Heavy Harrow	$7.00	acre			1	$7.00	$7.00	21,511	0.494	$3.46
Chemical Fallow:										
Roundup (RT3)	$52.00	gallon	16	ounce	4	$26.00				
Dicamba	$71.00	gallon	4	ounce	1	2.22				
Ammonium sulfate	$6.00	gallon	16	ounce	4	3.00				
Application	$10.00	acre			4	40.00	71.22	68,086	1.563	111.32
Wildoat/Cheatgrass Control:										
Maverick	$15.00	ounce	0.667	pound	1	$10.01				
Application	$10.00	acre			1	10.00	20.01	68,086	1.563	31.27
Fertilizer:										
Phosphate[1]	$800	ton	60	pound	1	$24.00				
Nitrogen[2] (46-0-0)	$600	ton	210	pound	1	63.00	87.00	21,511	0.494	42.96
Planting:										
Seed	$30.00	cwt	60	pound	1	$18.00				
Seeding	$13.00	acre			1	13.00	31.00	21,511	0.494	15.31
In Crop Spraying:										
Affinity Broad Spectrum	$9.25	ounce	0.6	ounce	1	$5.55				
LV-6 (2,4-D)	$20.00	gallon	6	ounce	1	0.94				
Surfactant	$16.50	gallon	1	ounce	1	0.13				
Application	$10.00	acre			1	10.00	16.62	68,086	1.563	25.97
Harvesting:										
Combine	$25.00	acre			1	$25.00	25.00	7,237	0.166	4.15
Crop Loss:										
Quality/Quanity in Overlap	$10.00	bushel	60	bushel	20%	$120.00	120.00	68,086	1.563	187.56
Pole Footprint	$10.00	bushel	60	bushel		$600.00	600.00	393	0.009	5.41
Weed Control Around Pole:										
Roundup (RT3)	$52	acre	16	ounce	3	$19.50	19.50	393	0.009	0.18
Maverick	$15.00	ounce	0.667	pound	1	$10.01	10.10	393	0.009	0.09
In Crop Herbicide Mix (application figured below)					1	$6.62	6.62	393	0.009	0.06
Labor & Equipment	$50	hour	0.33	hour	5	$82.50	82.50			82.50
TOTAL COST PER POLE DURING 2 YEAR ROTATION										**$510.24**
ANNUAL COST OF FARMING AROUND LONG SPAN MONO-POLE IN FIELD INTERIOR										**$255.12**

Estimated Winter Wheat Yield: 60 bu/ac

[1]Banding 11-52-0 or 18-46-0 with seed.
[2]Applying a total of 100 actual units of nitrogen per acre.

Compiled by Neal E. Fehringer, Certified Professional Agronomist, C.C.A. on 2/25/08.

Response 525: Because the costs and prices used previously have increased substantially, the farmer economics were recalculated and are shown in Section 3.13 using updated 2008 numbers.

3-11-08
Great Falls
No Journal
Consulted

Doug

MCN

From: "Doug" <dcbanka@~~earthlink~~.net>
To: <jvanthof@tonbridgecorp.com>
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2008 1:00 PM
Subject: MATL line

Tonbridge Power Inc.
Waterpark Place, 20 Bay Street, Suite 1100, Toronto, Ontario
M5J2N8

Douglas Banka
688 Business 15
Conrad, Montana
59425

Comment 526

Dear Johan van't Hof,

I visited with you on the phone a week or so ago about the MATL power line that is proposed through my farm. We seemed to have a couple of issues regarding the EIS statement about the prices associated with farming around the proposed line. First of all I think all of this will be fruitless as the main desire is to have the line go in a straight line format instead of the diagonal format. The use of single poles instead of the H structures. I have 8 separate transmission and distribution lines now on the farm. The H structure is the most difficult to go around and the most costly to operate around. I presently have an H structure on the farm. It presents the most weed issues and the most varmit issues of any other structure.

However, with that stated, the costs in the EIS are not accurate and alchemy at best.

For instance. The price of Roundup RT3 is not 21.50 per gallon but closer to 55.00 per gallon. Monsanto has informed us that we should expect a 3 dollar per month increase in the price. Monsanto has increased in Feb. 2008 the price of RT3 18.00 alone. That was with the base price of 32 to 36 dollars per gallon.

The price of Topdress N is not 450 per ton but 550 per ton.

The price of Phosphate fert is not 450 per ton but 850 per ton. The fertilizer dealer expects the price to exceed 1000 per ton within months.

The EIS statement implies that there is 60 lbs of fertilizer banded with the seed. However in my area the number is closer to 75 lbs. 60 lbs of fert @450 per ton is 13.50, 75 lbs @ 850 per ton is 31.88 per acre.

Seed cost is not 16.00 per cwt but closer to 20.00 - 24.00 per bushel. The price will depend on the availablity and quality of the seed being planted. ie certified, registered etc. Treating the grain is to be added to that number. Treating can vary from 1.50 to 3.00 per bushel and higher.

The harvest costs are not 20.00 per acre but close to the 2007 numbers of 27.00 and higher. I was quoted 27.00 by the custom harvestors in this area. I am sure the price will not be lower for 2008

In the past couple of years the cost of farming an acre of ground has held steady at 110.00 - 130.00 per acre. However in the 2008 season the cost will be over double those figures. In operating around an H structure it takes me approximately 2.4 acres of area. That figure is used from the GPS in my sprayer.

A large issue that still is on the horizon is the aggressive tactics used by your agents in the earlier attempts of easement signings. That has created a very disturbing issue for many people. VERY DISTURBING.

I do have many documents supporting my numbers above. If you would like to see them please advise. As the EIS statement quotes, farmers will profit from having poles on their farm. I can assure you that I will NEVER profit from this line having poles in the middle of my fields. A straight line format with single poles is the direction of least impact for me and the least costly to farm around.

3/11/2008

L37

One last issue is the creation of a fire by the power poles. I have had fires from power lines that have created sparks from arcing wires and shorted insulators etc. One as recently as 3 weeks ago. Who is the agency responsible for damages from such actions.

Thank you for your time.

Douglas C. Banka
688 Business 15
Conrad, Montana
59425

3/11/2008

Response 526: Because the costs and prices used previously have increased substantially, the farmer economics were recalculated and are shown in Section 3.13 using updated 2008 numbers.

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

Name Bob Guditis PE

Address 706 Sandpiper Dr

City Great Falls State MT Zip 59404

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing.

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

This is a great project, an asset to Montana, sound environmentally and an economic necessity to our State and nation. I highly support it!!!

Comment 527

3-11-09

L39

Response 527: Comment noted.

Response 528: Comment noted.

March 11, 2008

Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality Mgmt Bureau
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RE: Support of MATL

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 528

I am writing in support of the MATL. I support the MATL because it benefits both consumers and generators through additional connection with markets in demand of energy. It also will allow additional purchasing options for Montana utilities resulting in lower rates for consumers. MATL is an economic opportunity for Montana by providing additional transmission capacity.

My name is Vanessa Bucklin, and I support MATL.

Sincerely,

Vanessa Y. Bucklin

L42

Buck Traxler
Independent-Observer
Box 966, 59425

8 March '08

Tom Ring
Montana DEQ
Box 200901, Helena 59620

Dear Mr. Ring -

Comment 529

I would like to state that I favor the proposed MATL transmission line between Great Falls and Lethbridge.

The potential for renewal energy development throughout the entire area is enormous. However without the transmission line renewable wind energy ~~been~~ becomes a moot point and northcentral Montana remains in economic ~~decay~~ decay.

Comment 530

I truely believe the line will be a vital cog in funding for schools and business, not to mention tax help for infrastructure of the entire area.

Thankyou in advance for your consideration

Sincerely
Buck Traxler
I-O Editor

RECEIVED
MAR 11 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

L42

Response 529 and 530: Comments noted.

Ben Ober,
Commission Chairman
Allan Underdal,
Commissioner
David Miller,
Commissioner
Merle Raph,
County Attorney
Donna Matoon,
Sheriff
Dan B. Whitted,
Coroner
Commissioners Office
406-424-8310
Fax #406-424-8301

Mary Ann Harwood,
Clerk & Recorder
Sandra Peers,
Clerk of Court
Boyd Jackson,
Treasurer/Assessor
Supt. Of Schools
Helen I. Schnee,
Public Administrator
Russ Mann
Justice of the Peace
Clerk & Recorders
Office #406-424-8300
Email address:
tcclerk@3rivers.net

COUNTY OF TOOLE

226 1ST Street South
Toole County Courthouse, Shelby, MT 59474

March 10,2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
Attn: Tom Ring
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Mt. 59620-0901

To Whom It May Concern: Comment 531

I am writing this letter in support of the MATL line to be constructed in Northern Montana . It would be a great economical benefit to all the citizens of the area either by economical value or reducing taxes within the area.

I do not feel that there are any negatives to this project and it is a win win deal.

Again, I am writing to inform you of my full support of the project.

Sincerely,

Ben Ober

Ben Ober
Toole County Commissioner

RECEIVED
MAR 11 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

L43

Response 531: Comment noted.

United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge
922 Bootlegger Trail
Great Falls, Montana 59404-6133

March 10, 2008

IN REPLY REFER TO:
NWRS/BNLNWR
Mail Stop 61510

RECEIVED
MAR 11 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Mr. Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901

Mr. Ring:

This correspondence is in response to the receipt of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV Transmission Line Summary. Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge (Refuge) is nationally recognized as a migratory bird area and on March 17, 2002, the Refuge was designated a Globally Important Bird Area by the American Bird Conservancy. In addition, the Refuge is also recognized as a regional site by the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network.

In a correspondence dated November 29, 2006, from the Service to Mr. Patrick Mullen of AMEC Earth and Environmental, we discussed the proposed transmission line and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's suggestion on modifications that can minimize the impact to wildlife resources.

Comment 532

Specifically, the Service stated that our preferred placement of the transmission lines would be ALT 4_SEGMENTC_BRADYFRONTAGE with slight modification. We recommended that the route be located within 150 feet east and north of the current line, starting 5 miles north of the Refuge (Section 4, T23N, R3E) and ending 3 miles south of the Refuge. As an alternative, the Service also recommended utilizing ALT4_SEGMENTA_WESTGREATFALLS which is routed west and south of the Refuge. These modifications will decrease the likelihood of bird strikes and increase visibility to migratory birds.

L44

2

Our review of the Summary Draft EIS indicates that these modifications were not incorporated into the Preferred Alternative. We would like to reiterate that we suggest these modifications are made to minimize the impact of the transmission line to wildlife resources. If you have any questions, please contact Refuge Biologist Vanessa Fields at (406)727-7400 Extension 219.

Sincerely,

Kathleen A. Burchett
Refuge Manager

Enclosure

cc:
Patrick Mullen, AMEC Earth and Environmental, 21 North Last Chance Gulch, Ste 208, Helena, Montana 59601

Response 532: The proposed action and all alternatives avoid refuge lands. Overhead ground wires on alternatives east of the refuge could be marked to reduce avian mortality from line collisions. Also see Section 3.8.3.2, which has been revised. Alternative 4 uses about 30 miles of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's preferred placement.

Browning Area Chamber of Commerce
PO Box 990 • Browning MT. 59417 • (406)-338-4015

March 12, 2008

Mr. Chairman:

Comment 533 Browning Area Chamber of Commerce serves the Blackfeet Reservation businesses and is in support of the Montana Alberta Transmission Line. The environmental impact is little compared to the economic impact it will have on our Reservation. Unlike many rural communities, this Reservation does not have to worry about out migration of its population. The population is increasing, indicating not only a large workforce, but a large consuming force, with a need for more local services & goods. The reservation borders Glacier Park this coupled with our unique Blackfeet Culture indicates enormous potential for tourism services. MATL will assist in realizing the potential of our area.

Comment 534 As a nation, our energy demands are ever increasing and our options for production are limited. The development of clean wind power and the lines to transport it makes sense. Please support the construction of the MATL Transmission Line. The environmental impacts are minor and the economic benefits are great. We appreciate the time and attention you have given our request.

Sincerely,

Johnel H. Barcus, Member
PO Box 469
Browning, MT 59417
406 338-4015

L45

Response 533 and 534: Comments noted.

3-12-08
Cut Bank

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

Name David L. JACOBSON

Address 409 6TH AVE S.E.

City CUT BANK State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 535

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

THE M.A.T.L. PROJECT IS ESSENTIAL TO THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH CENTRAL MONTANA. THE INCONVENIENCE TO A SMALL PERCENTAGE OF FARMS AND RANCHERS SHOULD BE ACCEPTABLE. M.A.T.L. HAS BEEN GOOD AT ADDRESSING THEIR NEEDS AND CONCERNS. WITHOUT M.A.T.L. THE DEVELOPMENT OF WIND ENERGY WILL BE MINIMAL. M.A.T.L. CAN PROVIDE THE IMPROVED JOBS AND TAX SUPPORT THE "HI-LINE" NEEDS TO GROW AND SURVIVE WITHOUT ANY ADVERSE AFFECT TO THE ENVIRONMENT.

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

446

Response 535: Comment noted.

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

Name Wanda Barrett

Address 26-4th Ave So

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing.

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I do support the construction of the Montana / Alberta tie Line near Cut Bank & surrounding Communities.

Comment 536

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L47

Response 536: Comment noted.

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

Name Mary Ellington

Address 306 2nd ave. SE

City Cut Bank State Mt. Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 537

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

This is to voice my support for the Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. Transmission Line project, I feel this will be a huge boost for the area & community. This will also help bring more jobs to the community.

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L48

Response 537: Comments noted.

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

Name CLINTON J. ANDERSON
Address 442 Highway 213 N
City CUT BANK State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 538

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I think it's very important for the development of the community.

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L49

Response 538: Comment noted.

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

Name Alan Anderson

Address 425 6th Ave SE

City Cut Bank, MT State _____ Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 539

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

This is a development that is very important to our community

A J Anderson

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L56

Response 539: Comment noted.

Response 540: Comment noted.

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

Name Stephanie Browning

Address 601 West main

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 540

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I think this is a great project not only to increase our tax base in this area but to increase employment opportunities.

I appreciate that you are taking into consideration the impact on the environment for the farmers as well as other land owners.

Your committment to the community of Cut Bank is impressive.

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

451

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

Name Teri Gottlob (Northern Montana Insurance Service)

Address 234 4th Ave. SE

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 541

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

Welcome!

I totally support MATL and their proposal for a power line to help promote clean green wind farms. The tax relief and job opportunities brought to our county will be very beneficial.

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L52

Response 541: Thank you for your comment

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

Name JEFF GOTTLOB AMERICAN PIPE & SUPPLY
Address 234 4TH AVE SE
City CUT BANK State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 542

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I support the electric transmission being proposed by MATL. The construction of this will bring jobs and needed tax base to our counties. MATL genuine concern for private property (farmers etc) is encouraging in satisfying everyone's needs.

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L53

Response 542: Comment noted.

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

Name Scott Laird

Address 322 2nd Ave SE

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 543

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

The one constant in our area is the wind, and anything we can do to use it is needed. With declining finances in our schools + local gov't. areas, this Project is a huge benefit w/ the increase in taxable values alone.

The ability to use clean energy is also a major factor. This is definitely a win-win situation for everyone

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L54

Response 543: Comment noted.

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

Name Juanita Meik

Address 421 2nd St NE

City Cut Bank State Mt Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 544

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I would like to express my support of the upcoming MATL project. I feel it is necessary for North Central Montana to continue to grow in the energy world. Without proper transmission we cannot support the growth of the new wind energy. Please consider our economy in your consideration for this project.

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L55

Response 544: Comment noted.

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

Name Fritz H. Smith

Address 14 W. Main St. PO Box 85

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 545

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I support this project

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L56

Response 545: Comment noted.

3-19-09
Cut Bank

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

Name Wade Johnson
Address 436 Circle Drive
City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 546

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

The State of Montana is in need of economic development as well as development of green, renewable energy sources. The MATL project is a positive step in solving both of these problems.

I strongly recommend the approval and construction of the MATL project.

Sincerely

Wade Johnson

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L58

Response 546: Comment noted.

Billman's Home Décor LLP

March 11, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 547

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Ti Transmission Line. Billman's Home Décor LLP would like to go on record offering its full support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd. (MATL). Our business is located in Cut Bank Montana and is dedicated to the promotion and growth 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 548

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this project. We look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project and we urge the Montana DEQ and BLM issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as required.

Sincerely

Valerie Vermulm, President
Billman's Home Decor

L66

R&G Rentals, J&C Rentals, D&V Rentals

March 11, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 547

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Ti Transmission Line. We would like to offer our full support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd. (MATL). Our family owns several rentals businesses in Cut Bank making us dedicated to the continued growth of the area. We firmly believe construction of this line will have a positive and lasting effect on not only our community, but the entire Golden Triangle area.

Comment 548

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this project. We look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project and we urge the Montana DEQ and BLM issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as required.

Sincerely

Rick Billman, Jeff Billman, Valerie Vermulm
R&G Rentals, J&C Rentals, D&V Rentals

L67

3-12-08
Rick Bill

Billman's Inc

March 11, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 547

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Ti Transmission Line. Billman's Inc would like to go on record offering its full support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd. (MATL). Our business is located in Cut Bank Montana and is dedicated to the promotion and growth 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 548

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this project. We look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project and we urge the Montana DEQ and BLM issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as required.

Sincerely

Rick Billman, President
Billman's Inc

268

Responses 547 and 548: Comments noted.

3-13-08
Received

PONDERA COUNTY SANITARIAN

CORRINE A ROSE, RS
20 4TH AVE SW
CONRAD, MT 59425
crose@3rivers.net
(406) 271-4036 Cell 868-7935

March 13, 2008

TOM RING, ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES SPECIALIST, MT DEQ

Comment 549

I am a life long resident of Teton County and operate the family farm with my husband in the Pendroy Community. I am also the County Sanitarian for both Teton and Pondera Counties. I am supporting the construction of the MATL line.

I believe that the technology is available that will allow us to develop our natural resources, which will help to meet our energy needs, while maintaining our clean and healthful environment. I also believe that this can be accomplished while recognizing private property rights.

This has the potential to bring much needed economic development to our area which will benefit our local business and our tax base.

Sincerely,

Corrine A Rose

L80

Response 549: Comment noted.

3-13-08

Shawn and Lori Dolan
12418 N. Diamond Dr.
Hayden, ID 83835

March 12, 2008

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

Re: MATL EIS Comments

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 550a

I would like to submit my comments on the Federal Draft of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line. In general we felt that the document was fairly well done and we appreciate the revised economic impact projections and believe the new projections are more realistic than MATL was feeding to the press. The $240,000 annual tax impact to Pondara County may still be a little optimistic though. We are not opposed to the lines construction; however, we do have a few concerns with some of the material presented in the EIS document. I should point out that I am a registered professional engineer in the State of Montana and have been involved in power line design and construction for over 20 years. Comment 550b

Under the Regulatory Restrictions Analysis Section S.7 the preparers seem to be more concerned with the potential property rights impact to MATL than the property rights impact to the various US citizens and land owners along the proposed transmission line route. The various agencies should be more concerned with the impact of MATL's activities on the various land owner's property rights. Land owners that I might add vote, unlike MATL which is a Canadian based firm. I would like to point out that MATL's right-of-way agents have been securing "options" at very nominal rates not actively purchasing right-of-way. At least the preliminary documents sent to us were option documents that stated should MATL choose to exercise the option the land owners would be paid their token right-of-way fee. So the impact to MATL's property rights by requiring them to follow the agency prepared route of Alternative 4 would be fairly minimal.

Comment 550c

Comment 550d

Comment 550e

MATL has repeated stated that it has the ability to condemn property using eminent domain in the State of Montana. How does the recent Montana legislature action last summer limiting the use of eminent domain powers for private enterprise affect MATL's ability to exercise eminent domain condemnations?

Comment 550f

473

Responses 550a through 550e. See responses to comments 436 and 441 through 443.

Response 550f: Chapter 512, Montana Session Laws 2007, revised Montana's urban renewal laws. It precludes a city or town from using its power of eminent domain to obtain property with the intent to sell, lease, or provide the property to a private entity. This law does not apply to MATL because it is not a city or town exercising eminent domain authority under the urban renewal laws.

Comment 551

Our family owns 400 acres in the Belgian Hill area near Valier. In Figure 2.6-7 of the EIS, three of the routing options are depicted crossing our property. The Old Belgian Hill reroute, the current Belgian Hill local routing option and the Alt 2 Proposed alignment. The current Belgian Hill local routing option goes right through the middle of our irrigated field longitudinally. If the line was located in this manner it would make our property pretty much impossible to irrigate and would drastically affect the properties value and use as irrigated farmland. We strongly oppose this option and will file a law suite if this option is chose. This route would inflict the maximum harm and damage to our property and would be in direct conflict with statements on page 1-16 pertaining to right-of-ways providing the greatest public benefit and the least private harm. The Old Belgian Hill reroute follows the field line at the edge of our property to the west and the Alt 2 Proposed alignment cuts diagonally across our property then generally parallels the road. By adding a couple guyed 90 degree corner structures or better yet, a couple unguyed self supported structures to MATL's design in this area to eliminate the running angles in the line, the impact to our property could be minimized and crossing the roll irrigated field to the south at a diagonal could be avoided. As our property is presently in CRP and will be returning to crop production shortly, we stongly advocate the use of monopole structures across our property. We would prefer Alternative 4 be selected as it has the minimum impact on our property. It runs across the northern edge.

Comment 552

Comment 553

Comment 554a

In reading through the EIS I noticed that the only PE stamp I saw in the document was from an engineer from California. Montana law requires that transmission lines and other utility projects constructed in the state be designed under the responsible charge of a PE licensed in the State of Montana. Subsequently, documents covering the Montana portion of this line should be sealed or stamped by a Montana PE. California PE's are not recognized by the Montana Board of Engineers and it should be noted that California does not follow the NESC.

Comment 554b

And finally I would like to further address the minimum line clearance issue. The EIS lists the minimum line to ground clearance design criteria of the line to be 21.2 feet. In Volume 2 of the EIS entitled response to comments, two additional minimum clearance calculations are shown, one by Mr. Wayne Bauer of HDR in Billings, the other by Mr. Dave Marne of Marne Associates of Missoula Montana. Both of these calculations were performed in response to my earlier comments regarding the line being designed with insufficient line to ground clearance to meet the requirements of the NESC. HDR calculated the minimum clearance using NESC rule 232C and MATL and Marne Associates used the alternate method provided under NESC rule 232D, which allows for reduced clearances for circuits with known switching-surge factors. The HDR minimum clearance was 22.6 feet, slightly more than I calculated due to their assuming an elevation of 4,500 feet verses the 3,300 foot elevation assumed by my calculation. The approach used by the MATL consultant resulted in a clearance of 21.8 feet.

Comment 554c

Response 551 and 552: See the response to comment 436.

Response 553: Comment noted.

Response 554a: Comment noted.

Response 554b and 554c: See responses to comments 446. See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 555 to 558: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Comment 555

MATL's Response on page 235 of Volume 2 acknowledges the differing calculated clearance results, but instead of identifying why they received different values from three different engineers by looking at the different assumptions used, they chose to adopt the bare minimum clearance provided by their consultant. As I pointed out and Mr. Bauer of HDR pointed out design clearances should be prudently greater than the absolute minimum code clearance. The minimum line clearance proposed by MATL is too low and poses a safety hazard to farmer operating equipment under their lines. MATL assumes equipment heights are limited to less than 14 feet in height. Modern farming equipment greatly exceeds this height and can directly contact the 230 kV conductors if constructed at the heights proposed by MATL and will result in a fatality.

Comment 556

To prove this point I contacted the John Deer Corporation and had them email me the dimensional details of their 9000 series combines. I have attached this information for your reference. The model 9870 combine from John Deer has an operational height of 16 feet 7 inches to the top of the combine's chute. If a farmer were to attach at typical 108 inch (9ft) CB antenna at the top of the cab of the combine (which is a very common practice) the operational height of the combine jumps to 21 feet 4 inches. This is at or above the minimum clearance proposed by MATL resulting in one electrocuted farmer. As my friend Allen Clapp the former chairman of the National Electric Code Clearances Committee is fond of saying "this is socially unacceptable behavior on the part of the utility".

Comment 557

The question at hand is whether or not MATL should design the line assuming that typical over height farm machinery such combines will be present. During my conversations with Mr. Clapp former NESC Clearances Committee Chairman last fall at a NESC code class, he indicated that in court a plaintiff's attorney could easily make that argument and win a large verdict against MATL if the line is designed at the proposed levels. Mr. Clapp indicated that jury awards for these kinds of cases runs at about $1 million dollars (US) per inch of perceived code violation. My experience has shown that Mr. Clapp's numbers might be a little low. The power company I work for was involved in an electrical contact law suite a few of years ago and the plaintiff was awarded 10.5 million dollars even though the line was built to code. The plaintiff's attorneys successfully argued that the utility should have foreseen that a billboard worker could come in contact with the power lines even though the lines met code.

Comment 558

The NESC requires power line conductors to be raised up to accommodate the operation of over height vehicles or machines and requires them to be raised is it is reasonable to assume that the area in question is being used by over height vehicles. I refer you to excerpts I've attached from the NESC Handbook, Sixth Edition. See pages 299 through 300. I've also attached excerpts from the 2007 version of the National Electric Safety Code covering NESC Rules 232C and 232D the governing rules of the code for this line. Since MATL has chosen to hang its hat on Rule 232D I refer you to 232D subpart 4, which states "The alternate clearance shall not be less than the clearance given in Table 232-1 or 232-2 computed for 98 kV ac to ground in accordance with 232C." Column 4 pertaining to land traversed by vehicles, such as cultivated, grazing, forest, orchards etc..

provides a base clearance level of 18.5 feet for voltages between 750V and 22 kV. The foot note on column 4 refers you to note 26 on the table which states "when designing a line to accommodate oversized vehicles, these clearance values shall be increased b y the difference between the known height of the oversized vehicle and 14 feet." (IEEE issued an errata sheet correcting the foot note reference on column 4 of Table 232-1 to reference footnote 26 not footnote 24 as was shown on the earlier publication of the NESC. Rule 232C requires .4 inches per kV above 22 kV to be added to the calculated clearance and 3% for each 1000 ft above 3300 ft of elevation. Now putting it all together the minimum clearance of the line across farmland to accommodate a combine with CB antenna assuming the minimum 98 kV clearance requirement asserted by Rule 232D.4 should be:

Base Clearance from Table 232-1 up to 22 kV	18.5 feet	Table 232-1
Overheight vehicle clearance adder 21 ft 4 inches – 14 feet =	7.3 feet	Note 26
Voltage Clearance Adder (98 kV – 22 kV) *.4 inches/kV =	2.5 feet	232C.1.a
	28.3 feet	
Elevation Multiplier (4,500 ft – 3,300 ft)/1000 ft * .03 + 1 =	x1.036	232C.1.b
	29.3 feet	

If the combine didn't have a CB antenna the clearance calculated above would drop to 24.4 feet assuming a maximum operating height of 16 feet 7 inches as published by the John Deer Company. However, my experience in dealing with farmers is that a lot of them do have CB or other radio antennas mounted to their combines. To allow for this fact, it is common utility practice to use minimum line to ground clearances above the bare minimums listed in the NESC tables when crossing farmland. As HDR indicated the Rural Utilities Services (RUS) Design Manual for High Voltage Lines (CFR 1724E-200) requires a minimum clearance of 24.9 feet for 230 kV lines, NSP uses 30 feet as does Grant County PUD . If the state accepts the low conductor levels proposed by MATL it could find itself a joint party in a lawsuit when a fatality occurs due to an electrical contact with the proposed line. I caution you to carefully consider this before you approve the MATL line as designed. Comment 559

Respectfully Submitted,

Shawn Dolan, P.E.

Enclosures

Response 559: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. DEQ would require MATL to comply with the National Electrical Safety Code.

March 13, 2008

To: Montana Department Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring

My name is Everett Snortland. I reside at 207 South Colorado Street, Conrad, MT. 59425. My phone # is: 406-271-3777.

I was born and raised in Pondera County and I am a retired farmer. This was my main occupation for forty- three years.

I thank you for this opportunity to present testimony to you and your agency.

Comment 560 We in agriculture in the Golden Triangle have for many years produced wheat, barley, canola, hogs, cattle, lamb, wool and other products; most of which is exported. Wind generated energy is an environmental friendly product that has very good export potential.

Comment 561 The building and use of the Montana-Alberta Transmission Line will increase our tax base, improve our economy, create jobs and create a price competitive energy source. It will also ensure an adequate energy supply locally and statewide.

Your Agency's consideration and approval of wind energy transmission in this part of Montana will be greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,

Everett

Everett M. Snortland

L76

Response 560 and 561: Comments noted.

March 12, 2008

Tom Ring
Environmental Science Specialist
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Tom:

Thank you for sending the executive summary for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) regarding the Montana Alberta Tie LTD (MATL). You and your agency have been most helpful with explaining the process and the function of these hearings.

For the record my name is John Dallum, I live in Valier and presently serve the Valier School District as their Superintendent of Schools.

Comment 562 As I read the summary, what was not said or maybe could not be said, struck me. Perhaps a benefit to the nation section could be added to the EIS.

Bonneville Power Administrator, Steve Wright, in remarks to the People Utility District in Oregon recently reviewed the power situation.

"Utilities face complex decisions when acquiring the power we need."

"Utilities are looking at a number of different resource strategies…our situation will degrade further because of competing demand."

"We are looking at a supply deficit by 2010. Growth loads will make that come quicker." "We need an aggressive plan for providing power."

This document is the first step in solving a desperate need. Your fine office has preformed well implementing this plan.

Comment 563 On the MSU Green web site http://green.msu.com the question is asked "Why is it taking so long to develop more clean energy?"

Wind energy has the potential to become a major source of global electricity supply. But will politicians establish the policies required to make this potential a reality? The indefatigable conservationist David Brower would remind citizens, "Politicians are like weather vanes and our job is to make the wind blow." Nothing could be truer in the case of ensuring politicians make judicious policy and regulatory decisions

278

Response 562: See sections 3.13 and 3.17 for benefits from the MATL line, including some benefits that would extend beyond Montana's borders.

Response 563: Comment noted.

that seize opportunities presented by economically attractive, ecologically sustainable wind power.

Tom in this case the politicians have made the wind blow. The policy is in place the plan has been written.

Tom implement the plan, it is a good one. Well written and thorough.

Comment 564 Finally, it is not what power line will do to impact the environment it is what other options will do to the environment.

The Department of Environmental Quality has written a plan:

1. That helps satisfy the need for power
2. A plan that meets environmental tests
3. A plan that moves this region and this nation forward

Comment 565 Gentlemen do your duty implement this plan.

John Dallum

Response 564 and 565: Comments noted.

9-13-08

March 13, 2008

Dear Mr. Ring: Comment 566

In an effort to show our support for the MATL Transmission Line, and to cut down on the number of responses you must make to our comments, we present this letter as a group of individuals. We support the line and believe that it is good for the area. The economic benefits of the line and the potential development of wind projects in the future will contribute in a positive way to our rural economy. We believe the environmental concerns are minor and we welcome the enhanced tax base and the jobs that will be created. We ask that you move the process forward is an expeditious manner with thought to fairness to the affected landowners.

Mike and Gussi Lytle
Jo & Kit Finbyson
Harold & Betty Olson
Buck Traxler
Debbie Hicks
Jerry Black
Cheryl A. Sawyer
Heather Cathfried
Jamey Byrnes
Stanley Sjunelson
John & Janice McFarland
John P. + Penny L. Sherlin
Ronald Rees
Deborah Rees
Ryan VanDyke
WILLIAM VANDENBOS
Sandra J. Brandon
Jewell Pogreba
Paula Brady
John VanDyke

L79

Response 566: Thank you for combining your comments. Comments noted.

Response 567: Comment noted.

March 13, 2008
MATL EIS Hearing

Comments:

Totally Support

Signature

March 13, 2008
MATL EIS Hearing

Comment 567

Comments:

Totally support. Great for the economy in our area.

Signature

Shari Richter

482

Response 568 and 569: Comments noted.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RECEIVED
MAR 13 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

March 10, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. This electric transmission line is necessary to open up our area to Wind Energy.

We in Northern Montana are struggling with a dwindling economy and small towns like Sunburst are battling to keep our schools alive and well. This transmission line will make it possible for the planned Phase II Wind Farm to be built, resulting in numerous advantages to our local economy. Comment 568

I feel that MATL will not negatively impact the environment. It will, however, have a huge positive impact on the area. Not only will we benefit directly from the jobs it creates and the tax base it will provide, but we will also see its benefits in our schools, and in our consumer spending. Comment 569

Please record my support of this project.

Sincerely,

Brian Roark

L85

Sincerely,
Vincent E. Burley
Sincerely,
Linda Burley
Linda Burley
Sincerely,
Jacque Coolidge
Sincerely,
Dave A. Egan
Sincerely,
Diane J. Hastings
406-937-6625
Sincerely,
Susan Kimmet
Sincerely,
Jacque Coolidge
Sincerely,
Dave A. Egan
Sincerely,
Shawn Christiaens
Shawn Christiaens

Sincerely,
Sandie Seeger
Sincerely,
Kathy Lemler
Sincerely,
William Semmler
Sincerely,
Megan Seeger
Sincerely,
Todd A Williams
Sincerely,
Kathleen Rankin
Sincerely,
Sincerely,
Ronald D. Gillund
Box 70
Sunburst MT 59482
Sincerely,
Sincerely,
Colleen M Gillund
Sincerely,
Carol M. Morgan
Sincerely,
Brianna J Gillund

Sincerely,
Brian Barrows
Sincerely,
Mary M Miller
Sincerely,
Sincerely,
Sincerely,
Sincerely,
Sincerely,
Jonelle Johannsen
Sincerely,
Dee Barrows
Sincerely,
Christy Dennison
Sincerely,
Shad Barrows
Sincerely,
Conagher Barrows
Sincerely,
Aidan Barrows
Sincerely,
Andrew Scott
Sincerely,
Brian E. Barrows
Sincerely,
Robert Ross
Sincerely,
Sunburst, MT
Sincerely,
Sincerely,

Letters with the same content as in Brian Roark's letter on the preceding page (Comments 568 and 569) were also submitted by the signatories on this page.

CONRAD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

CRAIG BARRINGER, Principal
Meadowlark Elementary School (K-3)
Phone: (406) 278-5620
Fax: (406) 278-5621
Utterback Middle School (6-8)
Phone: (406) 278-3227
Fax: (406) 278-3228

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10
LYNN UTTERBACK, Superintendent
AFTON C. LAMOREAUX, Clerk/Business Manager
215 SOUTH MARYLAND STREET
CONRAD, MONTANA 59425-2017
PHONE: (406) 278-5521
FAX: (406) 278-3630

KEN LARSON, Principal
Conrad High School (9-12)
Phone: (406) 278-3285
Fax: (406) 278-3806
GREG JENSEN, Principal
Prairie View School (4-5)
Phone: (406) 271-5251
Fax: (406) 271-5252

To: Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Attn: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, Mt. 59620-0901

From: Conrad High School
Ken Larson, Principal
215 South Maryland Street
Conrad, Montana, 59425

Dear Sirs:

Comment 570

I am writing in support of the MATL power line that is proposed for our area. As a school administrator I can assure you that the tax base of our county is in dire need of additional projects and businesses to help support the financial needs of our schools, county and small cities. It is particularly exciting when these projects can provide additional jobs for families in areas that have been suffering from declining population. Comment 572

Comment 571 The MATL project would also open the door to energy development of wind in our area. There is a nation wide shortage of energy and transmission lines. The ability to produce electrical power from the wind projects that are pollution free should be hustled along and not allowed to be bogged down by the endless filing of court orders by those groups who wish not to prove any points but to win by making time lines of these projects so long that companies simply go else where to build. Coal development Comment 573 exemplifies this and this would be illustrated by the fact that Montana has twice the coal reserves of Wyoming but only 10% of the coal industry of Wyoming.

The MATL line has made many changes to help bring land owners on board. The Comment 574 routes have been changed, tax concessions made, and basic changes such as going to single poles and following property lines have been initiated. I suspect that after all is said in done, the biggest benefit for landowner maybe the reduction in their tax liability after the transmission lines and wind farms become reality.

Comment 575

L96

Responses 570 to 575: Comments noted.

I would hope that we can reasonably pass "good" projects such as the MATL line through our maze of regulations without undue delays or hardships. I would believe that another "Berkley Pit" project could be recognized and stopped without years of study. Please note my support and the good that will come from allowing this project in our area in terms of economic development and growth in our community. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Amy J Krause
Conrad Public Schools

Best regards,

Ken Larson, Principal
Conrad High School

Sincerely,

Phil Springer, Science teacher
Conrad Public Schools

Best regards,

Lynn Utterback, Superintendent
Conrad Public Schools

Ring, Tom

From: mikegolf@infowest.com
Posted At: Saturday, March 15, 2008 7:01 AM
Conversation: MATL
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL

Comment 576

I am a home owner in Shelby Montana. I feel that this project would help this small community greatly. I support the proposed Montana Alberta Transmission Line and look forward to hearning very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project. I urge the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and Bureau of Land management to issue the need certificates of compliance and right of ways as required. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of this project.

Sincerly

Michael P Smith

Shelby Montana

24

L110

Response 576: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Doug [dcbanka@earthlink.net]
Posted At: Saturday, March 15, 2008 6:47 PM
Conversation: EIS comments
Posted To: MATL

Subject: EIS comments

Mr. Greg Hallsten
Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901

March 13, 2008

Sirs,

This is a follow up letter concerning the MATL (Montana Alberta Tie Ltd.) power line. Again I want to reiterate that this is not about the line itself but the proposed direction of the line (diagonal) and the use of H-structures instead of the preferred mono pole design.

Comment 577

In the Great Falls and Conrad meetings it was brought up several times that everyone should sacrifice and **"take one for the team"**. I do believe that with the total number of poles and power lines coupled with the pipelines etc. I have done my share of **"Taking One for the Team"**. Therefore if it is a team effort then EVERYONE should share in the costs and not just a few burden the entire costs of having to farm around a diagonal direction power line. In the next paragraph it will state as the number of issues that I have to deal with on a yearly basis. MATL needs to address the issue of a straight line format only. I should not be saddled with a diagonal direction because of the funding problems that MATL has with making the line a few miles longer. It has been brought to my attention that the Northern portion of the line is only on a straight line format. We are asking for the same consideration that our Northern neighbors have been afforded.

Comment 578

As in my previous letter I wish to state that I have an existing 230 kV line cross the property. It consists of 30 + mono poles and of those only 2 of the poles presents any type of issues. The only issues they present are because of the location in the middle of fields. To operate around one of these poles presents an additional 2.4 acres of added input costs. I have also a 115 KV line that cuts a diagonal across the property.

20

L111

Response 577: See the discussion of Economic Issues and Line Issues in the Consolidated Responses section for related information.

Response 578: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Comment 579

That line consists of 11 H-structures and 1 triple pole structure with 6 guy wires associated with it. Of those particular structures they present the biggest problem in my farming practices. They have the **largest weed problem** due to the size of footprint of the poles structure. They also present the **largest gopher/grasshopper issue**. When operating around them they also have a larger area to operate around them. It approaches 2.8+ acres. Of the balance of lines on the farm (I have 8 separate transmission lines) there are only a total of 12 other poles that cause any issues. I started to count the number of power lines on the farm recently and stopped counting when the number surpassed 150. The total number of poles that follow field lines and roads etc is very large and they **do not cause any issues**. Only the poles in the middle of field and the diagonal direction cause the most economic loss to me in my farming. I have 2 69 KV lines and several other smaller distribution lines. I also have an interstate through the middle of the farm, a Burlington Northern Railroad, an irrigation system, several ICBM missile cables, 5 underground pipelines (crude oil, natural Gas, water, and a multiple fuels line), Fiber optic lines, telephone cables, and the 8 power lines. With the recent upsurge in the price of farming inputs, the cost of operating around these poles have went up approximately 120 to 125 percent. The cost to operate NEXT to a power line is NIL. It is nothing more than to swing around each pole on the opening of each field. The added cost is minor compared to operating around poles. In your assessment please consider only the use of mono poles and straight line direction.

One other issue is the tactics of the original leasing company that used intimidation and threats of Eminent Domain on people. This is especially concerning as the threats were used on some elderly people. This is a very concerning issue.

Comment 580

I have submitted some information earlier as to the cost increases of farming in the past year and wish the DEQ to use those in its assessment also.
To echo the earlier thoughts, fertilizer in the EIS was listed at 425 dollars per ton. Actually costs today are $550 for Urea and $850 for our phosphate. The amounts that were suggested are also misleading because my input amounts are based completely on my APH (actual proven history).

21

Response 579: Your comments regarding pole placement, weeds, gophers, and grasshoppers are noted. The agencies also note your comment indicating that pole placement at the edge of fields reduces interference with farming activities. Also see the discussions of Farming Issues and Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 580: Thank you for submitting more information on farm input costs. The agencies updated the analysis of farming costs in Section 3.13.2. See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Then the farm ground is analyzed for nutrient content. The amounts are then calculated based on a projection of APH and existing nutrients in the soil.

A bushel of wheat takes approximately 3 lbs of nitrogen to be produced. Therefore, a proven history of 50 bushels per acre needs approximately 150 lbs of nitrogen available for the plant. An APH of 65 would then need 195 lbs of nitrogen. So for the EIS to carte-blanc use 60 units of nitrogen is alchemy at best. Nitrogen is much **too expensive to recreationally** apply without a proper justification as to the needs of the soil. The amounts of phosphates is a bit different and my soil uses between 50 to 75 lbs of phosphate fertilizer per acre. That has been very historical on my farm and has not changed in 20 years. With the costs associated with farming there is not such a thing as random averages. Round-up costs have soared from 19 to 21 dollars per gallon to 50 to 55 dollars per gallon. The Monsanto people have informed dealers that we should expect a 3 dollar per gallon per month increase in price.

Comment 581

I am also concerned with the over spraying around poles and over fertilizing around poles if that will ever cause or create any ground water issues. Almost all of the chemicals I use do deteriorate very quickly but not all deteriorate rapidly. Will those chemicals stay in the soil and prevent grain germination and grain growth over time.

Comment 582

Farming is a very dangerous profession. Please do not allow it to become more dangerous with the addition of a diagonal power line.

Comment 583

My last comment is to thank the Department of Energy and the Department of Environmental Quality for the massive amount of work that they encumbered in this issue. A special thanks to Greg Hallsten and Tom Ring and the rest of the staff at DEQ. Your work has been appreciated.

Sincerely,

22

Response 581: Herbicides and other pesticides that deteriorate rapidly should not affect groundwater quality or grain germination and growth over time. As the commenter notes, most of the pesticides used by farmers are in this category. For more persistent pesticides and for fertilizer nutrients, the potential for effects would vary with the chemical and the farming method. Usually, soil moisture will soak only to about 4 feet in dryland and pivot and wheel line irrigated fields, and generally it will not reach more than about 6 feet even in flood irrigated fields. Thus, it is unlikely that any of these products would get into ground water. However, on either dryland or irrigated fields, excessive application of fertilizer could adversely affect surface water quality by increasing nutrient runoff that can promote excessive growth of algae and other aquatic plants. Excess fertilizer nutrients that reached groundwater below irrigated fields could discharge to springs or seeps that enter surface streams, also adversely affecting surface water. With or without a transmission line, farmers should monitor their fertilizer and pesticide use to avoid overloading (Technical memorandum from Shane A Bofto, Engineer, HydroSolutions, Inc. to Tom Ring, DEQ, dated July 17, 2008).

Response 582: Although MATL proposes to raise conductor height, farmers and aerial sprayers would have to exercise caution around the transmission line. Also see the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 583: Comment noted.

March 11, 2008

Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana DEQ
Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RECEIVED
MAR 13 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Dear Tom:

Comment 581

This letter is in response to the Montana Alberta Tie line. I work at Stockman Bank in Conrad, and as a business man and banker I would like to state my support for the transmission line. We definitely need the economic benefits and tax base that it will provide for our community. I would simply echo the comments from others on how it will help maintain our schools and labor force.

Comment 582

I also have a specific interest in the line as it will potentially cross my land northwest of Conrad. It appears that Alternative # 3 would cross my land in section 25, Township 29 North, Range 4 West.

My concern is that it appears that it dissects an irrigated hay field that I have an irrigation pivot on. I am hoping that we can negotiate the placement of poles so that they are not in a position that will prevent me from operating my irrigation system. If this alternative is not chosen then obviously this would not be an issue. Frankly, I have a hard time discerning exactly from the maps where it will be. The maps get to grainy when I blow them up to be sure.

If it were possible I would appreciate a little clearer map of the alternative that comes through the above mentioned land description.

Again, I would like to voice my support for the transmission line in general.

Thank You,

Dan Majerus

Dan Majerus
Box 843
Conrad, MT 59425
Work phone 278-8200
Home phone 278-3434

Email address: dmajerus@stockmanbank.com

L89

Response 584: Comment noted.

Response 585: A map of the area in question was sent to Mr. Majerus by e-mail on April 4, 2008. Alternative 3 does dissect the center pivot in that section. Also see the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Ring, Tom

From: Mary Guse [mothergoose@sofast.net]
Posted At: Friday, March 14, 2008 9:42 AM
Conversation: Support
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Support

Comment 586

As a past assessor of Glacier County I support the Montana Alberta Tie transmission line. During my tenure as assessor, I have seen Glacier County's tax base decline because of the decreasing
Amount of oil and gas production. We need to increase out tax base and why not with renewable energy such as wind generators.

Glacier County especially needs industry because not all of the county residents pay county and state taxes. The burden is being passed on to those who are not Native American. I am not saying that all Native American do not pay taxes, but according to the laws of Montana those who are enrolled members of the Blackfeet Reservation living on the reservation are exempt from county and state taxes. This creates an unfair burden on those that do pay. Industry would contribute to relieving some of that inequity.

Comment 587

Thank you

Mary Guse
18 7th Ave SE
Cut Bank, MT 59427

26

L90

Response 586: See the discussion of Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 587: The topic of property taxation for Native Americans living on the Blackfeet Reservation is beyond the scope of this EIS. Potential impacts of the proposed project on property tax revenues and other socioeconomic conditions are discussed in Section 3.13.

United States Department of the Interior

U. S. GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

Reston, VA 20192

In Reply Refer To:
Mail Stop 423
ER 08/161

March 14, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
Bureau of Land Management
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230-kV Transmission Line, Cascade, Teton, Chouteau, Pondera, Toole, and Glacier Counties, Montana

Dear Mr. Ring:

As requested by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, in their correspondence of February 12, 2008, the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) has reviewed the subject draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) and offers the following comment.

SPECIFIC COMMENT

Section 3.6.1 Analysis Methods, page 3-66, last paragraph, first sentence Comment 588

There is a typographical error in the Internet link provided for USGS flood-frequency and basin-characteristic data for Montana. The correct Internet link is:
http://mt.water.usgs.gov/freq?page_type=site&site_no=06108000

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on this DEIS. If you have any questions concerning our comment, please contact Lloyd Woosley, Chief of the USGS Environmental Affairs Program, at (703) 648-5028 or at lwoosley@usgs.gov.

Sincerely,

/Signed/
James F. Devine
Senior Advisor for Science Applications

Copy to: Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance

L92

Response 588: Thank you for pointing out the error. The correction is included in Section 3.6.1 in the EIS.

March 16, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring,
Montana DEQ

Please accept these comments on the Federal Draft EIS and State of Montana Supplemental Draft EIS for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) Transmission line.

Comment 589 The proposed energy development is unnecessary and inappropriate for this area. This sparsely populated area of Montana does not need such a large, expensive centralized energy system. Montana does not need such a system. Montana already makes more electricity than it consumes. There is no reason for Montana to supply other regions with power. This only fuels excessive growth in other areas that are beyond the resources of the local area. It also allows other areas to not face the environmental impacts of their own lifestyles. Montana should not subsidize other people's energy consumption.

Comment 590 This project will have a very large and negative impact on Montana's environment. I am opposed to this level of landscape alteration, including infrastructure, visual deterioration and noise pollution. The financial expense of this project would be better used to develop local, sustainable energy technologies and systems for this remote area of Montana.

Comment 591 We need to move toward small-scale renewable energy developments that are in-sync with the communities and work well with the landscapes. The relatively small and sparse population of this area is perfect for small-scale local energy development. This area should not by supplying energy to other regions. It makes no sense. This amounts to subsidizing over consumptive lifestyles onto rural communities.

Comment 592 We need to reduce out total energy consumption and keep production of the energy as local as possible and under public control. This proposal does the opposite, creating a corporate owned transnational energy grid. It is bad idea. I strongly support the "no action alternative." The time, money and energy would be better invested into research and development of local, renewable energy sources.

David Mildrexler
PO Box 7634
Missoula, MT 59807

L112

Response 589: Your comments are noted.

Response 590: Local, sustainable energy technologies can still be developed in this part of the state. However, their development would not satisfy the project need.

Response 591 and 592: Comments noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Michael [hihomike@peoplepc.com]
Posted At: Monday, March 17, 2008 1:14 PM
Conversation: powerline
Posted To: MATL

Subject: powerline

Dear Mr. Ring,

Comment 593

I AM WRITING TO YOU AGAIN IN RESPONSE TO THE EIS THAT WE AS LAND OWNERS RECENTLY RECEIVED IN THE MAIL. YOU DID IMPROVE ON SOME AREAS IN THIS DRAFT ,BUT YOU FAILED ONCE IN AGAIN ONLY TALKING WITH CERTAIN FARMERS IN THE AFFECTED AREA FROM THE POWERLINE CONSTRUCTION. MY FATHER AND I ARE CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THIS SITUATION , BECAUSE WE ARE NOT HUGE FARMERS . OUR FARM IS ALMOST AT THE 100 YEAR MARK FOR FAMILY OWNERSHIP AND WE HAVE HAD POWERLINES TO FIGHT WITH OR THE OLDER TELEPHONE LINES WHEN THEY WERE ABOVE GROUND TO DEAL WITH SINCE MY DAD STARTED FARMING. WE ARE NOT AGAINST PROGRESS OR THIS POWERLINE , BUT WE DON'T FEEL LIKE WE NEED ANOTHER POWERLINE CROSSING OUR PROPERTY WE HIGHLY RECOMMEND THAT THIS POWERLINE BE EITHER FATHER TO THE WEST SO THAT IT IS CLOSE TO THE SUPPOSEDLY WIND GENERATING FARMS THAT ARE RELIANT UPON THIS LINE BEING BUILT OR TO THE EAST ON PROPOSED ROUTE 3 WHICH ELIMINATES ANY DIAGONAL CROSSING ON OUR PROPERTY OR ANY OF THE NEIGHBORS. SO PLEASE TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION OUR SUGGESTIONS WHEN MAKING YOUR FINAL DECISION.

SINCERELY,
DONALD M. KOENIG
MICHAEL D. KOENIG
3/17/08

PeoplePC Online
A better way to Internet
http://www.peoplepc.com

18

L114

Response 593: Representatives of DEQ and MATL met with the Koenigs to discuss the possibility of a new local routing option to address the concerns raised in this comment. The Koenigs indicated they did not want the line crossing their property and did not want the agencies to consider additional alignments on their property.

March 13, 2008

RECEIVED
MAR 17 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-0901

c/o. Tom Ring

Dear Mr. Ring,

Comment 594

Regarding the routing on the proposed 230KV transmission line, I would request (alternative 4) R5W be utilized. This routing is more of a direct approach with a straight line to the final required destination. At this time I would not desire the lines to cross my property due to the impact of wildlife in the area. I purchased the property as an investment with the intent to preserve the raw natural beauty of the land. I would rather the proposed placement not cross my property line.

Sincerely,

Kathy Cummings
KMC INC

L115

Response 594: Your comment on Alternative 4 is noted, however, the agencies note that the reference to R5W may be in error.

Response 595: Comment noted.

RECEIVED

MAR 17 2008

Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

March 12, 2008

Mr. Tom King
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana
59620-0901

Comment 595

Dear Mr. King,
I am writing in response to the invitation to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana/Alberta Tie Transmission Line. I am chairperson of the Northern Rockies Medical Center in Cut Bank.

As a small rural medical facility, NRMC is impacted by the shift in population up or down and the economies of the area. We struggle to bring adequate health care to the citizens in our service area. I view the proposed electric transmission line as a positive step in bolstering the economy, which in turn will make it easier to provide better healthcare. Wind energy in my opinion is a "clean" industry that will not impact the environment negatively. I am in favor of the proposed project by Montana/Alberta Tie, Ltd.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my opinion and speak in favor the transmission line. I look forward to hearing of the progress being made in obtaining the necessary permits and right-of-ways to complete the project.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Gerald Ebelt

L116

DR. CHERYL REICHERT M.D., PH.D.
Pathologist • 51 Prospect Drive
Great Falls, MT 59405
Home Phone (406) 727-1964

March 15, 2008

RECEIVED
MAR 17 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

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

re: Montana Alberta Tie Ltd.

Dear Mr. Ring,

I am pleased by the prospects of wind energy as a much superior to "old coal'" technology, and I am lead to believe that this project will result in the development of a number of windfarms in northcentral Montana. I therefore endorse this project with a few caveats.

I am opposed to any merchant venture using eminent domain to condemn privately held farmland. 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. When I raised this issue during the first comment period on the draft EIS, the response about putting the lines on public lands adjacent to roads was a concern about "greater public exposure to EMF" (see Comments, p. 134). If this is an acknowledged concern, how is this being mitigated for rural families living and working near the line? Comment 596

Because our Big Sky and open landscape is a public resource enjoyed by all, **the permitting process for this transmission line should require a clear and direct benefit to the citizens of Montana**. Generating electricity as a merchant venture by private entities in order to export electricity to Las Vegas or Calgary does not provide a compelling reason to disrupt established farming practices or harm our landscape with a latticework of high voltage transmission lines. I would like to see a finite percentage of electricity transmitted on this line **directly benefit the citizens of northcentral Montana**. 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. Comment 597

When I posed this question to Dr. John Railton during a recent public presentation, he indicated that this is beyond the scope of a private for-profit company. I maintain that it is clearly within the prerogative of the company to recognize this public sacrifice by offering a small percentage of the transmission capacity to Montanans at cost. It should also be required by our state agencies, in the same manner we charge a coal severance tax. Comment 598

Please don't let this "takings" of Montana resources for private benefit and public cost to happen yet AGAIN. Comment 599

Sincerely,

Cheryl M. Reichert

L117

Response 596: See the discussion in the EIS, Section 3.4.2. Although no federal or state regulations are in effect specifying environmental limits on the strengths of magnetic fields from power lines, the agencies have worked to site the line so that it would not be in close proximity to residences. The agencies acknowledge that those people working in close proximity to the line would be exposed to elevated electromagnetic fields. In addition, MATL's policy is to minimize EMF exposure levels to the extent practicable. MATL would use a vertical optimized phasing orientation for the proposed line, where phases of the single circuit are offset to minimize the line's EMF strength. While additional research has occurred since 1999, the cover letter transmitting an exhaustive report about potential health implications of exposure to EMF still summarizes the state of science on this topic. (NIEHS REPORT 1992). An excerpt from this cover letter follows:

"The scientific evidence used in preparation of this report has undergone extensive scientific and public review. The entire process was open and transparent. Anyone who wanted "to have a say" was provided the opportunity.

"The scientific evidence suggesting that ELF-EMF exposures pose any health risk is weak. The strongest evidence for health effects comes from associations observed in human populations with two forms of cancer: childhood leukemia and chronic lymphocytic leukemia in occupationally exposed adults. While the support from individual studies is weak, the epidemiological studies demonstrate, for some methods of measuring exposure, a fairly consistent pattern of a small, increased risk with increasing exposure that is somewhat weaker for chronic lymphocytic leukemia than for childhood leukemia. In contrast, the mechanistic studies and the animal toxicology literature fail to demonstrate any consistent pattern across studies although sporadic findings of biological

effects have been reported. No indication of increased leukemias in experimental animals has been observed.

"The lack of connection between the human data and the experimental data (animal and mechanistic) severely complicates the interpretation of these results. The human data are in the "right" species, are tied to "real life" exposures and show some consistency that is difficult to ignore. This assessment is tempered by the observation that given the weak magnitude of these increased risks, some other factor or common source of error could explain these findings. However, no consistent explanation other than exposure to ELFEMF has been identified.

"Epidemiological studies have serious limitations in their ability to demonstrate a cause and effect relationship whereas laboratory studies, by design, can clearly show that cause and effect are possible. Virtually all of the laboratory evidence in animals and humans and most of the mechanistic work done in cells fail to support a causal relationship between exposure to ELF-EMF at environmental levels and changes in biological function or disease status. The lack of consistent, positive findings in animal or mechanistic studies weakens the belief that this association is actually due to ELF-EMF, but it cannot completely discount the epidemiological findings.

"The NIEHS concludes that ELF-EMF exposure cannot be recognized at this time as entirely safe because of weak scientific evidence that exposure may pose a leukemia hazard. In my opinion, the conclusion of this report is insufficient to warrant aggressive regulatory concern. However, because virtually everyone in the United States uses electricity and therefore is routinely exposed to ELF-EMF, passive regulatory action is warranted such as a continued emphasis on educating both the public and the regulated community on means aimed at reducing exposures. The NIEHS does not believe that other cancers or noncancer health outcomes provide sufficient evidence of a risk to currently warrant concern.

"The interaction of humans with ELF-EMF is complicated and will undoubtedly continue to be an area of public concern. The EMF-RAPID Program successfully contributed to the scientific knowledge on ELF-EMF through its support of high quality, hypothesis-based research. While some questions were answered, others remain. Building upon the knowledge base developed under the EMF-RAPID Program, meritorious research on ELFEMF through carefully designed, hypothesis-driven studies should continue for areas warranting fundamental study including leukemia. Recent research in two areas, neurodegenerative diseases and cardiac diseases associated with heart rate variability, have identified some interesting and novel findings for which further study is ongoing. Advocacy groups have opposing views concerning the health effects of ELF-EMF. Some advocacy groups want complete exoneration and others want a more serious indictment. Our conclusions are prudent and consistent with the scientific data. I am satisfied with the report and believe it provides a pragmatic, scientifically-driven basis for any further regulatory review."

The alternatives developed by the agencies have avoided siting the line in close proximity to areas of concentrated human use such as homes, schools, and businesses, where humans would be exposed to EMF from the transmission line over prolonged periods. This approach has been termed "prudent avoidance". The agencies recognize that persons working in agricultural operations and travelers will be exposed to elevated EMF for short periods as they work and travel under and near the lines.

Response 597 and 598: Comments noted. 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. The benefits of the MATL line are discussed in Sections 3.13 and 3.17. Where the power flowing over MATL would be used is the decision of power generators, utilities, and other electricity buyers.

Response 599: Comment noted.

Brown -

629 Prairie View Rd – Conrad, MT 59425
406-278-5600
Fax # 406-278-7506

March 13, 2008

RECEIVED
MAR 17 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
Attn: Tom Ring
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring,

I am a Conrad business person and a land owner 8 miles north of Conrad.

Comment 600

I am writing in support for the MATL line. Knowing that the impact to the environment is minimal, and knowing that this line will be the conduit to harnessing northern Montana's natural resource, the wind, I implore the bureau to accept MATL and its preferred placement.

Everybody always complains about not having good Montana jobs for our college graduates and employable work force. The MATL is a solution to this.

Comment 601

Everybody always says we should harness this wind and make some good of it. The MATL is a solution to this.

Everybody wishes for lower property taxes. The MATL would help spread the tax burden in many facets.

Please do not stand in the way of this improvement to Northern Montana.

Best regards,

Dede

Dede Brown

❖ DEDE ❖

419
TR

Response 600: 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 601: Comments are noted.

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

RECEIVED
MAR 18 2008
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

Name Maurice Tack

Address 78 Tower Rd

City Valier State MT Zip 59486-5138

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing.

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

As a farmer-rancher living in Montana for over 30 years I think this transmission line is a good deal for the state. The power line will greatly help towns like conrad and Valier once the line is built and wind energy companies start to devolope. My one concern is that Matt use single poles in all tillable ground. The H poles are very hard to farm around. I have farm ground that I lease that will have a mile of line. Single poles could be placed in a fence line with very little trouble to Matt or myself. Other than pole placement the positive benefits of the Montana-Alberta Tie power line far out pace the negatives. Thank you for your time setting up the public meetings everyone was well informed.

Comment 602

Comment 603

Comment 604

Sincerly

Maurice Tack

L120

Response 602 to 604: Comments noted. See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Ring, Tom

From: Jim Anderson [wings@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Wednesday, March 19, 2008 8:44 AM
Conversation: Teton County
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Teton County

Good Morning,

Comment 605

I am in favor of the MATL line coming thru Teton County. The tax revenue is greatly needed. Any wind generation in this area could tap into this line.

Thank you,

Jim Anderson
Wings and Wild Things
Choteau, MT

17

L121

Response 605: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Sean Pahut [srae.pahut@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Wednesday, March 19, 2008 9:50 PM
Conversation: Power Line
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Power Line

To whom it may concern;

Comment 606

I am writing this letter of support for the Montana-Alberta Tie Power Line. The Montana Hi-Line has long been economically barren with the persistent drought and the continued migration of people out of our communities. This power line gives our area an economic opportunity that has not been seen for a long time. I agree with the people who are concerned about the land owners and their interests should be addressed as much as possible, however, nothing is 100% perfect and I believe that the company has attempted to rectify any concerns that has been brought to it's attention. Comment 608

A few days ago I saw a picture of Governor Schwitzer in Butte welcoming a German company who will be building windmills in Butte. I would hate to see our state government turn away an opportunity that will kickstart wind generation along the Rocky Mountain Front considering our State is portraying itself as a leader in green energy. Comment 608

Please approve this powerline and it's current route so that the project can start immediately without any additional cost to the company. I believe that the long term benefits outweigh any short term pains that some people may/may not experience.

Comment 609

Sincerely,

Sean Pahut
past president Shelby Chamber of Commerce
Shelby, MT

16

L122

Response 606 to 609: Comments noted.

Response 610 to 612: Comments noted.

A NOTE FROM
THE TOOLE COUNTY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

March 15, 2008

RECEIVED
MAR 19 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 610

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Transmission Line. I would like to go on record as offering my support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd. (MATL). I firmly believe construction of this line will have a positive and lasting effect on not only Toole County, but the entire state of Montana.

Comment 611

The proposed 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 Toole and Glacier Counties. The development of wind farms will create permanent job positions within Toole County and will benefit all residents of Toole County by expanding the tax base. Additionally, the development of wind power, a renewable energy source, is the right thing to do in terms of protecting our environment.

Comment 612

Thank you for the opportunity to express my support for this project. I look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project.

Sincerely,

Deb Brandon

Deb Brandon
Toole County Development Director

Deb Brandon
P.O. Box 246
104 East Main Street
Shelby, MT 59474
Phone: 406.424.8403
Cell: 406.450.5177
Fax: 406.424.8413
brandon@northerntel.net

L123

MATL Project:
MT. Dept. Environmental quality
Management Bureau

To Whom It May Concern:

Comment 613

The Glacier County Commissioners would like to be on the record as in support of the MATL line being proposed for construction in our county. We have previously, in meetings with MATL personnel and publicly shown our support for the MATL line. We want to continue to show our support for this project and any others that may offer opportunities for economic growth in our area. Thank you for your public comment presentations in our area.

Glacier County Commissioners;

John W. Ray
Michael DesRosier
Ron Rides At The Door

L137

Response 613: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Mary Anderson [mary@3rivers.net]
Posted At: Thursday, March 20, 2008 1:46 PM
Conversation: MATL line
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL line

Hi there,

Comment 614

I am in favor of the MATL line coming thru Teton County. I believe this is good for our local economy and for the state.

Thank you,

Mary Anderson
Choteau, MT

14

L134

Response 614: Comment noted.

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Denver Federal Center, Building 56, Room 1003
Post Office Box 25007 (D-108)
Denver, Colorado 80225-0007

March 21, 2008

9043.1
ER 08/161

Ms. Ellen Russell, Project Manager
Office of Electric Delivery and Energy Reliability
U.S. Department of Energy
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms. Russell:

The Department of the Interior has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV Transmission Line, Montana, and offers the following comments:

The National Park Service has reviewed this project in relation to any possible conflicts with the Land and Water Conservation Fund (L&WCF) and the Urban Park and Recreation Recovery programs, and reports that there are numerous L&WCF projects in the counties affected by the transmission line.

Comment 615

They recommend you consult with the official who administers the L&WCF program in Montana to determine any potential conflicts with Section 6(f)(3) of the L&WCF Act (Public Law 88-578, as amended). This sections states: "No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary [of the Interior], be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversion only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location."

The administrator for the L&WCF program in Montana is Mr. Walt Timmerman, Grants Coordinator, Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, P.O. Box 200701, Helena, Montana, 59620. Mr. Timmerman's phone number is 406-444-3753.

Response 615: Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks did not express any concerns regarding the Land &Water Conservation Fund program in its review of the EIS. Further review found that none of these sites would be crossed.

Ms. Ellen Russell 2

If you have any questions regarding the L&WCF projects that could be impacted, please contact Terree Klanecky, Outdoor Recreation Planner, in the National Park Service Midwest Regional Office at 402.221.1556.

In addition, under separate cover the U.S. Geological Survey has provided a typographical correction to their Internet link on page 3-66. Comment 616

Sincerely,

Robert F. Stewart
Regional Environmental Officer

cc: Tom Ring, Montana DEQ

Response 616: Thank you for pointing out the error. The correction is included in Section 3.6.1.

Ring, Tom

From: George Wuerthner [wuerthner@earthlink.net]
Posted At: Friday, March 21, 2008 5:13 PM
Conversation: Power line development
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Power line development

Comment 617

Dear Montana:

I'm concerned about the development of a 215 mile long power line along the I-15 corridor. In particular, I am concerned about big wind development along the Rocky Mountain Front. This power line might facilitate major wind development close to the front. I hope the department will do a "full field" development alternative that looks at the impacts of major wind farms, especially as they get closer to the Front. Thank you.

George Wuerthner
306 South Fifth
Livingston Montana 59047

12

L/37

Response 617: The EIS analyzes effects of the proposed line and several alternatives. Length of the proposed line in the United States is approximately 130 miles. All alternative alignments would extend from the Cut Bank area to Great Falls, and would cross but not parallel I-15. See Figures 2.3-1, 2.4-1, and 2.5-1 for locations of these alternatives.

Assessment of cumulative effects of potential wind farm development, including location, size and number of turbines, was based on the best available information. The agencies do not know at this time where turbines would be located. The agencies judged it unduly speculative to assume that feeder lines more than 40 miles in length would be built to serve a single moderate sized wind farm outside of Glacier National Park or the Rocky Mountain Front. Also see the discussion of Visual Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the discussion of wind farms in Chapter 4.

Response 618: Comment noted.

GLACIER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

512 East Main
Cut Bank, Montana 59427
(406) 873-5063
(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

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MAR 21 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Tom Ring;
MT. Dept. of Environmental Quality
Management Bureau
POB 200901
Helena, MT. 59620

To Whom It May Concern:

Comment 618

This letter is to offer our continued support for the construction of the MATL line.
Glacier County has previously shown our complete support for this project through the meetings we have had with company officials and at local meetings.
Glacier County is fully supportive of any means that helps develop the economic growth that might occur as a result of this project.
We can offer support through some incentives and infrastructure that we are capable of.
Thank you for your interest and the local hearings you have so far conducted.
If we can be of any further assistance please feel free to contact the Glacier County Commissioners.

Glacier County Commissioners:

M DesRosier
Ron Rides At The Door
John W. Ray

L138

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

Name Joe DeStaffany

Address 676 Marathon Rd

City CONRAD State MT Zip 59425

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing.

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

Please use single pole towers at the edge of farm land. Comment 619

Was the height of the line (21') at cold or Hot temperatures? As at hot that height will be lower. Comment 620

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MAR 21 2008
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

L139

Response 619: Comment noted. See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 620: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 621: Comments noted.

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

Name Mick Ladon

Address 11 8th St. S.W.

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing. Comment 621

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I support the proposed Montana Alberta transmission line and look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project. I urge the Montana Dept of Environmental Quality and Bureau of Land Management to issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as required. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of this project.

RECEIVED
MAR 21 2008
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L40

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

Name GENI LADEN

Address 118 4th St. SW

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing.

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement: See Comment 621

I support the proposed Montana Alberta transmission line and look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project. I urge the Montana Dept of Environmental Quality and Bureau of Land Management to issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as required. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of this project.

RECEIVED
MAR 21 2008
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L141

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

Name Scott Laden

Address 118 4th St. S.W.

City Cut Bank State MT Zip 59427

Comments may be submitted orally or in writing at the public hearing.

See Comment 621

Please consider these written comments on the Environmental Impact Statement:

I support the proposed Montana Alberta transmission line and look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project. I urge the Montana Dept of Environmental Quality and Bureau of Land Management to issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as required. Thank you for the opportunity to express my support of this project.

RECEIVED
MAR 21 2008
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

COMMENT DEADLINE March 31, 2008

HOW TO COMMENT AND PARTICIPATE AFTER THE HEARING:

VIEW THE 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:

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

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

L142

Ring, Tom

From:	Gene & Linda Sentz [friends@3rivers.net]
Posted At:	Saturday, March 22, 2008 9:50 AM
Conversation:	Public comment on MATL: The DEIS does not appear to meet mandated NEPA requirements on cumulative impact and effects
Posted To:	MATL
Subject:	Public comment on MATL: The DEIS does not appear to meet mandated NEPA requirements on cumulative impact and effects

March 22, 2008 (hard copy sent via USPS mail)

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Environmental Management Bureau

ATTN: Tom Ring

PO Box 200901

Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: MATL & big wind farms…

To all boosters:

With some strict limits it might all turn out okay, but…

Be careful what you wish for. It could become too much of a good thing.

…and beware of unintended consequences.

Dear DEQ & DOE, et al:

Comment 622

The MATL DEIS repeatedly implies that this environmental study really is all about the transmission line and that it does not have to address in much depth the location, number, size, and effects of the accompanying wind farms. Therefore, the cumulative impact and effects of wind farms that are expected to feed into the MATL line are covered only in a rather cursory fashion in the draft EIS.

Just as an example, the DEIS mentions, almost as an afterthought, that more than 900 passerine birds and 1700 bats could be killed annually by the wind turbines associated with the MATL line. Yet there is

8

L43

Response 622: The potential cumulative impacts of wind farms that may connect with the MATL line, assessed in Sections 4.1 to 4.16, are based on realistic estimates of likely locations and conservative estimates of the number of wind turbines that could be built. Specific details are not yet available, and neither DOE nor DEQ would have regulatory authority over the siting of wind farms unless specific locations required a water quality permit under the Montana Water Quality Act. Because mortality data from areas with high bird migration are included in the data used as a basis for analyzing potential mortality of birds and bats, the analysis should bound the potential impact on migratory birds. The EIS discusses the potential for adverse effects on birds from facilities near Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge. Freezeout Lake is about 40 miles west of Great Falls, so it should not be affected by the wind farms sited to connect directly to the transmission line. Also see the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and sections 3.8.3 and 4.9.

no apparent analysis based on the area being a major migratory bird flyway, with Freezout Lake and surroundings a main stopping-off point for tens of thousands of geese, swans, ducks, and other waterfowl.

Comment 623

There also seems to be only a rather superficial discussion about impacts on viewsheds and habitat fragmentation caused by roads, power lines, large turbines, and other developments associated with big wind farms, especially if they might be located near Glacier National Park or the Rocky Mountain Front sometime in the future, when more capacity is added to the MATL line and additional feeder lines might be built.

Comment 624

DEQ repeatedly states or implies that neither it nor any other state agency nor the public has any real, viable jurisdictional authority over, or any procedure by which to give meaningful input about, the size or extent or location of wind farms on private land, and so the cumulative impact and effects of dozens, or hundreds (or even thousands) of giant wind turbines at some future time do not have to be seriously addressed and/or quantified in this EIS.

Comment 625

It is regrettable and alarming that the Montana legislature took away the authority of state agencies, and therefore the Montana public, to submit viable input and be seriously involved in the siting of large-scale energy facilities such as big wind farms with dozens or hundreds of giant turbines.

Comment 626

With all due respect, however, the rules of NEPA mandate that all cumulative impact and effects need to be taken seriously and quantified in an in-depth manner in an EIS. Ostensibly, the main reason the public has been given for the purpose and need for the MATL transmission line is to carry electricity most of which will be generated by big wind farms.

Comment 627

The cumulative effects of wind farms, even on private land, need to be quantified in an EIS to satisfy NEPA requirements. This DEIS seems quite lacking of a really serious in-depth study quantifying the cumulative impact and effects of "reasonably foreseeable" wind farms, and therefore it apparently does not meet the legal criteria mandated by federal government requirements under NEPA.

Comment 628

At the bottom of this letter is a copy of the relevant NEPA requirements, Sec. 1508.7 Cumulative Impact, and Sec. 1508.8 Effects. The applicable language is in Sec. 1508.7: "…reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such future actions."

Comment 629

Please, go back and do more in-depth study that carefully quantifies all the foreseeable cumulative impacts and effects of large-scale wind farms (e.g. how big and how many turbines and other consequences, etc) that might be spawned by the MATL line, and the possibility and extent of potential increased capacity and future tangential lines attaching to the MATL transmission line. This study may

9

Response 623: Assessment of cumulative effects of potential wind farm development, including location, size and number of turbines, was based on the best available information. The agencies do not know at this time where turbines would be located. MATL has not proposed to upgrade the line (see the discussion in response to comment 183). DOE would require a new NEPA review if capacity increase were proposed for the MATL transmission line. The agencies judged it unduly speculative to assume that feeder lines more than 40 miles in length would be built to serve a single moderate sized wind farm outside of Glacier National Park or the Rocky Mountain Front. Therefore, this situation is not reasonably foreseeable. Also see the discussion of Visual Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 624: 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. See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and sections 4.1 through 4.16.

Response 625: Comment noted.

Response 626 to 629: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. In compliance with NEPA, analysis of the potential cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable actions, including wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line, is in Sections 4.1 to 4.16. The cumulative impacts analysis considers the impacts of wind farm developments that might be built to use the full potential transmission capacity of the MATL line. The analysis is based on the best available information respecting the potential sizes, designs, and locations of reasonably foreseeable future wind farms.

be the best chance – possibly the only chance – that the public will ever have to consider and comment on such impacts to this region of Montana.

Finally: PLEASE, NO WIND FARMS NEAR THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN FRONT ! Comment 630

Respectfully,

Gene Sentz

PO Box 763

Choteau, Montana 59422

friends@3rivers.net

NEPA Requirements to be studied in an EIS:

Sec. 1508.7 Cumulative impact.

"Cumulative impact" is 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 other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

Sec. 1508.8 Effects.

"Effects" include:

(a) Direct effects, which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.

(b) Indirect effects, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

Effects and impacts as used in these regulations are synonymous. Effects includes ecological (such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems), aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social, or health, whether direct, indirect, or cumulative. Effects may also include those resulting from actions which may have both beneficial and detrimental effects, even if on balance the

10

Response 630: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Donna and Dave Colavito [dcolavito@hvc.rr.com]
Posted At: Saturday, March 22, 2008 12:52 PM
Conversation: Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. Proposal
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. Proposal

Dave Colavito

145 Bowers Road

Rock Hill, NY 12775-6815

845-794-1964

March 22, 2008

Montana Dept of Environmental Quality

Environmental Management Bureau

Attn: Tom Ring tring@mt.gov

PO Box 200901

Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 631

I hope I'm not out of line commenting here, but wanted to say that I am pleased to see Montana pursuing alternative energy development. I think in certain respects, it can be said that Montana is leading our nation in this important direction. I live in the Catskill Mountain region of New York and we are facing a set of similar choices and difficult decisions as to where people believe alternative energy development to be compatible with other values of the landscape. I just wanted to say that your Rocky Mountain Front is dear to my heart, and I think unique in a number of respects compared with much of the lower 48 states. It is for this reason that I hope industrial development does not encroach upon the Front, now or at any time in the future. I'm not sure of the legalese involved in ensuring this, but hope any easements, protections, covenants - or whatever else – that may be required to insulate the Front from such encroachment, are in place. Comment 633

Comment 632

6

L144

Response 631: Comment noted.

Response 632: See the discussion of Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 633: The topic of legal mechanisms to prevent industrial encroachment on the Rocky Mountain Front is outside the scope of this EIS.

Ring, Tom

From: Bethann Garramon [mac_oriley@yahoo.com]
Posted At: Sunday, March 23, 2008 11:28 AM
Conversation: MATL comments!
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL comments!

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Regarding the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. transmission line

I am a native of Choteau, MT - born and bred. I grew up there, left to Butte and then Missoula for my undergraduate academic work, and have now returned to the Rocky Mountain Front (Front) as an outdoor educator. I am passionate about the Front, and quite well acquainted with the environmental, economic, social, and ecological complexities of the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) transmission line project. I am taking this opportunity to identify a couple of concerns that I hope the MT DEQ will be keeping at the forefront in their consideration of this project.

First, alternative energy is, of course, only a positive alternative if it results in less (ideally substantially less) negative ecological and social impact. Considering that a great deal of this energy will be sold outside the state of Montana, I am concerned that the project may compromise the ecological and social integrity of the region and ultimately the state. The state's agencies, particularly the DEQ, ought to maintain this integrity above all economic considerations! Comment 634

Comment 635

Second, I am well aware of the economic challenges facing a rural mountain west state like ours. For centuries, Montanan's have been struggling against a tradition of milking whatever the current desirable resource(s) may be, shipping the commodity elsewhere, and watching as the majority of the profits were pocketed out-of-state, and large environmental and social degradation occurred within the state. As the world's focus shifts from historic resource extraction and use to new technology and energy development strategies, it is of paramount importance that we in Montana stand in the forefront of a new tradition - we need to *break* the habit of bleeding our state! The MATL is a positive addition to our state ONLY if it ensures the citizens of this state (including both affected property owners and all others) that our integrity, economic stability, and dignity *will be safeguarded*!

Comment 636

Third, aesthetic considerations are significant to every region, but the citizens of both MT and the entire nation have made it clear that the Rocky Mountain Front deserves particular consideration in this regard. Therefore, the appearance of any form of energy development, resource extraction, or other forms of industrial development *must* respond to the overwhelming concern our nation has expressed regarding the perpetuation of this region as an ecological, social, and cultural treasure of irreplaceable worth - whole, intact, and unblemished into perpetuity.

Comment 637

Fourth, as a matter of personal right and liberty, I am extremely concerned about the current trend in this state (see the matter of the Great Falls coal energy plant, for example) of forcing land owners to swallow bitter reductions in their ability to actively participate in the decisions affecting them. For that matter, MT seems to be right on track with situations having similar results (if not details) in other states and at a federal level as well. This is *unacceptable*!! The state constitution guarantees the citizens of Montana express rights to a healthful environment, as well as the right to privacy, and other rights fundamental to our individual and collective self-respect and integrity. If the development of the MATL threatens these intrinsic rights, *it ought not be approved*!

I conclude by assuring you that I am in full-hearted favor of appropriate and Comment 638

4

L145

Response 634 to 635: Comments noted.

Response 636: The Rocky Mountain Front is more than 50 miles away from the proposed MATL line and more than 10 miles away from the nearest potential wind farm that might use the MATL line. See the discussion of Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 637 and 638: Comments noted.

expediant development of more economically efficient and ecologically sound energy technologies and natural resource useage. However, I cannot support decisons which would threaten the ecological sanctity of a region considered to be one of the most biologically diverse, historically intact, and therefore significant regions of the planet! Additionally, I will stand and speak in opposition to any decisions with threaten to carry on the tradition of culturally detrimental economic practices which have faced Montanans since long before its statehood. The integrity of the place and its people, ecologically, culturally, and *then* economically ***MUST*** become a principle factor in all decisions made by the governments affecting this state.

I thank you sincerely for your attention to the concerns and very real needs of the state of Montana

Sincerely,
Bethann Garramon

Comment 638 (Cont.)

5

COPY

March 20, 2008

To: Montana Department of Environmental Quality

RECEIVED

From: Fredrick C. Trafelet, Valier, MT

MAR 25 2008

Re: MATL

Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

To Whom It May Concern:

Comment 639

I am a teacher in the Valier Public School system. I would like to go on record supporting the Montana Alberta Transmission Line. After reading comments in regards to MATL, I feel the benefits completely outweigh any negative effects felt by the construction of the power line.

The figures I've seen appear to indicate the potential to have strong economic impact in the area. The creation of employment possibilities with the addition of families to our local area would be of great interest to all local schools.

Landowners are fairly compensated for lines passing across the underlying land. Tax paying farms also benefit from having the tax base expanded. Comment 640

The power line and associated wind development will add jobs and tax base to our economy. Comment 641

Again, I would go on record supporting the Montana Alberta Transmission Line.

Respectfully submitted,

Fredrick C. Trafelet

Fredrick C. Trafelet
PO Box 211
Valier, MT 59486

L155

Response 639 to 641: Comments noted.

March 11, 2008

RECEIVED
MAR 20 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Mgt. Bureau

Montana Dept of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

To whom it may Concern,

Comment 642

I am writing in support of the MATL line that is proposed between Cut Bank and Great Falls. I am a farmer in Pondera County, however the line will not cross any of my property. I have owned property in 3 of Montana's counties over the last 38 years, so am quite familiar with the amount of property tax paid by property owners in Montana. Any increase in tax base will be welcome.

Comment 643

We, in the State of Montana, need this project and other like it, to give a boost to our economy both locally and State wide. There is no good reason why this should not be approved and many reasons why it should. Development of clean, renewable wind energy along the line is probably among the most important. The exportation of a resource such as energy (wind) can only help the state's economy both through jobs and an increase in tax base. We export wheat, barley and beef among other things, why not energy?

Comment 644

For those that are concerned about the "viewshed" of the Rocky Mountain Front, I suggest they go west of the line and look to their heart's content.

Comment 645

In reality, I believe the single most important reason for development of this or any environmentally sound project is the retention of our most valuable resource. I speak of our children, the young adults that leave our state each year because the only jobs available in the State are low paying service related jobs. Our best and brightest are going to Seattle, Portland and Denver for good paying jobs they need to pay off their student loans and still have a decent standard of living. Maybe, if we allow some sound resource extraction and/or exportation projects like the MATL line, our kids will be able to find a good job at home.

Comment 646

In closing I would like to remind all concerned that the only true wealth of any nation, ours included, comes from the earth, whether it be agriculture, mining, timber, or energy from oil, coal, hydro, wind or solar. It all comes from the land.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Brad Huffman
7763 US Hwy 91 North
Conrad, Mt 59425

L167

Response 642 and 643: Comments noted.

Response 644: Comment noted. The agencies acknowledge that, visually, different viewpoints provide different perspectives. See the discussion of Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 645 and 646: Comments noted.

Page 1 of 1

Ring, Tom

From: dmuenchphoto@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, March 27, 2008 9:45 AM
To: Ring, Tom; MATL
Subject: MATL proposal

Comment 647

I want to go on record, please, with my feelings about the MATL proposal. Montana's Rocky Mountain Front is one of the most specail undeveloped and uncluttered landscapes in North America. A lot of people have fought long and hard to keep it that way. And, while I support alternative energy, I would rather not see big wind farms built anywhere near The Front.

Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Ruth Rudner
Harrison, Montana & Corrales, New Mexico

Planning your summer road trip? Check out AOL Travel Guides.

3/27/2008

L173

Response 647: The agencies do not know at this time where turbines would be located. The agencies judged it unduly speculative to assume that feeder lines more than 40 miles in length would be built to serve a single moderate sized wind farm outside of Glacier National Park or the Rocky Mountain Front. Also see the discussions of Visual Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

PO Box 3
Dutton MT 59433
March 27, 2008

Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena MT 59620-0901

RECEIVED
MAR 28 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Dear Tom:

The E.I.S. from D.E.Q. are the only things I have received on this transmission line, except for the condemnation letter from an attorney in Helena.

The first meeting I attended was in Cut Bank about two (2) years ago. I advised you at that time I had a gate cut in half and tracks leading to the proposed line and running parallel to the N.W.E. line. You stated this was not acceptable.

Comment 648 I attended several meeting after the one in Cut Bank, including one in the Spring of 2007. I spoke with you after that meeting and you stated you would be in Dutton the next day to talk with Greg Habel. You stated you would go down and look at the way the line could cross my property. The day before you were in Dutton I know my gate was intact because I was out there. The day after you were in Dutton I went back out to my property and the gate was cut in half. Is this a coincidence or what?

Comment 649 I noticed at all the meetings the discussion was from the land owners and politicians. Never has a County Commissioner from Teton County been at a meeting to support this line. Many city people want this line for the tax dollars and don't care how it crosses a farmer or ranchers land.

Comment 650 On March 11, 2008, Peggy Beltrone voted against the rezoning for the coal fired plant east of Great Falls. She knew her fellow commissioners were going to vote for it. That evening she was at the power line meeting and wanted it expedited. This is real hypocritical, but then she gets paid $800.00 per meeting from Tonbridge to support their power line.

Comment 651 If Tonbridge can make the projected profits from this line, it should at least be fair to the landowners and go single pole all the way across Montana, east and west and north and south, with no diagonals. D.E.Q. got this done on the W.A.P.A. line and the land owners were treated fair.

Comment 652 The line could parallel Interstate 15 from Canada to Great Falls and not harm any ranchers or farmers.

L174

Response 648: DEQ staff contacted Mr. Carney for permission to walk on his property to inspect the landslide adjacent to MATL's proposed alignment. Mr. Carney granted his permission. A neighbor gave a DEQ staff member a ride to the State Trust Land section at the Teton River crossing, and the DEQ staffer proceeded on foot on the Carney property. DEQ staff did not cut Mr. Carney's gate.

Response 649: Comment noted.

Response 650: Comment noted.

Response 651: Comment noted. The commenter is correct in observing that when Western Area Power Administration built the Great Falls to Conrad and later the Conrad to Shelby 230 kV transmission lines, it sited the lines on rangeland and pasture where it was available. Elsewhere, those lines generally used field boundaries in most but not all areas.

Response 652: Federal regulations prevent the line from sharing the right-of-way of the interstate system. Locating the line off the interstate right-of-way would still place structures in farm fields and would also place the line near homes.

Comment 653 The fair market value for land is far from what Tonbridge is offering. Tonbridge's price for land is pre-World War II.

Comment 654 The man in Billings, who did a study about farming around the poles needs to put his toys away, get out of the sandbox and go out and see how big farm machinery is today.

Comment 655 The Right of Eminent Domain is for the government or its agents. This, being a private company does not qualify for eminent domain..

Comment 656 Canada made this company go out and deal with the land owners before a certain date. They were to report back to the Energy Board with the results of this endeavor. The U.S. should do the same before a permit is issued.

Comment 657 It seem the land owners are being forgotten for the value of a dollar. This is not right. The land owners should always come first.

Sincerely,

Robert Carney

Robert J. Carney

Response 653 and 654: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 655: Under Montana law the use of eminent domain is not limited to a governmental entity and may be exercised by a private company as long as it is for a public use listed in Section 70-30-102, MCA. Also see the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section for related information.

Response 656: Comment noted.

Response 657: Comment noted.

Ben Ober,
Commission Chairman
Allan Underdal,
Commissioner
Dave Miller,
Commissioner
Merle Raph,
County Attorney
Donna Matoon,
Sheriff
Dan B. Whitted,
Coroner
Commissioners
Office# 406-424-8310
tccomm@3rivers.net

Mary Ann Harwood,
Clerk & Recorder
Sandra Peers,
Clerk of Court
Boyd Jackson,
Treasurer/Assessor
Supt. Of Schools
Helen I. Schnee,
Public Administrator
Russell Mann,
Justice of the Peace
Clerk & Recorders Office#
406-424-8300
Fax# 406-424-8301
tcclerk@3rivers.net

COUNTY OF TOOLE

226 1ST Street South
Toole County Courthouse, Shelby, MT 59474

COPY

March 28, 2008

Tom Ring, Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59602

Dear Tom;

Comment 658

We are writing to express our enthusiastic support of the proposed MATL Line from Lethbridge to Great Falls. This is a very important project for Northern Montana and Toole County in particular. This power line will generate over one billion dollars of investment in Toole, Pondera, and Glacier Counties. It will also be positive for power consumers in Montana, as the byproduct, wind energy, will add 600 Megawatts to the total generation capacity in the grid. Other positive byproducts will be construction and permanent jobs, tax base increase, and stimulation of our local economies.

Comment 659

We believe that there are legitimate concerns from landowners and that they should be worked out as best they can be, but we feel very strongly that there be **no further delays** to the project. Again, we strongly support the project and hope that you will grant them the permitting needed as soon as possible. Thanks for listening.

Respectfully,

Ben Ober
Chairman

Allan Underdal
Commissioner

Dave Miller
Commissioner

L179

Response 658 and 659: Comment noted. See the discussion of Socioeconomic Impact Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 660 to 666: Comments noted.

TO: THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIROMENTAL QUALITY
THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

We the undersigned strongly endorse approval of the Montana-Alberta Tie Line (MATL) from Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada to Great Falls, Montana.

MATL is the key to development of up to $1 billion in wind energy projects that will be an enormous economic benefit for north central Montana, the State of Montana, and the nation's energy supply. The increased tax base, construction jobs, royalty payments from wind generators, and the permanent monitoring and maintenance jobs will provide badly needed tax dollars for Montana, local schools, law enforcement, fire departments, county roads, parks, and other services. Comment 660

Wind is one natural resource northern Montana has plenty of and, in fact, it is rated one of the best and most reliable wind resources on the North American continent. Without transmission lines to move electric power, wind cannot be developed. Comment 661

After a rather rough start, MATL is demonstrating an eager willingness to work with affected landowners to address concerns regarding routing of transmission lines and placement of poles that would be potentially disruptive to agriculture operations. This includes the use of monopoles rather than "H" poles, wherever it is practical. MATL has entered into multiple landowner agreements should this project receive final approval and concurs with recommendations in the DEQ report. Landowners must be fairly compensated and treated with the up-most dignity... Comment 662

The MATL line will improve the reliability of the electric transmission system in both Montana and Alberta by making these regions less vulnerable to outages, brownouts, and creating a greater opportunity to import and export electricity, all of can be of benefit to consumers and suppliers. It's predicted the United States within a few years will experience an energy shortage due to increased demand and the cancellation of approximately 60 coal fired generation projects in the U.S. because of environmental concerns. It's absolutely imperative we develop this country's green and clean energy resources for our generation and future generations to come. Comment 663

It is important to note that MATL is a "merchant line" and the large capital investment and risk is made by the banks and private investors rather than by local taxpayers in Montana and Alberta. Comment 664

We urge your approval of the MATL application without costly delays that could very well jeopardize the entire project. Your final routing decision should be fair to all parties, MATL and landowners, striking a good balance between what makes sense economically and addresses the most sensitive issues in a responsible and proper manner. Comment 665

A good analogy is, "it's would be like connecting power cables to a huge battery that moves the economic engine of development".Let's move forward and approve the MATL Montana.. Comment 666

L180

We the undersigned support MATL as per the attached letter.

SIGNATURE	ADDRESS
[illegible]	1025 Main St. Shelby
[illegible]	P.O. Box 1034 Shelby
[illegible]	164 White Rd Shelby, MT
[illegible]	118 Rodeo Dr, Shelby, MT
[illegible]	PO Box 721 Shelby MT
[illegible]	728 Marion Ave Shelby, MT
[illegible]	425 O'Haire Blvd Shelby, MT

Choteau, Montana

Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box # 200901
Helena, Mt. 59602

Comment 667

I am responding to you again for the third time about your company needing to, or wanting to have access on our land with your transmission line. The legal description of our property is Section 12, 29N, 4W, Pondera County, Montana.

Again I am stating that there will be absolutely no access unless you follow the Comment 668 east section line or west half section line with single poles with no guy wires. The least amount of area to farm around and interruption of farming operation is what I am asking. I would prefer that the alternate route to use is alternate four.

Comment 669

Our Nephew Shawn Dolan, who is an engineer and works on power transmission lines in the Coeur d' Alene, Idaho area had a excellent presentation at Norby Hall in Conrad, Mt. He submitted the concept of single pole with no guy lines.

Having served on several boards and committees, have came to the conclusion that doing a project with state of art technology, materials and design from the very start, has always been an advantage to all parties concerned. Comment 670

We do hope MATL will be reasonable and fair with all land owners. Comment 671

Sincerely,

Arlene Anderson Ray Anderson

Arlene & Ray Anderson

L181

Responses 667 and 668: See the discussion in the response to comment 436.

Response 669: Unguyed single poles at angle structures would reduce impacts by removing guy wires that may interfere with farming practices. 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. Also see the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 670 and 671: Comments noted.

Response 672 to 677: Comments noted.

27 March 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Department of Environmental Quality
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59602

Subject: MATL

Dear Mr. Ring,

Comment 672

First, we would like to thank you again for your support with our on going difficulty with MATL. We appreciated the time you took to support an alternate route away from our home and off our property.

Second, it needs to be stated at no time have we had a positive or "good neighbor" Comment 673 contact from MATL as consistently declared at the meeting in Cut Bank. Every phone call from them was hostile, aggressive and demanding. We were clearly told lies such as, "all of the meetings were over, all the permits have been issued, we have to sign what ever they send us, they will put the power lines anywhere they want, condemn any part of our property they want, and we have nothing to say about this. " We disagree with them Comment 674 and will continue to fight for our rights. At the meeting the concern about the additional financial burden for MATL for alternate routes was discussed. How can you equate what is simply pennies on the dollar for a large foreign corporation as compared to the Comment 675 potential billions of profit versus the negative impact on the quality of life on a family and community. We believe it will "cost" us more than MATL if they do not follow an alternate route.

Thirdly, we feel that this is a lose-lose situation for the United States of America, the Comment 676 state of Montana and Glacier county. All of the true benefits go to Canada. They are willing to give some token monetary benefits. But, as a whole it doesn't do anything to decrease our foreign energy dependence. It simply trades one country for another. Would we let Venezuela or Iran run a project like this in the United States of America?

Lastly, the only support we can give this project as we wrote before is to keep it off of our property.

Comment 677

Sincerely,

Joseph J. Karcher / Diane C. Karcher

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

L182

Ring, Tom

From: Brett Doney [BDoney@gfdevelopment.org]
Posted At: Monday, March 31, 2008 5:22 PM
Conversation: MATL EIS Comment
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL EIS Comment

Tom Ring

Montana DEQ

Ellen Russell

US Dept. of Energy

Tom and Ellen-

Comment 678

On behalf of the Great Falls Development Authority, I am writing to provide further comment on the draft EIS for the Montana Alberta Tie Line project.

We believe that the draft EIS provides a thorough and comprehensive review of the environmental issues raised by the project. We commend everyone who has been involved in preparing the draft.

Comment 679

We urge DEQ and the US Department of Energy to move expeditiously to complete the EIS process and to issue the required permits and approvals to allow the project to be constructed as soon as possible.

Comment 680a

The development of renewable energy sources such as wind power cannot take place without the development of transmission capacity to carry power to where it is needed. Transmission lines are difficult to develop because they cross many parcels of land in different ownership. Satisfying every property owner while keeping a proposed line financially viable is not always possible, however, in this case we believe the alternative proposed by the applicant comes very close.

In our verbal testimony, we made the following points demonstrating how this project is in the public interest:

Comment 680b

1) This project is needed to stabilize and strengthen the existing electricity grids in the region.

Comment 681

2) This project is needed to allow for much needed economic development in the primarily rural counties of north central Montana. Energy development, particularly utilization of our natural wind resource, is an industry we have targeted to diversify our regional economy, create higher wage jobs, and strengthen the tax base recently weakened by the loss of one of Malmstrom Air Force Base's missile squadrons.

3

L183

Response 678 to 681: Comments noted.

Comment 682a

3) Our region has one of the best wind power resources in the nation, yet has seen little wind power development because of the lack of transmission capacity. We believe that the way you approve this project should set the standard for future transmission line projects that can allow for the development of this national resource while protecting the rights of property owners.

Comment 682b

4) The State of Montana has recognized the importance of projects such as this to the state's economy and the nation's energy supply by creating a one quarter mile wide property tax free zone for property owners along new transmission line routes.

5) Timing of this project is critical to attract investment in wind power development. Comment 683

Thank you for supporting renewable energy development in central Montana.

Brett Doney

President

Great Falls Development Authority

bdoney@gfdevelopment.org

1 (406) 771-9030

Cell 1 (406) 750-2119

Fax 1 (406) 454-2995

P.O. Box 949

Great Falls, MT 59404

Street Address:

300 Central Avenue, Suite 406

Great Falls, MT 59401

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Response 682a: Comment noted.

Response 682b: Land that is within 660 feet on either side of the midpoint of right-of-way or easement for a transmission line with a design capacity of 30 megavolt-amperes or greater and constructed after January 1, 2007, is exempt from property taxes under Section 15-6-229, MCA. The exemption does not apply within the boundaries of an incorporated or unincorporated city or town; to a platted and filed subdivision; or to land used for residential, commercial or industrial purposes. Also see the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 683: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Zack [info2@statesofcontrol.com]
Posted At: Monday, March 31, 2008 5:11 PM
Conversation: Comments on MATL Draft EIS
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Comments on MATL Draft EIS

March 31, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: Comments on Draft EIS for MATL

To whom it may concern:

Comment 684

I am deeply concerned that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Line focusses almost exclusively on the direct impacts of the transmission line itself, and fails to consider the cumulative effects of the industrial-scale wind power development which would be an immediate consequence of the MATL.

Comment 685

The MATL DEIS repeatedly implies that this environmental study concerns only the transmission line and that it does not have to address the location, number, size, and effects of the accompanying wind farms.
Therefore, the cumulative impacts and effects of wind farms that are expected to feed into the MATL line are covered only in a cursory fashion in the draft EIS.

There is at best only a superficial discussion of impacts on viewsheds and the effects of habitat fragmentation caused by roads, power lines, large turbines, and other development associated with big industrial wind farms. This is of particular concern since, when more capacity is added to the MATL and additional side lines built, such wind farms may be located near Glacier National Park or the Rocky Mountain Front.

Comment 686

Similarly, there is no adequate analysis of the impact of industrial wind farms on birds (and bats), despite the fact that the Rocky Mountain Front is a major migratory bird flyway.

The Draft EIS repeatedly indicates that neither DEQ nor any other state agency has any jurisdictional authority over the size or extent or location of wind farms on private land, and so the cumulative impact and effects of hundreds (or even thousands) of giant wind turbines do not have to be seriously addressed and/or quantified in this EIS.

However, the rules of NEPA mandate that all cumulative impacts need to be considered seriously and quantified in an in-depth manner in an EIS.

Comment 687

The publicly announced justification for the MATL transmission line is that it it needed to carry electricity which will be primarily generated by big wind farms. Thus, the cumulative effects of wind farms, even on private land, need to be quantified in an EIS to satisfy NEPA requirements. Because the current Draft EIS lacks a serious study quantifying the cumulative impact and effects of "reasonably foreseeable" wind farms, it does not meet the legal criteria mandated by federal government requirements under NEPA. Copied below is the relevant language from NEPA defining what constitutes 'reasonably foreseeable' and 'cumulative' impacts and/or effects.

It is essential that the Draft EIS be rewritten to include an in-depth study that carefully quantifies the foreseeable cumulative impacts and effects of the large-scale wind farms that will result from the construction of the MATL, and from any future increase in the MATL's capacity along with the possible future attachment of tangential lines.

This study may be the best chance - possibly the only chance - the public will have to consider and comment on such impacts to this region of Montana.

Comment 688

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L184

Response 684 and 685: In compliance with NEPA, analysis of the potential cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable actions, including wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line, is presented in the EIS (see Sections 4.1 to 4.16). Also see the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 686: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. Additional information on bird and bat mortality from the Judith Gap Energy Center wind farm is included in the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and in the EIS, Section 4.9.

Response 687 and 688: In compliance with NEPA, analysis of the potential cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable actions, including wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line, is in Sections 4.1 to 4.16. The cumulative impacts analysis considers the impacts of wind farm developments that might be built to use the full potential transmission capacity of the MATL line. The analysis is based on the best available information respecting the potential sizes, designs, and locations of reasonably foreseeable future wind farms. See the discussions of Wind Farm Issues and Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Comment 689

Wind power has the potential to make a remarkable contribution to Montana's economy and to provide a wonderful, carbon-free source of energy. However, it must be done right, so that the environmental, aesthetic, and social costs do not outweigh the many potential benefits. There are some places where industrial wind farms simply do not belong. The Rocky Mountain Front is one of those places.

Sincerely,

Zack Winestine
92 Horatio St.
New York, NY 10014

PO Box 351
Augusta, MT 59410

NEPA Requirements to be studied in an EIS:

Sec. 1508.7 Cumulative impact.
"Cumulative impact" is 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 other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

Sec. 1508.8 Effects.
"Effects" include:
(a) Direct effects, which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.
(b) Indirect effects, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable.
Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.
Effects and impacts as used in these regulations are synonymous. Effects includes ecological (such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems), aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social, or health, whether direct, indirect, or cumulative. Effects may also include those resulting from actions which may have both beneficial and detrimental effects, even if on balance the agency believes that the effect will be beneficial.

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Response 689: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Brenda Schilling [cbhsbs@cutbankschools.net]
Posted At: Monday, March 31, 2008 10:02 AM
Conversation: Environmental Inpact Statement
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Environmental Inpact Statement

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 690

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Transmission Line. I am a teacher in the Cut Bank School system, and would like to offer my full support of the electric transmission line proposed by MATL. I am originally from the Wolf Point area, which has been devastated by business closures and lack of economic stimulus. I want my own children, as well as my students, to have a hometown to return to in the years to come, and I firmly believe this transmission line to be a key in the economic progress in our community, as well as the Golden Triangle area.

I have countless students who are in favor of this project. If I can provide signatures, please let me know. Comment 691

Sincerely,

Brenda Schilling, Educator

Cut Bank Schools

14

L185

Response 690: See the discussion of Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 691: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Shane Broesder [sbroesd@yahoo.com]
Posted At: Monday, March 31, 2008 8:59 AM
Conversation: MATL Comments
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL Comments

Mr. Tom Ring,

Comment 692

I would like to state that I am in favor of the Montana Alberta Transmission Line. The line will provide a positive environmental and economic impact to the areas surrounding the line. In my opinion, the potential for wind-farms adding onto the line would more than make up for any environmental issues presented by the line itself. More wind-farms should be installed to lessen the demand for fossil fuel powered electrical plants. The wind-farms could also serve as a small economic boost to open minded land-owners along the line. I also feel more tax-break incentives should be considered for those with renewable energy generation facilities on thier property.

Comment 694

Comment 693

Shane Broesder, P.E.

8840 Douglas Circle
Helena, MT 59602

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15

L186

Response 692 to 694: Comments noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Vernon Berger [iceberg@northerntel.net]
Posted At: Sunday, March 30, 2008 9:35 PM
Conversation: MATL LINE
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL LINE

Tom Ring

Environmental Sciences Specialist

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Helena MT . 59602

Comment 695

I strongly support the pr.oposed MATL line. Alt . 2 runs through two miles of my farmland and I believe it will be a great asset to myself and the complete area.

The poles will be a nusance to farm around but not any more than the gas wells and pipes we now have to farm around.

Comment 696

Vernon C. Berger

258 Berger RD

P. O. Box 457

Cut Bank, Mt. 59427

16

487

Response 695 and 696: Comments noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Jessica Sherburne [jsherb@gmail.com]
Posted At: Saturday, March 29, 2008 12:47 PM
Conversation: Comment for MATL FDEIS
Posted To: MATL

Subject: Comment for MATL FDEIS

March 29, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
Re: MATL FDEIS

Dear Department of Environmental Quality & Department Of Energy, et al:

Comment 697

In the cumulative impacts section of the Federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement (FDEIS) it is written "Department of Energy (DOE) does not view the wind farms as 'connected actions'.... DOE believes that Montana Alberta Tie Ltd's (MATL's) proposed project is separate from and has an existence and utility independent from the wind farms". However, according to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Sec. 1508.7 cumulative impacts related to a particular development, whether they are past, present and/or future, need to be addressed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Comment 698

Moreover, according to NEPA Sec. 1508.8, direct and indirect effects which are caused by the action, in this case MATL, need to be addressed as well. This most certainly includes the numerous wind farms that are proposed to be built along MATL. Proper placement as well as pre-surveying is important to regulate where these wind farms are placed and could prevent many unnecessary avian and bat mortalities. I recommend consulting the 2007 version of *California Guidelines for Reducing Impacts to Birds and Bats from Wind Farm Development* for additional strategies and recommendations.

Comment 699

Comment 700

Comment 701

Detailed maps of MATL extending from Lethbridge to Great Falls were provided displaying existing wildlife habitat, river systems, flora, fauna, etc. I would like to see similar maps provided to show that the proposed wind farms connected to MATL are not infringing on threatened or endangered species, important migratory flyways, sensitive ecosystems, waterways, etc.

Comment 702

I remain skeptical that MATL project will truly provide all of the benefits that have been promised to Montanans. The MATL project is being financed by the payments made to purchase the transmission/shipping capacity by wind farm companies. All of the wind farm companies named in FDEIS Table 4.1-1 are out-of-state companies and their payments for transmission rights will go to MATL in Calgary, Alberta. Where is the financial benefit for Montanans?

Comment 703

Additionally, MATL is a merchant line which by definition is a line constructed and owned by a private party with no electric service area and who owns no other electrical facilities. This stated in layman's terms means that the power will be shipped away from the area that it is generated and has no

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L188

Response 697: As the comment indicates, wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line are considered to be reasonably foreseeable actions that may result in cumulative impacts. Analysis of potential cumulative impacts is presented in Sections 4.1 to 4.16. See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues and Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 698: See the discussion of the analysis of impacts in Chapters 3 and 4.

Response 699 and 700: Neither DEQ nor DOE has a regulatory role in siting wind farms nor do the agencies have regulatory jurisdiction over wind farm development or operation. The agencies were aware of the 2007 draft California guidelines while preparing the Draft EIS. These guidelines are now finalized in California.

Response 701: The detailed information requested in the comment would require specific knowledge of the locations of proposed wind farms. This information is not available. See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 702: See the discussion of Economic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 703: See the discussion of Line Issues and Economic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and the responses to comments 166, 167, and 168.

Comment 703 (Cont.)

capacity to be used locally. It appears that nearly all, if not all, of the power generated from this project is going directly out of state. Montana already generates 2x as much power as it needs. Is it wise to allow thousands of acres of Montana cropland along the Rocky Mountain front to be devoted to a project headed by out-of-state developers (MATL and industrial wind farms) who also happen to be the two primary beneficiaries of the income?

Please go back and quantify the cumulative effects, direct and indirect, of the proposed MATL project, in a new EIS, specifically including wind farms that are proposed to line MATL. I am attaching the full versions of the aforementioned NEPA Sections at the end of this letter. Comment 704

Sincerely,

Jessie Sherburne
221 1/2 W. Kent Ave.
Missoula, MT 59801

NEPA Requirements to be studied in an EIS:

Sec. 1508.7 Cumulative impact.

"Cumulative impact" is 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 other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.

Sec. 1508.8 Effects.

"Effects" include:

(a) Direct effects, which are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place.

(b) Indirect effects, which are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

Effects and impacts as used in these regulations are synonymous. Effects includes ecological (such as the effects on natural resources and on the components, structures, and functioning of affected ecosystems), aesthetic, historic, cultural, economic, social, or health, whether direct, indirect, or cumulative. Effects may also include those resulting from actions which may have both beneficial and detrimental effects, even if on balance the agency believes that the effect will be beneficial.

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Response 704: In compliance with NEPA, analysis of the potential cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable actions, including wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line, is in Sections 4.1 to 4.16. The cumulative impacts analysis considers the impacts of wind farm developments that might be built to use the full potential transmission capacity of the MATL line. See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 705: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 706: Comment noted.

Response 707: See the discussion in Chapter 4 and the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Ring, Tom

From: Steve Dahlman [SDLands@tetonwireless.net]
Posted At: Friday, March 28, 2008 3:10 PM
Conversation: EIS MATL Transmission Line
Posted To: MATL

Subject: EIS MATL Transmission Line

3-28-2008

Mr. Tom Ring:
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Mr. Ring:

Comment 708

My name is Steve Dahlman; I am a 4th generation ag-producer in the Dutton/Power area. My 1st issue is regarding the power poles. They should all be of the single mono- pole design, throughout the whole project, but at the least and again I say the least they should be in all cropland and CRP. I would also like to see a provision that where applicable they can be placed on or right next to the property line especially when located between two different property owners. The proposed pole placement will not give us an allowable amount of clearance to circle any of the power poles between us and our adjoining landowner, thus creating a considerable amount of non-productive farm ground in a highly productive area. The only option for this unfarmed area would be to plant a grass species for erosion control. This will be an increased cost to the merchant line to seed, maintain weed control, apply chemicals etc. An H-frame design power pole would only increase this cost even more. If monopoles were utilized and placed on or right next to the property line then the loss of farm ground and cost to transmission line would be minuscule. Comment 710 Comment 709

Comment 711

Regarding safety, our farm equipment is not getting any smaller and in time will probably continue to increase in height, width, weight etc.. You read about the loss of birds, but what about the increase risk of death or severe injury for the humans that are driving this large farm equipment. Would you like to send your family members, younger nieces and nephews, into potential harms way, especially at harvest time, driving grain carts with lift augers or high lifting grain augers themselves. There was an incident not long ago just north of Great Falls where a young man, pulling a grain auger, got close enough to a power line, the electricity arced, and this young man was seriously injured. Again, this why it is absolutely necessary to utilize the monopole design and raise the current proposed ground height requirements. We utilize aerial spraying, have you taken in to consideration the increase risk to those spray pilots. I have yet to hear our pilots complain about a power line being too high. Give them the option of flying under these lines if they had to as a last resort. Safety should be of the utmost concern no matter what direction, diagonally or straight, this power line is constructed. Comment 712 Comment 713

In closing I would like to say that if all it takes is a few extra million dollars, which in my opinion is minuscule when dealing with a project of this magnitude, to prevent human tragedy from occurring, then you have no choice but to do it right the first time. Why not be the one to set an example for any further transmissions lines in the future. Comment 714

Sincerely,
Steve Dahlman
Box 294
Dutton, MT 59433
(406) 463-2369

21

L190

Response 708: Location of structures on property lines would help reduce interference to farming activities so long as there is not an existing road located along a property line. Movement of farm equipment along a road may be impeded by siting on a property line. Also see the response to comment 85.

Response 709: The optimum placement for a single pole would be along a property line if there is no road present. Locating a single pole or H-frame structure inside a field but less than the toolbar or sprayer width from the edge of a field could cause a larger area to be taken out of production than moving the single pole or H-frame structure farther away from the field edge and allowing farming equipment to work around a structure (de Waal Malefyt 1979). This principle would apply whether a single pole or an H-frame structure would be used.

Response 710: Comment noted. Today's line clearances may not be adequate in the future as the size of equipment increases.

Response 711 and 712: See the discussions of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and Section 3.4.

Response 713: Potential impacts on aerial spraying are discussed in Section 3.1 and were a consideration in developing local routing options (See the discussion in Section 2.6).

Response 714: Comment noted.

Ring, Tom

From: Bonnie Kronebusch [bpkrone@3riversdbs.net]
Posted At: Thursday, March 27, 2008 5:21 PM
Conversation: MATL Comment:attn. Tom Ring
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL Comment:attn. Tom Ring

Comment 715

To whom this may concern:
I am writing in support of the MATL power line. Because I am involved in our farming operation, I feel the construction of this power line should follow the boundaries of the land and the single pole construction would be beneficial to any farmers whose land will be used for this project.
We need this line for wind power projects.
I appreciate your consideration about this issue.

Comment 716

Sincerely, Bonnie J. Kronebusch; 8206 Old Shelby Rd., Conrad, MT 59425.

24

491

Response 715 and 716: Comments noted.

Ring, Tom

From: dmuenchphoto@aol.com
Posted At: Thursday, March 27, 2008 9:45 AM
Conversation: MATL proposal
Posted To: MATL

Subject: MATL proposal

Comment 717

I want to go on record, please, with my feelings about the MATL proposal. Montana's Rocky Mountain Front is one of the most specail undeveloped and uncluttered landscapes in North America. A lot of people have fought long and hard to keep it that way. And, while I support alternative energy, I would rather not see big wind farms built anywhere near The Front.

Thank you so much.

Sincerely,

Ruth Rudner
Harrison, Montana & Corrales, New Mexico

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25

492

Response 717: See the discussions of Wind Farm Issues and Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Dan Bennett
2410 5th Avenue South
Great Falls, MT 59405

March 28, 2008

VIA EMAIL: MATL@mt.gov

Montana DEQ
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 718

I believe the DEIS is fatally flawed due to its failure to consider the cumulative impacts – specifically the impacts of wind farms on the Rocky Mountain Front and on migratory birds that use the Front – of the tie line. The NEPA requires agencies to consider foreseeable impacts "regardless of what agency or person" undertakes the action. This would include wind farms on private lands along the Front that would not be economically feasible without the MATL. The MATL may very well be separate and independent from the wind farms. This does not absolve agencies from complying with their duty to consider the cumulative effects of theirs proposal. The NEPA specifically identifies natural resources, the functioning of ecosystems, and aesthetic, historical and cultural resources as effects that must be considered in the DEIS.

Comment 719

The time to address these issues is now. It is much more economical to prepare a supplement to the DEIS than to charge forward into a morass of litigation.

Comment 720

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue.

Sincerely,

Dan Bennett

Response 718: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section and Chapter 4 for a discussion of the cumulative impacts.

Responses 719 and 720: In compliance with NEPA, analysis of the potential cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable actions, including wind farms that may use the transmission capacity of the proposed MATL line, is in Sections 4.1 to 4.16. The cumulative impacts analysis considers the impacts of wind farm developments that might be built to use the full potential transmission capacity of the MATL line. The analysis is based on the best available information respecting the potential sizes, designs, and locations of reasonably foreseeable future wind farms. See the discussions of Wind Farm Issues and Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

MONTANA ALBERTA TIE LTD

March 28, 2007

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Facility Siting Program
1520 East Sixth Avenue
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901 U.S.A.

Attention: Tom Ring

Dear Mr. Ring,

Re: 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 (February 2008)

Comment 721 Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. is very pleased that the regulatory process in Montana is nearing conclusion and that this important project can shortly proceed. Comment 722 We are particularly encouraged by the positive and constructive feedback provided during the current round of public consultation. Comment 723 There are several points MATL would like to make concerning the draft Environmental Impact Statement and stakeholder concerns. MATL's comments are made in light of the current dire state of the debt capital markets, including the recent near failure of Bear Stearns, which is causing lenders to retreat from risk. MATL's comments are also made in light of the recognized economic importance of this project to Montana, in particular with respect to the development of wind generation in the state. Each of these factors reinforces the need for expediency in: 1) making a prudent impact decision, both environmentally and economically; and 2) issuing the Record of Decision in order to allow this project to proceed.

Comment 724 The recently-released draft Environmental Impact Statement considers a number of alternatives, including MATL's preferred route, Alternate 2. While there is a wide range of parameters that must be considered in evaluating a transmission corridor, economic efficiency is typically enhanced for all stakeholders by making the alignment as straight and short as possible. Of the route options proposed, Alternate 4 is materially longer in length. As a consequence: it impacts more landowners; has a larger footprint; may span more unstable soils; may have a greater potential of encountering archaeological and heritage resources; and has higher energy losses. These are economic arguments which we suggest need to be considered in the final route selection. Our views on this follow.

Comment 725 MATL understands the regulators' desire to address individual landowner concerns, but in doing so, the consequential tradeoffs, environmental and otherwise, may decrease economic efficiency to the point where the project becomes unviable. Such is the concern with Alternate 4; for example:

Montana Alberta Tie Ltd., Suite 800, 615 Macleod Trail SE, Calgary, Alberta, Canada, T2G 4T8

L125

Response 721: Comment noted. However, it is premature to conclude that a decision has been made by the DEQ that would allow the project to proceed. Such a decision cannot be made by DEQ for at least 15 days following publication of the EIS and by DOE for at least 30 days following publication of EPA's notice of availability of the Final EIS in the *Federal Register*.

Response 722 to 725: Comments noted.

Comment 725 (Cont.)

- Alternate 4 is some 10 miles longer than Alternate 2. Materially longer transmission lines waste more energy through increased line losses, energy that could otherwise power several hundred homes, and is therefore environmentally less efficient in that respect.

Comment 726
- Twists and turns in the route, or deviations from a straight line, require specially engineered pole structures (deflection structures) at each turn. These deflection structures magnify the impact on farming operations because they require guy wires which increase the size of the footprint and the visual impact by an order of magnitude, about the size of a small baseball diamond. Alternate 4 contains at least 20 more deflection structures than Alternate 2.

Comment 727
- Increases in the length and meandering of the route, from a straight line, add substantially to project costs. For example, each deflection structure costs an additional $30 to $50 thousand due to need to sink these poles in concrete bases and guy them off to take the additional weight strains of a line turn. A merchant line, such as ours, is not able to pass on such costs in a rate base and thereby automatically recover them. In the current risk-averse financing environment these incremental costs are disproportionately magnified.

Comment 728
- Such a wide deviation outside of the MATL studied corridor could add significant time to the development timeline for this project; postponing its benefits, adding costs, eroding financing confidence and placing its viability at risk.

This is not a one-way street, however. MATL understands its obligations to be a good citizen, and has demonstrated its desire to advance this project in a number of meaningful ways:

Comment 729
- MATL has agreed to incorporate 53 miles of monopole structures into its original Alternate 2 design in order to minimize the intrusion of its facility on farming operations. We need to caution though, that MATL's ability to add additional monopole line lengths over and above the 53 mile commitment is, of course, constrained due to the additional costs which may not be accepted by the debt financing market which is under an all time historic systemic stress.

Comment 730
- MATL is committed to compensating landowners reasonably for adverse effects that cannot otherwise be mitigated. MATL intends to offer compensation for such adverse effects in the form of an annual payment that is reviewed every 5 years. To MATL's knowledge, this is the first time that compensation for adverse effects from power poles, has been offered to Montana landowners.

Comment 731
- MATL has lobbied and supported the new Montana tax law (2007 Legislative Session) which taxes property at a lower rate when new transmission lines carry renewable energy, as the MATL line will, and has lobbied federally for tax effective treatment of pole rental payments.

Additionally, MATL wishes to propose the following modifications to its project plan in order to address the well-reasoned concerns expressed by stakeholders in Montana:

Comment 732
- The vertical clearance of conductors which cross over cultivated and CRP land will be increased to accommodate the tallest agricultural equipment, which, to MATL's knowledge, is commonly used in this region of Montana. This will allow the safe and

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Response 726: Impacts on farming and visual resources are discussed in Sections 3.1 and 3.15, respectively. Although structures with guy wires would increase the size of the footprint compared to non-guyed structures, the guy wires do not substantially contribute to increased visual impact due to their small diameter and inconspicuous nature compared to the structures and conductors. The agencies used proximity of the line (its structures and conductors) to residences, recreation areas, and roads as the key factor influencing magnitude of visual impact.

Response 727: Comment noted. DEQ will weigh costs and benefits of all parties in the EIS and in its siting determination.

Response 728: Comment noted. All alternatives identified in the EIS fall within the study area identified by MATL. See the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 729: MATL has changed its proposal and now would use monopoles on about 56 miles of line crossing cropland or CRP on the diagonal. See the discussion in Section 1.3.1.

Response 730: MATL has changed its proposed compensation package. See the discussion in Sections 2.3 and 3.13.2. DEQ is not aware of any other Montana utilities or electric cooperatives that are making annual per pole payments to farmers.

Response 731: Comment noted. See the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 732: The EIS has been revised to reflect the changes to MATL's MFSA application. See the revised discussion in Section 2.3, and the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

free moment of equipment of up to 20 feet in height. In addition, MATL will confirm with each owner of cultivated or CRP land that the allowance for safe movement of equipment up to 20 feet in height is sufficient for the equipment that they currently use. In the unlikely event that the 20 foot allowance is not sufficient, then MATL will address this by increasing the clearance, where reasonable, or, where this is not reasonable, by other mutually agreeable solutions.

Comment 733

- The width of the right-of-way will be increased to include the area previously described as the safety zone. The compensation for the right-of-way will be adjusted in accordance with the increased width.

MATL appreciates the importance of this project to Montana's energy future, both in terms of its direct impact and its precedent. MATL has been responsive in making a number of changes to its project as a result of the hard work of state and federal regulators as well as the input of individual Montanans. The financial and economic environment on Wall Street, in which this project is to be financed, necessitates making every effort to strive for an acceptable balance between project impacts and cost effectiveness and economic efficiency since the market will not finance inefficient or excessively costly projects; fundamentals that any essential utility should observe in any event. Comment 734

We anticipate your decision as we are eager to complete the financing and commence construction. We look forward to the economic benefits that this project will bring to the state of Montana. Comment 735

Sincerely,
Montana Alberta Tie Ltd

Robert L Williams

Bob Williams
VP Regulatory

3

Response 733: The proposed right-of-way is now 105 feet wide.

Response 734 and 735: Comments noted.

Comments on the *Federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Montana Supplemental Draft EIS for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line – February 2008*

VOLUME ONE:

Page 1-13.

Comment 736 How likely is it MATL's shippers will be issued electricity export authorizations by DOE? Comment 737 Is it largely *pro forma*, or is it a challenging process for the wind developers? Comment 738 Have any of the shippers applied for such authorizations? How might this affect the viability of the MATL line? Comment 739

Page 2-9.

Comment 740 In the discussion of right-of-way, MATL recognizes that 45 feet plus 30 feet on each side of the line (105') is the necessary safety zone for the proposed project. However, MATL wants to limit compensation to landowners to the 45 feet. This is not appropriate, and the regulators should require MATL to compensate for the 105' which is what the regulators in Alberta required.

Page 2-15.

Comment 741 Press reports have circulated stating the McCormick wind farm is not going to be connected to the MATL line.[1] Does the discussion of "Substations" need to be corrected?

Comment 742 Has MATL submitted a valid interconnection agreement as an addendum to its application?

Page 3-9.

Comment 743 The vast majority of the land in the analysis area is agricultural (88%). Of that 88 percent, 73% is used to produce crops. This equates to a total of 64% of the land in the analysis area. Impacts to these lands should therefore be weighted heavily when the Departments balance all the factors prior to the issuance of the permit/certificate.

/ / / /
/ / / /

[1]See *Great Falls Tribune*, 24 February 2008.

Page 1

L196

Response 736: Section 202(e) of the Federal Power Act requires that no person shall transmit electric energy from the United States to a foreign country without first obtaining authority from DOE. The Act specifies that DOE shall issue an export order upon application unless, after opportunity for hearing, it finds that the proposed export would impair the sufficiency of electric supply within the United States or would impede the coordination in the public interest of facilities subject to the jurisdiction of DOE. Each export application is evaluated on its own merits and it is neither possible nor appropriate to speculate on the likelihood of issuing an export authorization to an entity that has not yet applied to DOE.

Response 737: While not challenging, an export authorization applicant must comply with the evidentiary requirements of the program regulations contained at 10 CFR 205.300 et seq. DOE has been able to respond to export requests within 60 days of receipt of an uncontested application.

Response 738: No. DOE will not accept an application to transmit electric energy to a foreign country using facilities that have not yet been authorized by issuance of a Presidential permit.

Response 739: DOE and DEQ cannot speculate on the factors which may affect the viability of the MATL line.

Response 740: MATL has indicated it would pay for a 105-foot easement. See the discussion in Section 1.6.

Response 741: Although the decision regarding interconnection of the Glacier Wind Farm (formerly the McCormick Wind Farm) changes some details presented in the EIS, it does not change the need to consider the project as part of the cumulative impact assessment in the EIS. The Marias Substation is still being proposed by MATL regardless of the Glacier Wind Farm because an intermediate substation is needed to house switching equipment and series capacitors. Since MATL does not intend to change its plans for the Marias Substation, the discussion in the EIS has not been revised.

Response 742: Yes. See Appendix M in the Final EIS.

Response 743: Comment noted. Impacts to farming land use are discussed in Section 3.1.

Page 3-17.

Comment 744 Table 3.1-3 shows there is twice as many miles of line placed on the diagonal in cropland under Alternative 2 (54.9) as there are under Alternative 4 (28). As noted later in this document, farming around structures where the line is diagonal (especially when located within a field) causes the most interference with farming operations. It seems **§3.1.3 Environmental Impacts** as to land use, should also include discussion of the increased "carbon footprint" associated with farming around poles placed within the interior of fields. Each extra movement of mechanized farm equipment around a pole spews extra carbon into the atmosphere. Over the life of this line all those additional passes around structures in the field will add to greenhouse gases. Also, the increased number of trips over the same soil leads to extra compaction of the soil which in turns reduces the amount of carbon that loose farm soil absorbs. This double negative effect on the net impact to carbon in the atmosphere should be noted as an environmental impact. It may be difficult to quantify, but that does not make it any less real. Comment 745

Page 3-88.

Comment 746 The detailed discussion regarding impacts of construction and maintenance activity relating to "vegetation" (§3.7.3.2) is equally applicable to "land use." Disturbance due to construction and maintenance will be greater on Alternative 2 than Alternative 4 because the additional miles of line placed diagonally in cropland will greatly increase the need for off right-of-way access. To get to the interior of so many more fields will mean many additional trips across land which is outside of the 45' or 105' right of way. The additional interference with farming operations and increase in disturbance to cropland should be included in the discussion of environmental impacts under land use in §3.1.3.2.

Page 3-109.

Comment 747 This discussion regarding impact on big game animals includes the statement that the construction would occur in the spring and summer. If in fact construction would take place in the spring and summer, disruption to farm activities would increase and disturbance of roadways, cropland, and rangeland would be much greater. Can the Departments require that construction not occur at such times?

Page 3-126.

Comment 748 Does Alternative 2 cross cottonwood stands on either the Marias and Teton rivers?

/ / / /

Page 2

Response 744: There would be a slight increase in carbon dioxide emissions resulting from additional equipment usage in order to farm around structures. Activities and variable factors involved in farming around are discussed in Section 3.1. The increase would be very small relative to total emissions of greenhouse gases in the region, which are discussed in Section 4.12.

Response 745: Any driving over fields with equipment will cause compaction. This includes concrete trucks and cranes. It would be worse when the soil is wet. Trucks and equipment should be kept in one track to minimize impacts. Additional compaction would be expected with more trips across an area such as when farming around poles. However, the 20% yield reduction listed on the farming costs in Section 3.13 takes this into account. Although soil compaction from agricultural equipment may have detrimental effects on crop yields, soil bulk density, and soil water processes, any effect on carbon storage in soil would be inconsequential. Carbon in the plow layer actively cycles between soil, plants, and atmosphere. Carbon sequestration is accomplished by farming practices that add large amounts of crop residues and other stable biomass to the soil and increase the soil's organic content. Continuous no-till crop production is one of the best examples of a farming practice that can increase soil organic matter and thus help sequester carbon from the atmosphere into soil (Bofto 2008). In response to this comment, information about compaction has been added to Section 3.2.3.2.

Response 746: Alternative 4 would result in the shortest distance of transmission line crossing cropland at a diagonal (See Table 3.1-3). Section 3.1.3 discusses the additional impact from diagonal crossings. Routine maintenance can often be scheduled to occur following the completion of harvest thereby reducing crop damages.

Diamond Valley South would be adjacent to about 1 mile of field road in T24N R1E between sections 3 and 10. Diamond Valley Middle would be adjacent to about 2.5 miles of field road in between T25N, R1E and T25N, R2E, and T25N R2E and T24N R2E. Diamond Valley North would be adjacent to field roads in T25N R2E between sections 31 and 32, 30 and 29, and 19 and 20. The estimated maximum number of miles of trails needed by alternative is: Alternative 2 – Dryland = 81.71 miles, Irrigated = 0.3 mile, Range = 27.55 miles; Alternative 3 – Dryland = 87.84 miles, Irrigated = 3.31 miles, Range = 17.91 miles: Alternative 4 – Dryland = 72.45 miles, Irrigated = 0 mile, Range = 40.96 miles.

Response 747: DEQ could require that construction not take place in cultivated areas during spring and summer. DEQ could also require that farmers receive compensation for damages caused by transmission line construction, such as crop losses caused by construction during the growing season.

Response 748: Alternative 2 would not cross cottonwood stands on the Marias or Teton River. See the discussion of Vegetation, Wetland and Weed Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Pages 3-172–175.

Comment 749 The projected tax revenues are incorrect in that they do not include a 1.5% 15-19 year tax abatement granted to MATL by the 2007 Legislature. These need to be recalculated based upon the additional tax break. MATL's corporate website includes a statement that its calculations indicate the company will pay about $600,000 per year to local governments in Montana.[2]

Page 3-234.

Comment 750 In Table 3.18-1 under "Economics - Counties" the Summary of Impacts states: All alternatives have similar impact. This is an inaccurate characterization in relation to the second column which states: "Farmers would bear additional costs from having to farm around transmission structures." The earlier discussion as to interference with farming clearly shows interior diagonal structures increase the interference and cost. Alternative 2 has twice as many miles of such line in comparison to Alternative 4. The Summary should acknowledge this difference.

Page 4-44.

Comment 751 I still question the inclusion of the last paragraph on this page. A business decision by MATL to pay for easements along one route of its choosing seems irrelevant to this discussion of regulatory restriction. How do DOE and DEQ regulate the choice of an applicant to make any particular set of easement payments?

Page 5-2.

Comment 752 In the future the Departments might analyze more carefully where they advertise public meetings. The newspapers mentioned in relation to public scoping do not cover more than the northern half of this particular project. For example, the notices should have appeared in the newspapers in Conrad, Choteau, and Great Falls.

Page 5-4.

Comment 753 Future projects that have so much impact on farmers should generate contact with NGOs such as the Montana Grain Growers Association and the Montana Farmers' Union.

/ / / /

[2]http://www.matl.ca/project/faq.php

Page 3

Response 749: See the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. The assessment assumed that MATL would be taxed at 3 percent because the agencies did not know whether the additional 50 percent tax abatement would be issued by local governments.

Response 750: The correction you stated for Table 3.18-1 has been made. The analysis presented in Section 3.13 indicates that Alternative 2 would cost more to farmers than Alternative 4.

Response 751: The agencies do not regulate MATL's choice to make particular easement payments. MATL is not prohibited from seeking easements in advance of obtaining approval from DEQ. The regulatory restrictions analysis is required by the Montana Environmental Policy Act. Also see the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 752: Legal notices of the meeting dates and locations were printed in the following newspapers:

Newspaper	Location	Publication Dates
Independent Observer	Conrad	Feb. 21 & Feb 28, 2008
The Valierian	Valier	Feb. 21 & Feb 28, 2008
The Shelby Promoter	Shelby	Feb. 21 & Feb 28, 2008
Choteau Acantha	Choteau	Feb. 20 & Feb 27, 2008
Cut Bank Pioneer Press	Cut Bank	Feb. 20 & Feb 27, 2008
Great Falls Tribune	Great Falls	Feb. 17 & Feb. 24, 2008

A press release was issued, but not all the news papers picked up the story. DEQ is aware that the following newspapers ran articles about the meetings – Acantha, Promoter, Pioneer Press, and Valierian.

Response 753: Comment noted.

VOLUME TWO:

Pages 35-37.

Comment 754 The property tax revenue information in these comments may no longer be valid in light of changes made by the 2007 Legislature.

Page 134.

Comment 755 Response 332 as to placing the line along a highway corridor includes a statement which recognizes "[S]uch a line location may also result in greater public exposure to EMF." Perhaps then there should be discussion elsewhere as to the possible greater effects of EMF on those who have to farm throughout each growing season in and under the proposed line.

CORRECTION TO MY EARLIER COMMENT SUBMITTED AT GREAT FALLS

Comment 756 In my comments submitted at the March 11th hearing in Great Falls, I made inaccurate statements regarding the amount of property tax relief granted to MATL by the 2007 Legislature. In paragraph 2 on page 2, I stated: "The Legislature also enacted a 75% property tax cut for the company from which it will reap nearly $800,000 each year." In fact the amount of tax relief the company received is far, far greater. The permanent property tax rate did go from 12% to 3%. However, the dollar amount of that change equals a tax reduction of **$2.2 million per year** for Alternative 2 or **$2.4 million per year** for Alternative 4. I also did not include the additional tax abatement which amounts to 1.5% for a period of 15-19 years. Since I was not completely sure as to the dollar amount generated by this abatement, I did not include it.

Comment 757 The property tax break received by affected landowners (**$40,000 per year** total for the entire 130+ miles of the line) was included as revenue to farmers in calculating compensation for interference with farming. Surely the same logic should apply when costs to MATL are discussed or considered. Any calculation of MATL's costs should include the more than $2 million per year the taxpayers of Montana are giving up to benefit MATL.

Katrina Wilson Martin
1720 24th Ln NE
Dutton, MT 59433
406-463-2337

Page 4

Response 754: The property tax changes made in 2007, including those made in HB 3 of the 2007 Special Legislative Session, did not change the tax rate on wind farms. In other words, wind farms did not get an additional incentive under HB 3. The tax rate on wind farms was dropped to 3% in the 2005 Legislative Session. The tax information presented in the EIS is correct for wind farms. Also see the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 755: Section 3.4 contains the discussion of the potential impacts associated with electric and magnetic fields that would be produced by the MATL line. Also see the response to comment 596.

Response 756: Your corrections are noted. Also see the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 757: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. The tax advantage information has been changed accordingly to address your comment. The property tax relief to farmers is no longer included in the numerical comparison between costs and benefits, although it is mentioned separately.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901
MATL@mt.gov

Dear Mr. Ring,

Comment 758

I would like to share my opinions about the proposed MATL transmission line. I agree in principle with the concept of a transmission line that will allow the growth of wind generation projects in Montana and Alberta. I totally disagree with the method in which a private, for-profit, foreign company can expect to build this line as cheaply as possible with no regard to the problems it will cause farmers for generations to come. I am a third generation farmer who has had to deal with power lines my entire farming career. During the 1950s, when the Air Force missile silos were proposed, my family was promised that all power lines would be buried. When the final construction was finished, the result was 27 poles placed thirty feet from the center of the access roads and on our land. My family was paid $10 per pole for the inconvenience of farming around them. This totals $270 of compensation for fifty years of weed problems, seed, chemical and fertilizer waste, implement damage, and general hassle. Presently, my smallest farm implement is 45 feet wide and the placement of these poles creates a significant amount of "waste land". I've presented this background information to help explain my feelings on how Tonbridge, Ltd. proposes to build the MATL line. I have read the draft EIS in full and know that I am reiterating some other comments, but I feel they are important. It is a shame that a private, for-profit, foreign company has the power to exercise the law of eminent domain. I realize this must be addressed through the legislature, but that makes it no less shameful. When Tonbridge was asked why they can't build a line like the WAPA line that currently passes through our area, they replied that it was too costly to build in that manner and it was government money that built the WAPA line. I have a problem with that answer, as it seems that if Tonbridge can't build a proper line, and still be able to make a profit, then they should drop the project.

Comment 759

Comment 760

Comment 761

Comment 762

My main concern is with the "Southern Diamond Valley Optional Route". I was led to understand that the proposed route of the MATL line would parallel the existing NWE transmission line, which is miles east of my farmland, both owned and leased. Because of this I was not involved in the planning and negotiations of proposed routes. In August 2006, a MATL agent left me a message to inform me that a new proposed route included some of my land. I returned her call, but she wasn't available. Even though I left my number I was never contacted again. Because of this I assumed the said route had been abandoned. When I received the draft EIS eighteen months later and learned that one of the proposed routes would border 2 1/2 miles of land I farmed, I was stunned to say the least. I feel that I should have at least been granted the courtesy of being involved in the planning process and at the very least notified of the details of this route.

Comment 763

According to the draft EIS, this option was chosen by the local farmers. I was **not** one of the farmers invited to help choose this route. It not only unfairly impacts me, compared to my neighbors; it will displace miles of necessary farm roads that will widen the power line's impact. Who will choose where the roads will go and will the affected landowners be compensated for the extra loss of farmland? To place the power line on this route just because my neighbors don't want it on their land is totally unacceptable. My landlords and I are committed to opposing this route option to the full legal extent available to us.

Comment 764

Comment 765

Thank you for your attention to this matter,

John Goodmundson
100 1st ST SE
Dutton, MT 59433

Sent via email with hard copy backup

L197

Response 758: Comment noted.

Response 759 and 760: Comments noted. See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 761: See the discussion of Eminent Domain in the Legal and Regulatory Issues of the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 762: Comment noted. Also see the revised discussion in Section 3.13.

Response 763 to 765: Invitations were mailed to the owners of property in the Diamond Valley area. Mr. Goodmundson's address was obtained from the database of property owners used in assessing state property taxes. DEQ has no record of the letter sent to that address being returned with an incorrect address. See the discussion in response to comment 746 for miles of field roads affected.

Mr. Goodmundson's concern about interference with use of a field road is noted and will be taken into consideration when making a decision.

DEQ must make the findings required by the Major Facility Siting Act and associated administrative rules before approving the project. Your comments will be taken into consideration when making a decision. Also see the discussion in the responses to comments 708 and 709.

United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Denver Federal Center, Building 56, Room 1003
Post Office Box 25007 (D-108)
Denver, Colorado 80225-0007

TAKE PRIDE IN AMERICA

March 31, 2008

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ER 08/161

Ms. Ellen Russell, Project Manager
Office of Electric Delivery and Energy Reliability
U.S. Department of Energy
Washington, D.C.

Dear Ms. Russell:

The Department of the Interior submitted comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV Transmission Line, Montana, on March 21, 2008. The following additional comments were received from the National Park Service too late for inclusion in that letter. Please accept our apologies for any inconvenience this may cause.

Comment 766 The National Park Service understands that one of the benefits of the MATL could be alternative energy production by developed wind farms on lands east of Glacier National Park's boundary. They are supportive of alternative energy development, including wind energy, as a national goal, but are concerned that this type of development *could adversely affect the park's viewshed, night skies, and raptor populations during migration.*

Comment 767 Glacier, along with Waterton Lakes National Park in Canada, is the world's first International Peace Park and also a World Heritage Site and a Biosphere Reserve. Glacier National Park has raised concerns about impacts to the viewshed from development on the east side in the 1999 General Management Plan, in 2001 when the Park submitted comments to Bonneville Power Administration for the proposed Blackfeet Wind Project near Browning, and during scoping for this project in 2007.

Comment 768 In its scoping comments to US DOE, Glacier National Park asked that potential impacts to the Park be analyzed under cumulative impacts, but upon review of the DEIS, they did not find potential impacts to the Park acknowledged, disclosed or analyzed in the Cumulative Impact Section. Impacts to views were discussed only in a general sense.

L198

Response 766 to 768: See the discussions of Visual Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Ms. Ellen Russell 2

Comment 769 Cumulative impacts to bird species that frequent Glacier National Park were also not analyzed, although the document did analyze impacts to birds and raptors from these kinds of facilities. Impacts to night skies in Glacier National Park from future wind farm development were also not analyzed. While we understand and acknowledge safety concerns, lights on the wind turbines and associated development could have significant impacts on Glacier's night skies that are valued by park visitors and necessary for the health and survival of some wildlife species.

Comment 770 The mitigation measures described in Appendix O to reduce impacts to visual resources, raptors and night skies were well developed and appear to be complete given available technology and knowledge. However, we urge you to address ways to **require** implementation of these measures for any subsequent wind farm development, particularly farms that are adjacent to the park boundary or within view of Glacier National Park.

Comment 771 Wind farm development on public lands would be subject to further analysis and public involvement; however wind farm development on private lands would not be, unless state or local permits are required. All of the land adjacent to Glacier National Park on the east side is within the Blackfeet Indian Reservation. We anticipate working with the tribe to mitigate impacts from future wind farms, but in the event that DOE or the State are involved, Glacier National Park would like to be notified of **any** future wind farm proposals within 15 miles of the park boundary.

If you have any questions regarding these comments, please contact Mary Riddle, Environmental Protection Specialist, Planning and Compliance Coordinator Glacier National Park at (406) 888-7898.

Sincerely,

Robert F. Stewart
Regional Environmental Officer

cc: Tom Ring, Montana DEQ

Response 769: See the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. Note that the cumulative effects analysis analyzed impacts on all potentially impacted migratory birds. Birds were not grouped based on their destination as there is no advantage to this approach.

Response 770: See the discussion of Visual Issues and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 771: DOE and the state will attempt to honor the National Park Service request for information when the agencies are involved with proposals for wind farms within 15 miles of the park boundary. However, the agencies are not likely to have any role in future wind farm projects in that area.

March 31, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

Environmental Management Bureau

ATTN: Tom Ring

PO Box 200901

Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: the Montana Alberta Tie Line (MATL)

Comment 772

The Montana Farmers Union (MFU) would like to comment about potential benefits and/or impacts the Montana Alberta Tie Line (MATL) design may have on local area landowners and agriculture producers.

Montana Farmers Union policy has strongly supported development of alternative energy options within our state. We recognize the benefits that can be gleaned from wind energy development projects as well as other alternatives such as the planting, crushing and production of fuel from oil seed crops. As always, Montana farmers stand ready to help our state and our country move toward energy independence.

Comment 773

We do not support renewable energy developments at all costs however. We believe that development should be done smartly and with a critical eye toward the impacts or benefits to rural landowners. We think that it is in our state's economic development interests that such developments be locally owned and operated whenever possible – thus keeping revenues working in the state and in the supporting communities.

9

L199

Response 772 and 773: Comments noted.

Comment 774

In the case of the Montana Alberta Tie Line, where local impact – not ownership – is the central issue of our concern, we support development if it can be accomplished with as little impact to the affected landowners as possible. The negative impact of the diagonal lines being proposed from approximately Conrad south is significant. They pose unnecessary burdens on the farmers whose property the lines cross.

Comment 775

MFU believes that the best way to minimize impact while still ensuring that the development moves forward is by building power lines along field lines, section lines and with the use of monopoles in CRP and cropland.

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(2 KB)

Thank you for th opportunity to submit comments.

Sincerely,

Alan Merrill, President

10

Response 774 and 775: Comments noted.

MATL POWER LINE

To Who It May Concern,

Comment 776 We agree a power line needs to be built to service the area wind farms. Our Comment 777 concern is the impact caused by the Conrad to Great falls diagonal section that crosses cultivated and CRP farm land. This section is shadowing the existing already established power line of NW energy. Our concern is farming around the poles which will cause doubling of fertilizer, spray, seed, fuel, labor. The abuse the land will receive from over use, causing it to blow in the strong winds, and produce a poor crop. We are producers just like they are. We supply a commodity that the world also needs, if the land is taken out of production because of the diagonal line this will cause a more of a shortage of Comment 778 food. But if the power line is put parallel to the fields the effect on the commodity we raise will be minimal. If the world is to see an increase on food shortage, which Comment 779 commodity will they pick to keep the power of food?

Our son lost his arm and still wants to farm. With the power line running Comment 780 diagonal this will cause great stress on his other arm. With the power line running parallel to our fields the impact on his arm will be greatly reduced.

We prefer Route 4, which will be more expensive for MATL to build, but which will have minimal impact on farming. MATL's additional expense is being off set by their large tax break. Comment 781

Allen Denzer
Terri Denzer
Darlene Denzer

L200

Response 776: Comment noted.

Response 777: Comments noted.

Response 778 to 779: Comments noted. See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 780: Comment noted.

Response 781: Comment noted.

Montana Audubon
P.O. Box 595 • Helena, MT 59624 • 406-443-3949 • mtaudubon@mtaudubon.org

March 31, 2008

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

Dear Mr. Ring,

Please accept the following comments from Montana Audubon regarding the *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 (Draft MATL EIS)*. Montana Audubon is the coordinating entity for the ten Audubon Society Chapters in the state of Montana. Currently there are approximately 3,800 Audubon members in the state. Our mission is to protect birds and other wildlife, and their habitats. You may receive comments from other members of the Society.

This project proposes to build a transmission line from northeast of Lethbridge, Alberta to Great Falls, Montana, with approximately 130 miles of the line in Montana. The *Draft MATL EIS* examined some of the environmental impacts for the Montana portion of the project.

Because Montana Audubon's mission is focused on protection of wildlife and wildlife habitat issues, our comments are directed at those impacts/issues:

1. According to the *Draft MATL EIS*, MALT has "sold all the "capacity" of the line to potential wind farms." It also states that the "development of wind farms along the MATL line is considered to be a reasonably foreseeable future action under federal law and is analyzed under the cumulative impacts." While we agree that "development of wind farms along the MATL line should be "considered to be a reasonably foreseeable future action under federal law," we disagree that the *Draft MATL EIS* did an analysis of these developments under cumulative impacts. How can the EIS claim an analysis was done if: Comment 782

Comment 783

- A The location of only one of the wind farms is discussed.
- B The EIS describes the acreage for only two of the projects (a total of 27,000 acres will be fragmented), but no details on the environmental impacts are provided (type of land impacted, species of wildlife impacted, numbers of wetlands or floodplain acres impacted, etc.).
- C The EIS states that "several potential wind farms that would ship power on the proposed MATL transmission line are in early development stages" (p. 4-3), yet it states early in the EIS that the Great Plains Wind and Energy – McCormick Ranch Wind Park is slated for development in 2007-08, and the Great Plains Wind and Energy – Rim Rock Wind Farm is slated for construction in mid-2007 (obviously these deadlines have slipped, but these statements indicate that the wind projects are NOT in the early development stage).
- D The EIS states that most of the information on wind farms was taken from local news stories. It appears that DEQ/DOE did not even call the wind farms to determine if they would provide information on their projects.

L201

Response 782: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues and Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 783: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Montana Audubon, Page 2

Comment 784

2. We disagree with the DOE assessment that MATL "has an existence and utility independent from the wind farms." MATL has indicated that it will qualify for the "clean and green" property tax incentives established under HB 3 adopted by the 2007 Montana Legislature in May 2007. Without new wind farms built and using this line, the transmission line will not qualify for this tax incentive, making it less economically feasible. We believe that the DOE needs to reexamine its determination that wind farms are a "connected action" as defined in 40 CFR, 1508.25(a)(1). As a result, the environmental impacts for all wind farms that have a contract with MATL lasting 5 or more years need to be more accurately and thoroughly analyzed by the EIS.

Comment 785

Comment 786 The cumulative effects on wind farms needs to require that bird and bat census data be gathered through a peer-reviewed process for at least one, and preferably two years. It also needs to take into account the Judith Gap wind farm studies recently completed that document 4.52 birds per turbine killed per year and 13.4 bats per turbine per year killed (these numbers generated by a wind farm in Montana are higher than any numbers found in the tables on pages 4-28 and 4-29). The Judith gap site has almost no standing water, no perennial streams, no prairie dog towns, and few ground squirrels. As a result, depending on the information provided by the wind companies planning to use MATL, higher numbers of these species may be killed. We understand that DEQ has a copy of this study. If you do not, we can direct you to a copy.

Comment 787

We would also argue that if any utility easements are required by wind farms for transmission lines from proposed wind farms over state lands, then MEPA requires cumulative impacts to be analyzed. Not knowing where these projects are located, prevents DEQ from knowing if DNRC is currently even considering easements for transmission lines (which would be an action under MEPA requiring cumulative impacts be examined). This lack of information seems irresponsible, at best.

Comment 788 3. We support keeping the transmission line as far away from Kevin Rim as possible. Kevin Rim has been identified as an Important Bird Area. The Important Bird Areas Program (IBA) is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds. The Kevin Rim escarpment provides nesting habitat for a diversity of diurnal raptors and has been designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern and as a Key Raptor Area by the Bureau of Land Management. It is also the site of a long-term research and monitoring project (begun in 1988) by biologists from Montana State University. Ten species of raptors breed within the IBA, four of which are of Global (Ferruginous Hawk), Continental (Swainson's Hawk, Prairie Falcon), or State (Golden Eagle) conservation concern. The site contains the highest known density of nesting Ferruginous Hawks in Montana. Based on the number of nesting Ferruginous Hawks, the site qualifies as an IBA of Global significance.

Comment 789 We question the quality of the bird studies conducted for the MATL application. The EIS states on page 3-114 that "Two biologists walked along approximately 3 miles of Kevin Rim in early May 2005 surveying for raptor nests. No nests and no raptors were observed at that time (MATL 2006b)." Walking once in early May and seeing no raptors? We have in our files BLM studies from 2001, 2002, and 2003 documenting nesting Ferruginous hawks, a species of special conservation concern (14 pair nesting in 2001; 4 pair nesting in 2002; and 13 pair nesting in 2003). In addition to Ferruginous Hawks, nesting Prairie Falcons and Golden Eagles were also documented. Did they disappear all of a sudden? Instead, it appears that the bird survey work was inadequate. We would be happy to share these studies with DEQ/DOE since you did not receive them from the BLM.

Comment 790 We also support requiring the use of bird strike diverters or similar warning devises where the transmission line would be closest to Kevin Rims, including an area extending at least ¼ mile on either side of the rim. We also support requiring perch guards on transmission lines in all areas where native habitat is of a significantly size to allow species of conservation concern to nest near the Kevin Rim area.

Comment 791

Response 784: See the discussion of Tax Issues, Legal and Regulatory Issues, and Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 785: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 786: See the revisions to Section 4.9, which includes information from a recent study of bird mortality estimated at Montana's largest operating wind farm near Judith Gap.

Response 787: See the discussion of Wind Farm Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. DNRC has no power line easement applications in the area of the proposed MATL line (Sullivan 2008).

Response 788: Kevin Rim is discussed in Sections 3.7, 3.8, and 3.10. The easternmost alternative route for the transmission line (Alternatives 2 and 4) is approximately 7 miles due west of the Kevin Rim Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The other routes are further west. Additionally, the agencies note that one anemometer is located near Kevin Rim. Although the presence of an anemometer does not equate to a wind farm, the presence of an anemometer does indicate interest in wind resources.

Response 789: Regarding wildlife surveys, see the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

As stated in Table 2.3-4, "Raptor safe power line construction practices (Edison Electric Institute, Avian Power Line Interaction Committee) would be employed during transmission line construction." Additionally, in Table 2.3-4, it states "Approved line marking devices would be installed at appropriate intervals and appropriately staggered on each overhead ground wire across stream crossings and migratory bird flyways (for example wetlands) within the Right-of-Way." These areas would be finalized during design.

Section 3.8.3.2 contains a discussion of potential collision impacts as well as environmental protection measures that would be implemented.

As stated in Appendix F, environmental specifications under consideration by DEQ would include the requirement that "Overhead ground wires within ¼ mile of wetlands will be marked to reduce the potential for collisions after inspection and a determination of the need for marking in consultation with FWP and FWS biologists."

Response 790: The easternmost route (Alternatives 2 and 4) is approximately 7 miles due west of the Kevin Rim area ACEC and about 3 miles west of the rims northwest and southwest of Kevin. Alternative 3 is farther west.

MATL has carried out field studies using censusing protocols, including call back surveys, to determine the presence of listed species. Few areas of concern have been identified. See Section 4.9.

Response 791: MATL has agreed to use perch guards where, in collaboration with regulatory authorities, it is determined that they are required. The MATL transmission line is located about 3 miles from the rims northwest and southwest of Kevin. Regarding wildlife surveys, see the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Montana Audubon, Page 3

Comment 792

The fact that no Burrowing Owls were seen during field investigations done by MATL—and the fact that the EIS says that landowners reported seeing Burrowing Owls in the project area—also raise questions about the timing and protocol used to document impacts to birds and other wildlife.

Comment 793

4. We support keeping the transmission line as far away from Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge as possible. Benton Lakes NWR has been recognized as an Important Bird Area. The Important Bird Areas Program (IBA) is a global effort to identify and conserve areas that are vital to birds. During spring and fall migration, up to 150,000 ducks, 25,000 geese, 5,000 swans, and as many as 50,000 shorebirds use the refuge. Because of the concentrations of migrating shorebirds, the Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve Network recognizes Benton Lake as a site of Regional importance. During an average breeding season, 20,000 ducks are produced, and several thousand pairs of Franklin's Gulls nest here. Numbers of breeding Chestnut-collared Longspurs (a species of conservation concern) exceed the threshold for an IBA of Global significance. In total, 240 bird species have been recorded on the refuge, nearly 90 of which are known to breed.

Comment 794

We also support requiring the use of bird strike diverters or similar warning devises where the transmission line would be closest to Benton Lakes NWR, including an area extending at least ¼ mile on either side of the refuge. We also support requiring perch guards on transmission lines in all areas where native habitat is of a significantly size to allow species of conservation concern to nest near the Benton Lake NWR area.

Comment 795

5. We support keeping the transmission lines so that it minimizes impacts to riparian vegetation near the Marias River, Teton River, perennial streams, Waterfowl Production Areas, and wetlands. We also support avoiding all cottonwood stands, as these are scarce in the study area (p. 3-89). We also support keeping the lines as far away as possible from Hay and Aloe Lakes, because of their significant use by waterfowl and shorebirds as a stopover area during migration. Riparian areas and wetlands make up less than 4% of the state's landscape. These areas also provide the most densely used wildlife habitat in the state.

Comment 796

6. The EIS repeatedly states that the corridor used by the transmission line is primarily cropland and that the native grasslands/prairie habitat is fragmented. That said, we support minimizing the amount of habitat fragmentation caused by transmission lines through prairie grasslands. A 2006 Montana Natural Heritage Ecological Information report describes the significance of Montana's prairie grasslands in the following way: "Due to agricultural conversion and grazing by domestic livestock throughout the Northern Great Plains, examples of widespread communities in good-to-excellent condition are rare and of great ecological, scientific, and aesthetic value."

Comment 797

One of the reasons prairie grasslands should not be fragmented is that, as a suite of birds, grassland species are declining throughout the United States. Additionally, prairie nesting birds are not just impacted by raptors; members of the crow family (especially magpies, crows and ravens) also impact these species. As a result, perch guards should be installed on transmission lines in all areas where native habitat is of a significantly size to allow prairie bird species of conservation concern to nest.

Comment 798

7. The final EIS needs to mitigate the impacts of habitat fragmentation. The EIS discusses habitat fragmentation as an environmental impact in numerous places, but never mitigates for this loss. DEQ/DOE should work with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to develop concrete mitigation measures to address habitat fragmentation of native habitats further chopped up from the transmission line.

Comment 799

8. We support the use of bird strike diverters or similar waning devises in high risk areas, such as "lakes, river crossings, wildlife refuge areas, and high ridge crossings."

Response 792: Comment noted.

Response 793: The alignments cross land to the east (Alternatives 2 and 3) or south and west (Alternative 4) of Benton Lake NWR. Alternative 2 and 3 routes are approximately 0.8 to 0.9 mile away from Benton Lake, but much closer to the eastern boundary of the NWR, while Alternative 4 is more than 2 miles from the nearest NWR boundary. This information has been included in Section 3.8.3.2.

Response 794: See the discussion in the responses to comments 789 and 791.

Response 795: Comments noted. See the discussion of Legal and Regulatory Issues and Vegetation, Wetlands and Weed Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. Aloe Lake is 10-12 miles from the transmission line alternatives. North of Cut Bank, Alternatives 2 and 4 pass near Hay and Grassy lakes, while Alternative 3 passes near or crosses several unnamed ponds and intermittent lakes.

Response 796: As the comment notes, little native grassland habitat remains in the area, and the habitat that remains is fragmented. Transmission line development should not contribute to substantial fragmentation of grassland habitats because any permanent disturbance of grassland vegetation would be spatially discontinuous; only the sites of transmission line support structures would be permanently disturbed for construction. Alternative 4 would cross the greatest amount of grassland but Alternative 2, which best avoids grasslands, conflicts with your preference to remain as far away from the refuge as possible.

Response 797: Comment noted.

Response 798: Farming and other development in the area has already fragmented the natural grassland habitat. Transmission line development could contribute to additional fragmentation of grassland habitats, especially along the Dry Fork Marias River on Alternative 4.

Response 799: Comment noted.

Montana Audubon, Page 4

Comment 800 9. We found no documentation on how many miles of new roads would be developed in this project from the various alternatives. Roads cause significant impacts by fragmenting habitat, allowing more human access into sensitive areas, and acting as a conduit/infestation source for the spread of noxious weeds. Impacts from newly constructed roads needed for this project need to be more accurately quantified and described, including cumulative impacts from the network of roads on the environment. The Final EIS needs to minimize the number of miles of roads crossing native habitats.

Comment 801 10. Raptor safe power lines should be constructed to reduce the risk of electrocution to perching raptors. Additionally, mitigation measures should also assess whether or not installing insulators (or other proven technology) on all power poles to prevent raptor electrocutions should be required—especially in areas around Kevin Rims and Benton Lakes NWR.

Comment 802 11. The Final EIS needs to document all Sharp-tailed Grouse leks and winter range using peer-reviewed protocol. This seems particularly important given the questions we have about other bird field work done by MATL to prepare for the Draft EIS. In the Draft EIS: 1) not all leks that will be impacted appear to be identified; 2) an evaluation of the impact of the proposed project on winter survival needs to be completed; 3) the EIS needs to more completely evaluate the utilization of available habitat by Sharp-tailed Grouse for nesting, foraging, or brood rearing because recent studies indicate that grouse avoid areas of development, increasing mortality; and 4) the impact of the power line on movement of Sharp-tailed Grouse needs to be more adequately assessed.

Comment 803 12. The EIS fails to address or mitigate the impacts to mule deer and pronghorn. It is especially important to mitigate impacts to important winter range.

Comment 804 13. Because of the way in which *the Draft MATL EIS* is written, it is very difficult to determine what measures will be used to mitigate impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitat. The following mitigation measures should be required:

- Minimizing the length of roads that cause fragmentation of habitat (miles of road in native habitat).
- Using appropriate lighting, that won't attract night migrants (bats and birds) to any substations.
- Requiring that intensive post-construction monitoring (annual mortality surveys identified on page 3-128) is done to ensure that bird and bat mortality is as low as predicted. This monitoring must use **peer-reviewed monitoring protocol** to ensure that the results are meaningful. This seems particularly important given the questions we have about other bird field work done by MATL to prepare for the Draft EIS. Additionally, we would ask that, as a mitigation measure, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) be formed for the purpose of reviewing post-construction monitoring studies and making recommendations if changes are needed. If post-construction studies reveal significant impacts, it makes sense to allow the TAC to recommend that additional bird strike diverters or similar waning devises be installed, additional monitoring studies be conducted, etc.
- Taking precautions in the construction process to power wash all construction equipment to avoid transporting noxious weed seeds. At one point in the EIS, there seems to be a commitment to doing this:
  - Page 2-19: "Noxious Weed Control (Section 13.5): Requires a "clean vehicle policy" while entering and leaving construction areas to prevent transport of noxious weed plants and/or seed."

  Yet in other parts of the EIS, there seems to be a qualification to this requirement:
  - Page 3-87: "Mitigation practices such as washing vehicles and equipment would occur throughout construction and continue during future line maintenance activities." Note that "washing vehicles" is very different than requiring vehicles entering and leaving construction areas to be power washed.
  - Appendix C, Page 5: Prior to entering the project area, vehicles and construction equipment will be cleaned (pressure wash or forced air) of all mud, dirt, and plant parts *where there is a*

Response 800: Until the project is completely planned and engineered, it is not possible to determine the location and length of access roads. The project would employ environmental protection measures to minimize the area disturbed due to access roads and the impacts from erosion, soil compaction, and noxious weeds. See Table 2.3-2 in the EIS and Section 2.7 of Appendix F.

Response 801: As discussed in Section 3.8.3.2, transmission line design standards provide adequate spacing to prevent raptor electrocution.

Response 802: Section 3.8.2.2 has been updated to reflect the latest surveys. Lek surveys were conducted on April 30 (ground) and May 2 (aerial), 2008. Although some isolated sharp-tailed grouse were seen, no leks were observed. Wind breaks and shrubby areas are generally avoided. See the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. It is possible that sharp-tailed grouse may collide with the line.

Response 803: The majority of impacts to winter range would be short term due to construction activities. The DOE and DEQ did not find the long-term impacts to be at a level to warrant mitigation as long-term impacts would consist of a minimal amount of habitat loss.

Response 804: Comments noted. Road length and impacts would be minimized as outlined in the DEIS. The contradiction between the Chapter 2 summary "requiring" a clean vehicle policy and Chapter 3 and Appendix C "recommending" clean vehicle mitigation has been corrected. The requirement is for vehicles to be thoroughly washed. See Appendix F, item 2.8.6.

During the preparation of the Major Facility Siting Act application (MFSA) and the Draft EIS, MATL communicated with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks relative to known locations, population status, and habitat use of sharp-tailed grouse in the project area. MATL also conducted lek surveys in areas of suitable habitat within the project area (MATL 2006b, as referenced in the EIS). Field surveys undertaken by MATL in 2005 resulted in the verification of seven sharp-tailed grouse leks, three observed and four heard.

MATL's MFSA application (MATL 2006b), page 83 provides the following discussion on grouse winter range: "Gary Olson, Region 4 biologist for Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MFWP) in Conrad identified shelterbelts and riparian areas as areas where Sharp-tailed grouse concentrate during severe winters (Olson 2006). MT Natural Heritage Program cited the MFWP Bird Coordinator, Rick Northrup, as also identifying riparian and brush-covered areas as important to sharp-tailed grouse during severe winters (Maxwell 2006). MFWP has not developed this information into a GIS layer that could be used to make a map. But, Olson reiterated that sharp-tailed grouse are widely distributed within the Project Study Area from the Canadian Border south to Great Falls. He said that field and homestead shelterbelts as well as native riparian areas, including brush coulee bottoms, are where sharp-tailed grouse concentrate during severe winters."

During a subsequent conversation with Gary Olson on May 6, 2008, he reiterated that there were no available data on sharp-tailed grouse movement patterns relative to winter habitat use for the Project Area, and that given the wide and diverse distribution of potential severe winter habitat, additional detail could not be expected or provided. He did indicate that some 2008 data recently collected for areas north of Cut Bank would provide additional information on spring distribution and habitat use (including lek attendance).

Montana Audubon, Page 5

potential to import weeds." Who decides where there is a potential to import weeds? These circumstances need to be more clearly defined.

This policy needs to specifically state that all vehicles will be power washed when entering construction areas that disturb soil or native vegetation. Additionally, if there are areas that are disturbed from other activities, such as maintenance activities, they should also be included in the places where power washing is mandatory.

- Disturbed CRP should be replanted back to native grass varieties as much as possible. Comment 805

14. Comment 806 Although we support requiring MATL to delineate all wetlands not covered by National Wetland Inventory maps, delineation is NOT a substitute for mitigation. Mitigation measures need to be developed based on the species of conservation concern being impacted. DEQ/DOE should work with Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to develop concrete mitigation measures to address impacts to wildlife species of conservation concern located in wetlands that are crossed by the transmission line. When wetland delineations are carried out, inventories for the plant species of concern should be noted and turned into the Montana Natural Heritage Program.

15. Comment 807 Restoration Work Needs to Use Native Plants. All restoration work impacting native habitats should be required to use native plant species that occur in the area. DEQ/DOE should check areas that are revegetated for up to five years to ensure that revegetation efforts are successful.

We believe that the impacts from the MATL project have not fully been examined. It is important that the final EIS address these concerns, especially the cumulative impacts from wind farms under contract with MATL. Comment 808

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Janet H. Ellis

Janet H. Ellis
Program Director

Response 805: Your comment is noted. Section 3.7.3.2 discusses revegetation with the appropriate seed mixtures. For CRP land those seed mixtures would be determined by the requirements of the CRP program.

Response 806: Your comment is noted. Additional information pertaining to wetlands in Teton County is presented in Section 3.6. The delineation of all wetlands along the selected alignment where it traverses Teton County is primarily to assist with the engineering design and pole placement, so that all wetlands can be spanned. DEQ has draft Environmental Specifications (Appendix F, revised in the Final EIS) that are essentially mitigation measures that apply to many environmental aspects of the project to ensure that the disturbed areas are returned to conditions as good as or better than before construction. Additional mitigation measures specific to wetlands and Waters of the United States may be required by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers under a Nationwide #12 Permit (Utilities Line Activities), if any construction, maintenance, or repair of utility lines and associated facilities is required within a jurisdictional wetland and Waters of the U.S. DOE has completed consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for this project. The inventorying of wetland plant species of concern could be included as an ecological component of the delineation of wetlands along the selected alignment.

Response 807: DEQ's administrative rules allow the department to hold a bond and monitor reclamation.

Response 808: Comment noted.

TO: THE MONTANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIROMENTAL QUALITY
THE U. S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

We the undersigned members of the Montana Senate and the Montana House of Representatives strongly endorse approval of the Montana-Alberta Tie Line (MATL) from Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada to Great Falls, Montana. Comment 809

MATL is the key to development of up to $1 billion in wind energy projects that will be an enormous economic benefit for north central Montana, the State of Montana, and the nation's energy supply. The increased tax base, construction jobs, royalty payments from wind generators, and the permanent monitoring and maintenance jobs will provide badly needed tax dollars for the state, local schools, county, and city governments. Comment 810

Wind is one natural resource northern Montana has plenty of and, in fact, it is rated one of the best and most reliable wind resources on the North American continent. Without transmission lines to move electric power, wind cannot be developed. Comment 811

After a rough start, MATL is demonstrating an eager willingness to work with affected landowners to address concerns regarding routing of transmission lines and placement of poles that would be potentially disruptive to agriculture operations. This includes the use of monopoles rather than "H" poles, wherever it is practical. Comment 812 MATL has entered into multiple landowner agreements should this project receive final approval and concurs with recommendations in the DEQ report. Landowners must be fairly compensated and treated with the up-most dignity... Comment 813

The MATL line will improve the reliability of the electric transmission system in both Montana and Alberta by making these regions less vulnerable to outages, brownouts, and creating a greater opportunity to import and export electricity, which can be of benefit to consumers and suppliers. Comment 814 It's predicted the United States within a few years could experience a serious energy shortage due to increased demand and the cancellation of many proposed coal fired generation projects in the U.S. because of global warming and environmental concerns. Comment 815 It's absolutely imperative we now develop this country's green and clean energy resources for our generation and future generations to come. Comment 816

It is important to note that MATL is a "merchant line" and the large capital investment and risk is made by the banks and private investors rather than by local taxpayers in Montana and Alberta. Comment 817

We urge your approval of the MATL application without costly and unnecessary delays that could very well jeopardize the entire project. The final routing decision should be fair to all parties, MATL and landowners, striking a fair balance between what makes sense economically and addresses the most sensitive issues in a responsible and proper manner. Comment 818

L202

Response 809 to 811: Comments noted.

Response 812 and 813: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 814 to 818: Comments noted.

Comment 819

A good analogy is, "it would be like connecting power cables to a huge battery that moves the economic engine of development". Let's move forward and approve the MATL project for Montana. We respectfully ask for your positive and thoughtful far-reaching decision for our great state.

Senator Jerry Black
Senator Roy Brown
Senator John Brueggman
Senator Aubyn Curtis
Senator Jeff Essmann
Senator Kelly Gebhardt
Senator Kim Gillan
Senator Ken Hanson
Senator Rick Laibbe
Senator Lane Larson
Senator Jesse Laslovich
Senator Dave Lewis
Senator Jim Peterson
Senator Trudi Schmidt
Senator Frank Smith
Senator Don Ryan
Senator Joe Tropila
Senator Don Steinbeisser
Senator Keith Bales

Representative Llew Jones
Representative Tim Callahan
Representative Edith Clark
Representative Sue Dickenson
Representative Julie French
Representative Ralph Heinert
Representative Gordon Hendrick
Representative Pat Ingraham
Representative Harry Klock
Representative Bob Lake
Representative Scott Mendenhall
Representative Bill Nooney
Representative Jesse O'Hara
Representative Alan Olson
Representative Mike Phillips
Representative Rick Ripley
Representative Jon Sesso
Representative Wayne Stahl
Representative John Ward
Representative Bill Wilson
Representative Jonathan Windy Boy
Representative Ken Peterson
Representative Gary MacLaren
Representative John Parker
Representative Bill Beck
Representative Mike Milburn
Representative Duane Ankney

Response 819: Comments noted.

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

RECEIVED
APR 0 1 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Re: MATL Transmission Line

Comment 820

We would like to go on record as supporting the construction of the Montana Alberta Tie LTD 240/230 kV merchant transmission line and strongly urge the Montana Department of Environmental Quality and the U.S. Department of Energy along with the Bureau of Land Management and the Department of the Interior to issue all necessary permits and grants as expeditiously as possible.

Comment 821

The environmental impact of this line is negligible, and the potential for this line to transmit clean, green wind energy is limited only by the capacity of the line itself. At the same time, it is imperative to the sustainability of our communities, that this positive economic growth in our local economy be realized.

Comment 822

We recognize there is an impact on the farmers whose lands will be crossed. To the extent practical, we think there should be single pole structures that follow section lines on farm acres, while still keeping the line as close to potential wind farm sites such as Alternative 2 depicts. We would also request that both MATL and the landowners be treated fairly, equitably and with respect.

Sincerely,

L204

Response 820 to 822: Comments noted. See Farming Issues and Socioeconomic Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. Additional signatures to this letter are on the next page.

Sincerely,

Angela D. Brown

Harold D. Olson

Hicks

Ben F. Rulup

Hicks

Cheryl A. Sawyer

Heather Cathcart

Curtis C. Rice

John P. + Penny L. Sherlin

Ronald L. Widhalm

Ben Widhalm

Ronald Ries

Deborah Ries

Jane Hoker

Cheryl Curry

Everett Snottland

Carrie A Lane

Pat Becker

Carol Jones

Linda Bonka

Marjorie Jones

Cynthia A Johnson

Kathy Jones

Dr. Robert and Ali Newkirk
P.O. Box 110
Dupuyer, MT 59432
(406) 472-3388

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Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

March 31, 2008

Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana DEQ
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59602

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 823

We are writing to express our support of the MATL electric transmission line proposed to be built between Lethbridge, Alberta and Great Falls, Montana.

We believe that is an important energy and economic project for the people of our state and even the country.

Comment 824

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dr. Robert Newkirk Ali Newkirk

L205

Response 823 and 824: Comments noted.

Montana Department of Transportation
2701 Prospect Avenue
PO Box 201001
Helena MT 59620-1001

Jim Lynch, Director
Brian Schweitzer, Governor

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APR 01 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

March 31, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Attn: Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Subject: Federal Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)
State of Montana Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement
Montana-Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV Transmission Line (MATL)
Project# 65.71.445.01

Dear Mr. Ring,

The Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) has reviewed the subject document and your responses to our comment letter and has the following comments and concerns:

Please confirm that in Appendix F: Revised Draft DEQ Environmental Specifications, specifications 2.5.1, 2.6.1, and 2.7.1, DEQ requires that MATL complete MDT's review and approval process before being allowed in MDT right-of-way to construct, operate or maintain the transmission line, or construct an access road off of an MDT facility. Comment 825

MATL has no statutory right to occupy MDT right-of-way. MATL is not considered a public utility and does not have the rights of such. All power poles and guy-wires must be outside of MDT right-of-way. Comment 826

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

Stephanie Hilger, System Impact Coordinator
Program & Policy Analysis Section
Rail, Transit & Planning Division

copy: Sandra Straehl, Rail, Transit & Planning Administrator
Mick Johnson, Great Falls District Administrator
Steve Prinzing, P.E., Great Falls Engineering Services Engineer
James Combs, P.E., Great Falls District Traffic Engineer
Jim Skinner, Program & Policy Analysis Manager
Tom Martin, P.E., Environmental Services Bureau Chief
Dick Turner, Multimodal Planning Bureau Chief
Lynn Zanto, Statewide and Urban Planning Supervisor
Walt Scott, Right-of-Way Utilities Section Supervisor
File

L206

Program & Policy Analysis Bureau
Phone: (406) 444-3423
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TTY: (800) 335-7592
Web Page: www.mdt.state.mt.us

TR

Response 825 and 826: See revised Appendix F, Sections 2.6.1 and 2.7.1.

To: Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Rink
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901 DEADLINE: MARCH 31, 2008

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APR 01 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

We, the undersigned, oppose the development of industrial wind complexes and associated transmission corridors within the view shed of Glacier National Park and the Rocky Mountain Front. Comment 827

NAME PO BOX 523 EAST GLACIER 59434 ADDRESS

1. REBEKAH A WRIGHT Rebekah A. Wright 3/20/08
2. Heather Holloway Heather Holloway PO Box 414, E. Glacier Pk 59434
3. TRACEY VROMAN Tracey Vroman P.O. Box #511, S. Glacier Pk. 59934
4. FRED VROMAN Fred Vroman PO. Box 867 FAIRFIELD, MT 59436
5. Carletta Vroman Carletta A. Vroman P.O. Box 867 Fairfield, MT 59436
6. Ursula Mattson Ursula Mattson PO Box 254 E Glacier Pk 59434
7. GREG STRUTZ PO BOX 122 E. GLACIER PK, MT 59434
8. Gregory M. Strutz
9.
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1208

Response 827: Comments noted. See Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

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

Re: MATL Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Hallsten,

In my initial letter to you, regarding the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. and dated April 26, 2007, my comments ran to more than1000 words. Today, I will be brief.

Comment 828

In responding to my concern about the visual impact of giant industrial wind farms on Montana's landscapes, the staff response was, in part, as follows: "*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 judgement.*" [*Response 297,* MATL Draft EIS]

I can only say, in reaction to this kind of reassurance, that it offers me little in the way of comfort. However, it does help to explain the thought process behind the making of these remarkable, often environment-altering decisions, on behalf of the citizens of Montana.

Sincerely yours,

Philip Perszyk
620 Evans
Missoula, MT 59801

March 31, 2008

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APR 01 2008
DEQ
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

L209

Response 828: Comment noted. See Visual Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

March 30, 2008

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

RE: MATL EIS Comment

Dear Mr. Opper,

I am Jerry McRae, a farmer in the Dutton area. Problems with DEQ's proposed local routing options are listed below-

Diamond Valley South:

Comment 829 1. puts **5 miles** of poles on my property, **33** structures possible.

Comment 830 2. is too close to our farm site in W 1/2 Sect. 34. Please mark it in red also on the map.

Comment 831 3. turns a 90 degree corner on cultivated land. The guy wires will leave a farming nightmare.

Comment 832 4. is sited on top of 2 miles of field road which can not be removed. The line will have to be built out in the field, not on the field edge to allow machinery clearance using the road.

Comment 833 5. crosses Hunt Coulee in a roadless area. What has been studied about this crossing?

Comment 834 6. it crosses Sec. 11 and 12 not on field edges but in the middle of existing fields.

Comment 835 7. Comment 1 of the first draft EIS makes it clear that DEQ supports solving a 9 structure problem for one farmer by suggesting a route that places **33 structures on another farmer's place**. For all the same reasons DEQ erased its preferred alternative from the 1st draft EIS, I ask that DEQ remove Diamond Valley South from consideration.

Alternative 2 MATL proposed alignment

Comment 836 1. is absolutely too close to our farm site on Sec. 36. **Siting that close to a farm when there are other choices is wrong!**

Comment 837 2. **it is a diagonal line across cultivated land and that is wrong!!**

1210

Response 829 to 832: Figure 2.6-2 has been updated to include the house that was inadvertently omitted. Also see the responses to comments 708 and 709.

Response 833: Hunt Coulee is located on private land and does not have a road that crosses the draw at the Diamond Valley South crossing of the draw. A small pond is located near the crossing and the area is indicated as winter range in MATL's application. Where possible, such coulees are typically spanned. If this alignment were selected, design of the line and final structure location would occur after the agencies reach their decisions. If the goal is to avoid constructing new roads on the steep erosion prone slopes, access would likely be from each side of the coulee, and construction and maintenance traffic would have to drive out and around to access each side of the coulee rather than directly across the coulee. Alternative 2 is located near a private road that crosses the coulee. However, this road is located off the right-of-way and additional easements would be necessary to use it for construction.

Response 834: Comment noted.

Response 835: In discussions during the development of the local routing option for the original March 2007 document, DEQ staff was led to believe that there was consensus among the landowners in the Diamond Valley area to move the line farther away from two homes and parallel to an existing transmission line. As indicated by the Draft EIS comment you cited, there was not consensus among area landowners. Therefore, DEQ determined there was a need to examine other possible alternatives in this area. A mailing list of landowners in the area was developed from the Department of Revenue database of property owners and a letter was

sent inviting them to a meeting to discuss other alignment options.

The agencies received two letters of comment opposing the Diamond Valley South local routing option because it would be located along a field road. The agencies received no letters or testimony supporting this local routing option. When making their decision, the agencies will consider this input indicating there is no local support for the Diamond Valley South local routing option.

Response 836 and 837: Comments noted. Also see Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Comment 838 3. How is this Alternative 2 siting "better" than the choice you erased for the Habel family? (comments 1st draft of EIS)

Diamond Valley Middle:

Comment 839 1. it is sited on 3 miles of field roads that can not be removed. The line will have to be built out in the field, not on the field edge to allow machinery clearance using the road.

Comment 840 2. it turns **five** 90 degree angles in cultivated farm land. The resulting guy wires create a farming nightmare.

Comment 841 3. it runs into the existing poles of the NW power line in two places.

Diamond Valley North:

Comment 842 1. it places **4.5 miles** of line on land that we farm- **30** structures.

Comment 843 2. it is sited on 2.5 miles of field roads. The line will have to be built out in the field, not on the field edge to allow machinery clearance using the road.

Comment 844 3. it turns a 90 degree angle in cultivated land. The resulting guy wires create a farming night mare.

100% of the affected landowners on this section of Diamond Valley have submitted the route we ALL want across our farms to MATL. We have agreed on the mitigation amounts we must have and have submitted these to MATL. Thus far, DEQ has drawn many unacceptable routes on the map. As farmers and landowners, we have provided the solution, the only solution to Diamond Valley and I ask that DEQ support all of us in obtaining this route. Comment 845

Respectfully submitted by,

Jerry A. McRae

Jerry A. McRae
McRae Farms
Dutton, Montana

Response 838: DEQ is looking for the lowest impact alignment while considering the nature and economics of the various alternatives and will make its finding independent of which private landowners' lands would be crossed. In the Diamond Valley area Alternative 2 does not closely parallel an existing line where maneuvering equipment between two sets of poles may prove difficult or impossible depending on final line location. Alternative 2 is shorter than the now dropped Diamond Valley portion of Alternative 4 in the March 2007 document and therefore is likely to have fewer structures located in fields. Alternative 2 also has fewer guyed angles than would the other now dropped alternative. Alternative 2 is not located adjacent to any field roads and therefore would have a lower overall number of structures in mid-field locations. However, as indicated in response to comment 835, Alternative 2 is located much closer to two houses, resulting in greater visual impacts.

Responses 839 to 844: Comments noted.

Response 845: The agencies are considering the route submitted by Mr. McRae, as well as the compensation amounts.

March 30, 2008

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

RE: MATL EIS Comment

Dear Mr. Opper,

I received the enclosed letter from MATL July 10, 2006. I submit it to substantiate the need for my request that all mitigation measures be made conditions of the certificate. MATL continues to show no desire to negotiate these mitigation costs and I must assume that MATL will proceed in district court to acquire an easement across my property upon receiving the DEQ certificate.

Comment 846 1. Please make the easement width of 110' a condition of the certificate.

Comment 847 2. Please make the annual payment to pay for the increased costs of farming around the poles a condition of the certificate. These annual payments should be made to the farm operator and should pay 100% of the additional cost of farming around the poles.

Comment 848 3. Please make a solution to all GPS related problems a condition of the certificate.

Comment 849 4. Please determine the correct height above the ground this power line should be and make that height a condition of the certificate.

Comment 850 5. Please determine a dollar amount that should be paid to landowners to mitigate the decrease in market value to our land and homes, and make that payment a condition of the certificate. This amount should also mitigate the cost of having limited aerial spraying of these fields and the loss of current or future irrigation of these fields.

I remain convinced that MATL must agree to fully mitigate all of these 5 items in order for the DEQ to determine "that the facility minimizes adverse environmental impact, considering the state of available technology and the nature and economics of the various alternatives." (S-5 DOE/EIS-0399) Comment 851

Respectfully submitted by
Jerry A. McRae
Jerry A. McRae
McRae Farms
Dutton, Montana

L211

Response 846: MATL has revised its proposal to increase the easement width to 105 feet. See Section 2.3.

Response 847: MATL's compensation package is part of the overall project. MATL has revised its proposed compensation package. See Sections 2.3 and 3.13.2, and Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 848: The Revised Draft DEQ Environmental Specifications include correction of problems of interference with GPS by the MATL line.

Response 849: MATL has revised the minimum ground clearance for the conductor to 27.2 feet where the line would cross cultivated and CRP land. Also see Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 850: DEQ will not become involved in the compensation negotiations. Also see the response to comment 847 and Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 851: Comment noted.

March 31, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

COPY

RECEIVED
APR 03 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Re: the Montana Alberta Tie Line (MATL)

Comment 852 I write to give my support to the Alternate 4 Alignment for the MATL line. This design, although it has some faults, it is a much superior design to the other alternatives. It encompasses most of the landowners' concern dealing with impacts of production agriculture.

Comment 853 The State Land Board's comments align with our concerns exactly. The use of field boundaries, section lines, property lines and monopoles in cropland and CRP.

Comment 854 Alternative 4, the Agency Developed, in the first draft EIS was a fine attempt to alleviate the on the ground impacts of the other routes. I was disappointed when Director Opper chose short term monetary considerations of MATL's over permanent harm the proposed diagonal lines do.

Comment 855 Alternate 4 Alignment is in the study area. It is equal or superior in most of the impacts studied. The main concern is the additional cost. These costs, however, have been more than mitigated by the State of Montana's new tax policy under which this line is able to take advantage.

Comment 856 Does the DEQ really believe that it only costs the farmers an addition cost of $9.38 per pole per year to maintain around these poles? First, this assumes that the farmer has the equipment to do this maintenance; second the time allotted in the farming study to do this is not realistic. The responsibility to maintain around the poles is the sole responsibility of MATL and I will not sign an easement that shifts their responsibilities upon me for any price. Comment 857 Are these costs or payments this document is proposing going to be mandated by the EIS and become part of the permit, so that it can be enforced? Comment 858

Comment 859 The tables on 3-167, 3-168 and 3-169 are one sided and come to an erroneous conclusion that the farmers actually have a new gain from having poles on their land. This shows that there are flaws in the farming analysis. Taking farming costs and multiplying it by the number of poles does not represent an accurate figure. The greatest benefit according to these tables comes when this document adds the tax abatement to the payments multiplied by the lifetime of this line.

Comment 860 If this document is going to use the tax abatements with the 50 year multiplier to show the gain the farmers receive and to use this as a decision making tool, the same a analysis has to be included in the Table 3.13-18 on page 3-175, This is done by figuring the tax table at 12%, the original tax when MATL planned this line, and subtracting it from the 3% rate to show the savings and multiplying by 50 year like they do on table 3.13-15. This would show that MATL receives a tax abatement of over 2 million dollars per year with a lifetime 50 year savings of over 100 million dollars. Also, MATL gets an additional tax abatement for 15 to 20 years giving MATL and effective abatement tax rate of 1.5% for an additional $25 million of the 50 year life of this line. One could say that the total tax abatements amount to ¾ of the entire capital costs of this line. Compare the 2 million per year vs. the $40,000.00 per year the farmers with the impact costs get. Where is the balance?

Response 852: Comment noted.

Response 853: Comment noted.

Response 854: The tentative identification of a preferred alternative in the EIS is based on many factors, not just economics. DEQ's ultimate decision will be disclosed when it determines whether to issue a Certificate of Compliance.

Response 855: See Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 856: The $9.38 was the original figure MATL calculated for farmer cost. It was neither a DEQ-generated figure nor did it reflect DEQ conclusions. MATL has since generated a new average figure of $33.90 per pole per year. See Section 3.13.3.2.

Response 857: Comment noted.

Response 858: The EIS, as an impact disclosure document, can identify mitigation measures, such as compensation, but cannot require them. Any mitigation measures DEQ imposes on MATL must be within the authority of the Major Facility Siting Act to impose or must be attached to the Certificate at MATL's request. Any conditions on the Certificate are enforceable. If the project is approved, DEQ would mandate payments for damages during construction. See the discussions of Legal and Regulatory Issues and Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. Also see Sections 2.3 and 3.13.3.2.

Response 859: The analysis and tables referred to in the comment have been revised. See Section 3.13. The information provided in those tables is for a general comparison of alternatives across all landowners and not for individual farmers. Individual costs could vary based on individual farming practices.

Response 860: See the discussion of Tax Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. The tax incentive to farmers is no longer included in the tables that balance benefits and costs to farmers. It is included as a separate item. The lower tax rate to MATL is also included in revised Section 3.13.

Comment 861

MATL started this project usesing the 12% the tax rates when it did it's financial forecasts. These tax abatements could not have been known or anticipated, so can this company still use additional costs as a determining factor, when these abatements are factored in? How can the DEQ not question the untested cost figures that MATL provides to the DEQ? Comment 862

The question of the 45 foot easement and the safety zones have been resolved in Alberta. I don't see where the same reasoning wouldn't apply to the Montana portion of the line. The idea that MATL will exercise complete control of the safety zone and not compensate the landowner is unreasonable. Comment 863

Alberta has also made a determination upon the height of this line and has increased it. With the new farming equipment and the height of the roadway added there will be places quite dangerous. There are already, such as the interstate underpass at Dutton that my drills won't go under. Also, the Northwest line is a worry with my combines. One forgets to look up. Comment 864

The farming costs analysis is flawed. On page 6 of the farming cost review the statement that most farmers farm closer than 5 feet to poles is wrong. It is a physical impossibility to take a 90 foot sprayer around an h-frame structure and stay 5 feet away without backing up the outside edge of the sprayer which causes the chemical to be misapplied. To stay within 5 feet a person would have to take 4 passes, a pass for each side, to stay within the five feet without backing up the sprayer. Comment 865

There is no time allowance for having to slow 100 feet before each structure and then the 100 feet after to get up to speed.

In any event, since the time of this study the costs of farming has increased dramatically. The cost of fertilizer has increased from the projected 450 dollar per ton to over 950 dollars per ton; the costs of Round-up has gone up from 21 dollars per gallon to 55 dollars per gallon; the cost of diesel has increased to over $4.00 per gallon and this continues forward for application, labor, etc. Comment 866

MATL has a costs adjustment to its customers every two years, why doesn't this document use the same time basis for farmer's costs adjustments as MATL uses for it's business purposes. Are MATL's business profit's a greater concern in this process than the farmers' profitability? Comment 867

Comment 868 This document talks about the easements that MATL already has. This is not proper. This was a calculated business decision by MATL. This line is above the limit whereby a company may bypass this process by getting 75% of the easements needed to build the line and thereby being approved without a permitting process. Thus any discussion of the these easements is improper and gives unfair weight to MATL's costs. Your response 586 is incorrect. The ROW easement payments were not the result of any regulation, but a free and calculated choice by this company. If MATL had not made any ROW easement payment before the DEQ started the regulatory process it would not have mattered. Please site the regulation that allows you to use ROW easement payments, **before a route has been approved**, as a decision making criteria. Any adverse impact of these payments are not the result of regulation. Comment 869

Comment 870 Through-out this document are cited costs of the various alternatives. What independent source are these costs cited from. If these costs are from MATI, I would question the differences between the various alternatives. If you are using MATL's costs I would say you have a fox in the henhouse.

Comment 871

This line is important to the economic growth in this area. I agree with that, but it must not be built with diagonals. There are alternatives which are reasonable, if a little more expensive.

Response 861: The Major Facility Siting Act requires DEQ to make findings that the facility minimizes adverse environmental impact, considering the state of available technology and the nature and economics of the various alternatives, and that the facility will serve the public interest, convenience, and necessity. Decision makers will weigh many aspects of project viability in making this finding and before making their decisions.

Response 862: 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 labor and material prices are currently very volatile and cost estimates are subject to change in short periods of time.

Response 863: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. MATL has revised its proposal to obtain a 105-foot-wide easement.

Response 864: See the discussion of Safety Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 865: See the discussion of Farming Issues in Consolidated Responses and the response to comment 861. Appendix N indicates that most farmers would farm closer than 5 feet. This does not indicate that all farmers would farm this close, but, for purposes of study, a safety buffer of 5 feet was used. The document indicates that the safety buffer is generally dependent on the specific field, equipment, and operator experience, but in this case a 5-foot safety buffer should be adequate to safely clear the pole(s) using typical equipment while still optimizing farmed area. Conservative assumptions were used in the farming cost study in order to

avoid underestimating costs for farmers. However, individual operators will have their own preferences on factors such as equipment speed and how close to a structure to farm.

Response 866: See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 867: Comment noted. See the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 868: If MATL already paid for right-of-way access, and that alternative is not permitted, MATL may lose the money it already spent. To seek easements and pay for routes that have not been permitted by DEQ is a business decision MATL made.

Response 869: See the response to Comment 868. The Montana Environmental Policy Act requires that an EIS disclose the impacts of regulations on an applicant (75-1-201(b)(iv)(D), MCA). Easement payments made on MATL's proposed route would be an adverse economic impact of regulation if another alternative is selected.

Response 870: See the response to comment 862 and the discussion of Farming Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 871: Comment noted.

Comment 872 I am amazed by this company. I know that time is of the essence. We told MATL two years ago that if they would abandon the diagonal and h-frames in CRP and cropland that we would support this line. Some even offered to forgo easement payments and to help get the easements from their neighbors. This line could have been built and drawing revenue if these changes had been agreed upon then. How short sited was this.

Comment 873 If MATL wants to go forward smoothly with future projects it should weight carefully the harm in its reputation when it has to use eminent domain to force the diagonal across cropland from Conrad to Great Falls.

Comment 874 This also a political process, although it claims to be above this. This was proven to my satisfaction by when Mr. Opper dismissed the work product of his own employees in the DEQ, the Agency designed Alternative 4. Governor Schweitzer may be surprised who will join the outcry on the farmer's side for personal property rights when this Canadian company starts using eminent domain to get its cheaper, but impact laden diagonal. This will be a big news and political story not just a legal fight. MATL may win their diagonal for this line, but squander any goodwill and future projects to achieve this.

These comments are respectfully submitted:

Chris Stephens
PO Box 94
Dutton, Montana 59433

Responses 872 to 874: Comments noted.

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 8, MONTANA OFFICE
FEDERAL BUILDING, 10 West 15th Street, Suite 3200
HELENA, MONTANA 59626

Ref: 8MO

March 26, 2008

RECEIVED
MAR 27 2008
DEQ / EMB

Mr. Tom Ring
Environmental Sciences Specialist
Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, Montana 59620-901

Re: CEQ # 20080054, Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230-kV International Transmission Line DEIS

Dear Mr. Ring:

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region VIII Montana Office has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230-kV International Transmission Line, in accordance with EPA responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. 4231 and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Section 309 of the Clean Air Act directs EPA to review and comment in writing on the environmental impacts of any major Federal agency action. The EPA's comments include a rating of both the environmental impact of the proposed action and the adequacy of the NEPA document.

Comment 875

The EPA does not object to the proposed construction and operation of the MATL 230-kV transmission line from Great Falls, Montana into Alberta, Canada. Although, we recommend the DOE and MDEQ consider construction of a new modified preferred alternative that would better optimize the many environmental, social and economic trade-offs for this project (i.e., trade-offs in impacts to farm operations and residences, soil erosion during construction, water quality and wetland impacts, impacts to birds and wildlife habitat, costs, etc.). The intent should be to address project purpose and need and the significant issues while minimizing adverse environmental impacts. Evaluation of a modified alternative in the FEIS may also better explain to the public the many trade-offs involved in making transmission line decisions, which may lead to improved public acceptance of decisions. In general desirable features we consider worthy of including in a new modified preferred alternative include:

- minimize soil disturbance and soil erosion by selecting alignments on less erosive soils and that reduce the extent of ground disturbance as much as possible;
- use monopoles rather than H-frame structures wherever possible to reduce soil disturbance and impacts to farm operations;

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Response 875: In assembling the alternatives presented in the EIS, the agencies have attempted to present a full range of reasonable alternatives that optimize the social, economic, and environmental trade-offs associated with the proposed project. Several of the desirable features of a new modified alternative suggested by EPA are included in each of the alternatives analyzed in detail in the EIS, including the applicant's proposed route, Alternative 2. The alternative alignments considered in the EIS provide options to minimize impacts, consistent with the siting criteria suggested in the comment. The agencies will examine the alternatives and consider environmental impacts in making their decisions. The DEQ decision will be based on the findings required by the Major Facility Siting Act. This includes consideration of cost and economics of the various alternatives, in addition to minimization of environmental impacts. Likewise, DOE must consider environmental impact, impact on electric reliability, and any other factors that DOE may consider relevant to the public interest.

- incorporate appropriate construction sediment and erosion control methods and BMPs, as well as weed prevention and control measures during construction;
- minimize new access roads and new road construction, and locate any new roads that may be needed where they have minimal impacts, away from rivers, streams and wetlands;
- minimize stream and lake crossings, and disturbances of wetlands and riparian areas;
- minimize disturbances to sensitive wildlife habitat, and use appropriate mitigation measures to reduce wildlife impacts, particularly transmission line mortality to birds;
- minimize adverse impacts to farm operations and residences;
- minimize fragmentation of open landscapes from a scenic standpoint, and use topographical features to help screen the transmission poles as much as possible;
- consider costs of construction and operation.

We note of course that the MDEQ and DOE will need to evaluate and analyze the impacts of any new modified alternative, and display those impacts in the FEIS.

Comment 876 We also want to state that it appears to us that Alternative 3 would have fewer environmental impacts than the other action alternatives. Alternative 3 would have the shortest alignment (121.6 miles) with the fewest stream and lake crossings (12), fewest acres of wetlands within 500 feet of the alignment (62.3 acres), and least amount of construction ground disturbance (206 acres). Alternative 4 would have the longest transmission line (139.6 miles) with greatest number of stream and lake crossings (19), greatest potential wetland impact (76.4 acres), and greatest ground disturbance (240 acres), although Alternative 4 would reduce impacts to farm operations. Alternative 2 would appear have impacts between those of Alternatives 3 and 4, with 129.9 miles transmission line length, 14 stream and lake crossings, 76.4 acres of potential wetlands impacts, and 214 acres of ground disturbance.

Comment 877 We recognize that there are many considerations and trade-offs involved in evaluating the transmission line alternatives, but we want to emphasize our interest that minimization of environmental impacts be considered as an important criterion in the decision making process. We support reductions in soil, water quality, wetlands, fisheries and wildlife impacts when finalizing alignment alternatives and evaluating the many project trade-offs.

Comment 878 We also believe that the FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD) should clearly explain the process and underlying rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative, and the environmentally preferred alternative should be identified in the ROD [40 CFR 1505.2(b)].

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Response 876: Note that some of the values in the comparison tables have changed since the Draft EIS, primarily due to the incorporation of new information on wetlands in Teton County. While some of the numerical values in comparison tables suggest that Alternative 3 may have fewer impacts to natural resources, a crude comparison of these numbers is not sufficient by itself to determine the lowest impact alternative. Numerical values for crossings of streams, lakes, and wetlands indicate the potential for impacts, but because surface waters and wetlands would be spanned or otherwise avoided under all alternatives (except for one angle structure in Black Horse Lake under Alternative 2), most potential impacts of surface water and wetland crossings would be avoided. Thus, after the application of this mitigating measure, there is little or no difference between alternatives with respect to the environmental impacts on surface water and wetland crossings. Similarly, because potential impacts to surface water quality due to construction disturbance would be minimized through mitigation measures, impacts would be minor under all action alternatives, in spite of the differences in land areas disturbed. Additionally, not all of the potential environmental impacts of this project are easily correlated with numerical measures. For example, Alternative 4 would reduce potential impacts to birds by avoiding Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge, but the tables do not include a numerical indicator of this difference between the alternatives. Finally, because of the preponderance of agricultural land uses in the region and the long-term nature of impacts to farming practices, the agencies must give significant weight to impacts to farming practices when comparing the overall impacts of the alternatives.

Response 877: See the response to comment 875.

Comment 879 We appreciate the listing of the MATL environmental protection measures in Table 2.3-4, and the MDEQ environmental specifications included in Appendix F. The Appendix F environmental specifications protection measures appear to be particularly detailed and comprehensive. We support utilization of these environmental specifications and environmental protection measures to avoid or reduce the intensity and duration of impacts to the environment. We encourage use of the most comprehensive set of environmental protection measures using the most protective measures from both MATL's and MDEQ's lists.

Comment 880 We also believe that if there is likely to be any increase in pollutant delivery (e.g., sediment) to water quality impaired waters listed by the State of Montana under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act as a result of construction and/or operation and maintenance of the transmission line that watershed restoration activities should also be included in the project to offset sediment delivery from transmission line and access road construction. This is needed to assure that no further degradation occurs to the several 303(d) listed streams along the project alignments (i.e., Old Maids Coulee -an intermittent stream, Pondera Coulee, Cut Bank Creek, Marias River, Teton River, Lake Creek, the Missouri River, and Benton Lake). For example, we recommend stabilization of existing eroding banks; improving/installing BMPs on additional existing roads, perhaps in cooperation with local governments, to reduce existing road sediment sources. Unless existing sediment sources are reduced, we believe there will be potential to further degrade 303(d) listed streams by transmission line and road construction.

Comment 881 We also encourage the DOE and MDEQ Major Facility Siting Act staff to contact MDEQ's TMDL Program staff to assure that the MDEQ Watershed Protection and TMDL staff consider the proposed project to be consistent with MDEQ's development TMDLs and Water Quality Plans for the applicable TMDL Planning Areas (contact Robert Ray of the MDEQ in Helena at 444-5319).

Comment 882 The DEIS states that there could be alterations to wetland hydrology, wetland plant communities and inadvertent filling of wetlands or sedimentation of wetlands, although no direct filling of wetlands is intended. We recommend that there be a strict prohibition of placement of transmission line pole structures in wetlands, rather than just avoiding placement in wetlands "wherever possible," and that a wetland buffer zone be used to avoid even inadvertent construction impacts to wetlands (e.g., 50 foot wetland buffer zone). We also recommend that wetlands be flagged on the ground to facilitate contractor avoidance and inadvertent wetland impacts. If any wetlands are to be impacted the extent of impacts should be more clearly estimated and disclosed. The final EIS should also more clearly identify and disclose probable wetland impacts, as well as the mitigation activities that would compensate for unavoidable impacts to wetlands.

Comment 883 In addition, we recommend that the FEIS include maps that identify locations of important migration corridors of birds and along with identified potential collision hazard areas. This will provide the public and the decision maker with a clear understanding of the locations where effects to avian species are likely to be the greatest; assist in selecting alignments that avoid avian flyways; and help focus identification of the mitigation measures needed to eliminate or reduce avian effects.

3

Response 878: Consistent with the requirements of CEQ's NEPA regulations, the final EIS identifies the agencies' preferred alternatives, and the agencies' Records of Decision will identify the environmentally preferable alternative and present the agencies' decisions and the basis for those decisions.

Response 879: If DEQ decides to issue a certificate for the proposed Project, all of the environmental protection measures identified in MATL's application would be incorporated into the DEQ certificate as requirements. Appendix F is a draft of the additional environmental specifications that DEQ could include as conditions.

Response 880: As stated in Section 3.5.3, the implementation of a storm water pollution prevention plan, avoidance of activities in flowing or standing water, and other measures to reduce sediment delivery to surface waters would effectively reduce short- and long-term risk of sedimentation from transmission line and access road construction to a minor adverse impact.

Response 881: The DEQ Watershed Protection staff and TMDL staff are aware of the proposed project.

Response 882: The commenter addressed this topic in greater detail in comments 896 to 904. See the responses to those comments and Vegetation, Wetland and Weed Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Response 883: See the discussion of Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Comment 884 Finally, the DEIS does not provide much information about the construction of the transmission line and new substation in Alberta, Canada or the proposed route of the Canadian transmission line. We recommend that the FEIS identify the agency responsible for construction of the transmission line in Canada, and a contact person with that agency, and provide a discussion of the applicability of Executive Order 12114 *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions* and *CEQ's Guidance on NEPA Analyses for Transboundary Effects, July 1, 1997* in regard to the proposed MATL transmission line (http://www.nepa.gov/nepa/regs/transguide.html). We believe additional information about project implementation in Canada and any significant environmental effects that may occur as a result should be provided in the FEIS.

Comment 885 The EPA's further discussion and more detailed questions, comments, and concerns regarding the analysis, documentation, or potential environmental impacts of the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. International Transmission Line DEIS are included in the enclosure with this letter. Based on the procedures EPA uses to evaluate the adequacy of the information and the potential environmental impacts of the proposed action and alternatives in an EIS, the DEIS has been rated as Category EC-2 (Environmental Concerns - Insufficient Information). A copy of EPA's rating criteria is attached. The EPA believes additional information is needed to fully assess and mitigate all potential impacts of the management actions.

The EPA appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the DEIS. If we may provide further explanation of our comments and concerns please contact Mr. Steve Potts of my staff in Helena at (406) 457-5022 or in Missoula at 406-329-3313, or via e-mail at potts.stephen@epa.gov . Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

for John F. Wardell,
Director
Montana Office

Enclosures
cc: w/ enclosures
Larry Svoboda/Julia Johnson, 8EPA-N, Denver
Robert Ray/Mark Kelley, MDEQ, Helena
Carol M. Borgstrom, DOE, Washington DC

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Response 884: In accordance with Executive Order 12114, the EIS does not assess impacts occurring in a foreign nation unless that foreign nation is not otherwise involved in the action. The portions discussing the Canadian part of the project were included for information only.

Response 885: The comment and rating have been noted.

EPA COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE MONTANA ALBERTA TIE (MATL) 230-KILOVOLT TRANSMISSION LINE

Brief Project Overview

Comment 886 The U.S. Dept. of Energy (DOE), Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability, and Montana Dept.of Environmental Quality prepared this EIS to evaluate impacts of a proposal to construct the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. (MATL) 230-kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line across the U.S. – Canada border in northcentral Montana. Originally DOE and MDEQ prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate this project which would require granting a Presidential Permit from DOE and a Major Facility Siting Act (MFSA) certificate of compliance from MDEQ. However, based on comments received on the EA relating to land use and potential effects on farming, it was determined that an EIS should be prepared.

The proposed project is an international 240/230-kV alternating current merchant (private) transmission line that would originate at an existing NorthWestern Energy (NWE) 230-kV switch yard near Rainbow Dam at Great Falls, Montana, and extend north to a new substation to be constructed northeast of Lethbridge, Alberta, crossing the U.S.-Canada international border north of Cut Bank, Montana. The total length of transmission line would be 203 miles, with approximately 126 miles constructed inside the U.S. The transmission line would be owned by MATL, a private Canadian corporation owned by Tonbridge Power. The proposed line would be part of the Western Interconnection (western grid), and a phase shifting transformer would be installed at the substation near Lethbridge to control the direction of power flows on the line. The MATL application for certification described the following purpose and need:

> *The Project would be the United States' first power transmission interconnection with Alberta and is expected to facilitate development of additional sources of generation (e.g., windfarms both in northern Montana, and southern Alberta), and improve transmission system reliability in Montana, Alberta, and on a regional basis in both the U.S. and Canada. In addition, the Project would promote increased trade in electrical energy across the international border, and provide a transmission route to balance energy surplus/shortage situations in an efficient and economic manner.*

Comment 887 The line would directly connect Montana and Alberta's regional operating transmission systems, and would allow power to flow directly between these two systems where there is no current connection. The proposed transmission line would have the capacity to carry up to 300 MW north and 300 MW south for a total capacity of up to 600 MW. However, due to constraints on the current system where MATL would tie in at Great Falls, the full capacity of 300 MW to the south would not be realized unless additional upgrades are made.

The proposed new transmission line could support a modest increase of new electricity generators, such as wind, in the study area by connecting them to regional grids and thus

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Response 886: Note that the first document published by DEQ and DOE for the MATL project (in March 2007) was a DEQ Draft EIS under the Montana Environmental Policy Act and a DOE Draft EA under NEPA. The second document, published in February 2008, was a supplement to the DEQ Draft EIS and a DOE Draft EIS. See page 1-1 of the EIS.

Response 887: There may be non-firm space available to prospective shippers south of Great Falls without additional upgrades. If the permitted and queued generation plants are not all constructed in the Great Falls area, non-firm space may be available south or west out of Great Falls. If all the planned and permitted generation in the Great Falls area and north of Great Falls was constructed and prospective shippers sought firm transmission rights, existing lines might have to be upgraded or additional lines might be required. Also see the discussion of Line Capacity Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

potentially to electricity markets. A connection could provide access to markets for new wind generation facilities in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line and improve transmission access to markets seeking new energy resources. Additional transmission capacity is needed for the viability of new energy generation enterprises, and added capacity from this proposed transmission line could support a modest increase in new power generation in Montana, including wind energy. The region of Montana to be crossed by the proposed transmission line has a high potential for development of wind resources.

The proposed tie line between Montana and Alberta, may also result in benefits to transmission system operators whose service areas include Montana and to utilities that provide transmission service within the state. A modified transmission system could provide more options for power routing within Montana, increase energy transactions between Montana and Alberta, and allow for easier balancing of energy surpluses and shortages within and between balancing authority areas. Because tie lines are able to connect with adjacent electric systems, different generation resources can combine to provide a level of reliability that one jurisdiction could not otherwise afford if that jurisdiction had to cover the same resources independently. 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.

Comment 888

Four alternatives have been evaluated including No Action (Alternative1). Alternative 2 is MATL's proposed project to construct and operate a 129.9 mile long, 230-kV merchant transmission line between Great Falls, Montana, and Lethbridge, Alberta. The proposed alignment would have an operational ROW width of 45 feet with an additional 30 feet on either side to create a 105-foot safety zone. The line would extend from the expanded 230-kV Great Falls switch yard north of Great Falls to a proposed new substation south of Cut Bank, and then north to the Montana-Canada border at the western edge of the Red Creek Oil Field. Monopole structures would be used on 53 miles of the line where it would cross cropland and Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land diagonally. H-frame structures would be used for the remainder of this alternative. Costs are estimated to be $40.6 million with mitigation.

Alternative 3 is a modified MATL alignment B proposal for a 121.6 mile transmission line that would be similar to Alternative 2 in width of the ROW, types of access roads, and other features., but the alignment would generally parallel an existing 115-kV transmission line along the entire route from the Great Falls switch yard to a substation near Cut Bank and use only H-frame structures. Alternative 3 was developed by MATL in response to a single siting criterion under MFSA that gives consideration to paralleling existing utility corridors (Circular MFSA-2). This alternative alignment was not intended to address potential land use issues or maintenance issues but is the shortest and potentially the least costly alternative under consideration. Costs are estimated to be $36.3 million with mitigation.

Alternative 4 was developed by the DEQ to address public concerns regarding line interference with farming activities and close proximity to residences. Alternative 4 would be 139.6 miles long and would be similar to Alternative 2 in that width of the ROW and other features, but would incorporate a higher degree of environmental protection than either

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Response 888: While it is correct that NorthWestern Energy would have an opportunity to obtain regulating reserves through the MATL line, there is no guarantee that it would use the line for this purpose. NorthWestern recently announced plans to construct a gas-fired generation plant near Anaconda to help satisfy its need for regulating reserves.

Alternative 2 or 3 since it would employ DEQ's draft Environmental Specifications. The Alternative 4 alignment would use portions of the Alternative 2 alignment from north of Conrad to the Montana-Alberta border. In other areas it would maximize the use of range and pasture land, where available. Where cultivated land would be crossed, it would generally be located along field or strip boundaries. Alternative 4 would require the use of monopole structures on all 88.9 miles of cropland and CRP land, not just where cropland and CRP land are crossed on the diagonal as in Alternative 2. Although Alternative 4 is analyzed as a whole, the agencies could select some or all parts of this alternative or other realignments. Costs are estimated to be $44.9 million with mitigation . MATL has stated that if Alternative 4 is selected, the project would be unlikely to be built since it would have difficulties obtaining adequate financing for the project due to additional costs and delays. Comment 889

Comments:

1. a Thank you for providing clear maps and aerial photos showing the various transmission line alignment options, (Figures 2.3-1 to 2.7-3). We also appreciate the inclusion of Table 2.3-4 showing MATL's proposed environmental protection measures (page 2-20), and Appendix F showing MDEQ's revised environmental specifications, as well as Table S-2 providing an alternatives matrix that compares resource impacts of the alternatives (pages S-26 to S-44). Comment 890

   b The Appendix F environmental specifications protection measures are detailed and comprehensive. We support utilization of these environmental specifications and environmental protection measures to avoid or reduce the intensity and duration of impacts to the environment. We encourage use of the most comprehensive set of environmental protection measures using the most protective measures from both MATL's and MDEQ's lists.

   c These maps, photos, and tables facilitate improved project understanding, help define issues, and assist in evaluation of alternatives providing a clearer basis of choice among options for the decisionmaker and the public in accordance with the goals of NEPA.

2. The EPA does not object to the proposed construction and operation of the MATL 230-kV transmission line from Great Falls, Montana into Alberta, Canada. Although, we recommend that the many environmental, social and economic tradeoffs may be better balanced and optimized with creation of a new modified preferred alternative that would use the better features from the existing action alternatives. We recommend the DOE and MDEQ consider construction of a new modified alternative that would better optimize the many environmental, social and economic trade-offs for this project (i.e., trade-offs in impacts to farm operations and residences, soil erosion during construction, water quality and wetland impacts, impacts to birds and wildlife habitat, costs, etc.). Comment 891 Comment 892

   Comment 893 The intent should be to address project purpose and need and the significant issues while minimizing adverse environmental impacts. Additional alternatives evaluation in the FEIS may also better explain to the public the many trade-offs involved in making

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Response 889: Comments noted.

Response 890: Note that Appendix F has been revised to include additional environmental protection measures that DEQ could require.

Response 891 to 893: It is the opinion of the agencies that a full spectrum of reasonable alternatives was considered, including Alternative 4, which attempted to accommodate both the transmission line and existing land uses. Also see the response to comment 875.

transmission line decisions. This may also lead to improved public acceptance of decisions. In general desirable features we consider worthy of including in a new modified preferred alternative include:

- minimize soil disturbance and soil erosion by selecting alignments on less erosive soils and that reduce the extent of ground disturbance as much as possible;
- use monopoles rather than H-frame structures wherever possible to reduce soil disturbance and impacts to farm operations;
- incorporate appropriate construction sediment and erosion control methods and BMPs, as well as weed prevention and control measures during construction;
- minimize new access roads and new road construction, and locate any new roads that may be needed where they have minimal impacts, away from rivers, streams and wetlands;
- minimize stream and lake crossings, and disturbances of wetlands and riparian areas;
- minimize disturbances to sensitive wildlife habitat, and use appropriate mitigation measures to reduce wildlife impacts, particularly transmission line mortality to birds;
- minimize adverse impacts to farm operations and residences;
- minimize fragmentation of open landscapes from a scenic standpoint, and use topographical features to help screen the transmission poles as much as possible;
- consider costs of construction and operation.

Comment 894 We note of course that the MDEQ and DOE will need to evaluate and analyze the impacts of any new modified alternative, and display those impacts in the FEIS.

Comment 895 We also want to state that Alternative 3 appears to have the shortest transmission line alignment (121.6 miles) with the fewest stream and lake crossings (12), fewest acres of wetlands within the 500 foot alignment (62.3 acres), and least amount of construction ground disturbance (206 acres); while Alternative 4 has the longest transmission line (139.6 miles) with greatest number of stream and lake crossings (19), greatest potential wetland impact (76.4 acres), and greatest ground disturbance (240 acres), although Alternative 4 would reduce impacts to farm operations. Alternative 2 would be 129.9 miles long with 14 stream and lake crossings (Table 3.5-1, page 3-63), and 76.4 acres of potential wetlands impacts, and 214 acres of ground disturbance (page 3-90). It appears to us that Alternative 3 would have fewer environmental impacts than the other action alternatives.

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Response 894: Alternatives 2, 3, and 4 together with local routing options bracket the range of possible agency actions. Portions of these alternatives may be combined in the agencies' decisions. Since the publication of the Draft EIS, MATL has revised its application to include additional provisions to reduce some potential impacts. Also, MATL and DEQ worked with local land owners to modify some local routing options to reduce potential adverse effects on farming activities. The Final EIS presents the impacts of these revisions to the proposal and the modified local routing options.

Response 895: See the response to comment 876. Alternative 3 crosses more land diagonally than any other alternative alignment, so it would have the greatest potential for interference with farming activities. Also, because of its location adjacent to NorthWestern's Great Falls to Cut Bank line, it could place two sets of structures near each other, which would further complicate farming operations.

Comment 896 We recognize that there are many considerations and trade-offs involved in evaluating the transmission line alternatives, but we want to emphasize our interest in seeing that minimization of environmental impacts is considered to be an important criterion in the decision making process. We encourage efforts to support reductions in soil, water, wetlands, fisheries and wildlife impacts of the alternative alignments when evaluating the many project trade-offs.

Comment 897 We also believe that the FEIS and Record of Decision (ROD) should clearly explain the process and underlying rationale for the selection of the Preferred Alternative, and the environmentally preferred alternative should be identified in the ROD [40 CFR 1505.2(b)].

3. Comment 898 We are pleased that the DEIS states that MATL anticipates only minimum development of new access roads to construct, operate, and maintain the proposed transmission line (page 2-15). Construction of access roads is an important aspect of the project, since road construction and road operation and maintenance can result in adverse effects to water quality and other resources. Sediment from roads, particularly during road construction and reconstruction, and from poorly maintained roads with inadequate road drainage, is often a major cause of adverse water quality impacts, particularly where roads are near streams and there are many stream crossings.

Comment 899 It will be important for MATL, MDEQ and DOE to minimize new road construction, as well as to properly plan and design access roads, and to properly maintain roads and utilize adequate sediment and erosion control BMPs during road construction to minimize erosion and reduce sediment production and transport from roads.

Comment 900 Table 2.3-2 (page 2-13) estimates 3, 5, and 7 miles of new access road construction with Alternatives 2, 3 and 4, respectively. We did not see clear disclosure of the number of the number of road stream crossings associated with the proposed new access roads. The number of new road stream crossings for new access roads should be disclosed for each alternative in the FEIS. We also suggest that MATL, DOE and MDEQ review and consider our general recommendations regarding road construction in regard to new access roads, which are:

* minimize road construction and reduce road density as much as possible to reduce potential adverse effects to watersheds;

* locate roads away from streams and riparian areas as much as possible;

* locate roads away from steep slopes or erosive soils;

* minimize the number of road stream crossings;

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Response 896 and 897: Comments noted.

Responses 898 to 901: Only minimum development of new access roads is anticipated for any of the alternative alignments. Few graded surface access roads are planned or anticipated, and no new culverts, bridges, or other constructed stream crossings are expected to be needed. The majority of the right-of-way for the alternative transmission line alignments can be easily accessed from public roads, existing two track roads, and farm fields allowing truck and equipment travel. The study area is relatively flat, and most construction equipment for a line of this size can move cross country on side slopes of up to about 5 percent.

MFSA rules define a road as "… a way or course that is constructed or formed by substantial recontouring of land, clearing, or other action designed to be permanent or intended to permit passage by most four-wheeled vehicles for a significant period of time." MATL's application identifies several areas where road construction could be necessary. Specifically, the application identifies sites north and south of the proposed transmission line's crossings of the Teton and Marias rivers as places where grading and recontouring might be required to provide access to construct the reinforced structures needed to span these valleys. (All alternative alignments would cross both of these rivers.) Prior to construction these areas would be reviewed in the field to assure that there would be no unnecessary disturbance. There are other areas where there would be cross country travel with no road blading.

Sites of structures and roads would be chosen to avoid surface streams and 100-year floodplains. Areas judged to have significant constraints on effective reclamation would also be avoided to the extent possible.

* stabilize cut and fill slopes;

* provide for adequate road drainage and control of surface erosion with measures such as adequate numbers of waterbars, maintaining crowns on roads, adequate numbers of rolling dips and ditch relief culverts to promote drainage off roads avoid drainage or along roads and avoid interception and routing sediment to streams;

* consider road effects on stream structure and seasonal and fish spawning habitats;

* allow for adequate large woody debris recruitment to streams and riparian buffers near streams;

* properly size culverts to handle flood events, pass bedload and woody debris, and reduce potential for washout;

* replace undersized culverts and adjust culverts which are not properly aligned or which present fish passage problems and/or serve as barriers to fish migration;

* use bridges or open bottom culverts that simulate stream grade and substrate and that provide adequate capacity for flood flows, bedload and woody debris where needed to minimize adverse fisheries effects of road stream crossings.

Comment 901 We also encourage conduct of inspections and evaluations to identify conditions on roads that may cause or contribute to sediment delivery and stream impairment, and to correct road conditions impacting streams. It is important that road maintenance (e.g., blading) be focused on reducing road surface erosion and sediment delivery from roads to area streams. Grading (blading) of unpaved roads in a manner that contributes to road erosion and sediment transport to streams and wetlands should be avoided. Practices of expediently sidecasting graded material over the shoulder and widening shoulders and snow plowing can have adverse effects upon streams, wetlands, and riparian areas that are adjacent to roads. Road use during spring breakup conditions should also be avoided to limit runoff created road ruts during late winter thaws that increase road erosion (i.e., ruts channel road runoff along roads).

Comment 902 We also recommend that MATL and its road contractors and the agencies review road design and maintenance training videos available from the Forest Service San Dimas Technology and Development Center for use by road contractors (e.g., "Forest Roads and the Environment"-an overview of how maintenance can affect watershed condition and fish habitat; "Reading the Traveled Way" -how road conditions create problems and how to identify effective treatments; "Reading Beyond the Traveled Way"-explains considerations of roads vs. natural landscape functions and how to design maintenance to minimize road impacts; "Smoothing and Reshaping the Traveled Way"-step by step process for smoothing and reshaping a road while maintaining crowns and other road slopes; and "Maintaining the Ditch and Surface Cross Drains"-instructions for constructing and maintaining ditches, culverts and surface cross drains;

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Additionally, DEQ's draft environmental specifications (Appendix F) would require (if adopted) that roads be designed to prevent channeling of runoff. Areas of new road construction would be reviewed and inspected in the field prior to construction to assure that there would be no unnecessary disturbance. State inspections would also take place during construction of new roads. Any construction on the bed and banks of a perennial stream would require state inspection.

Following construction, MATL would retain some key access roads to maintain access to the right-of-way for routine operations and maintenance activities, but most access roads would be restored to pre-existing conditions. Reclamation of temporary roads built for use during project construction would be done in coordination with landowners and appropriate agencies. Long-term road maintenance would be minimal.

Response 902: MATL was provided a copy of your letter so that company personnel might see your suggestions.

http://www.fs.fed.us/eng/techdev/sdtdc.htm , contact Greg Napper, at 909-599-1267 x 290).

4. Comment 903 As you know, there can be public health concerns regarding electric fields created by a high-voltage transmission lines, since electromagnetic fields (EMF) field effects can include induced currents, steady-state current shocks, spark discharge shocks, and in some cases field perception and neurobehavioral responses. We appreciate the analysis and discussion regarding potential health and environmental effects associated with electromagnetic fields induced by the transmission line (Section 3.4). We are pleased that this DEIS analysis predicts that the level of electromagnetic fields will be below the standard and within the biologically based recommendations (page 3-50).

5. Comment 904 Thank you for providing Figure 3.5-1 showing watersheds intersecting the study area (page 3-58), and Figure 3.5-2 (page 3-60) showing water quality impaired streams that may be crossed by the transmission line (i.e., Old Maids Coulee -an intermittent stream, Pondera Coulee, Cut Bank Creek, Marias River, Teton River, Lake Creek, the Missouri River, and Benton Lake). A Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Water Quality Plan will need to be prepared for all impaired streams listed by the State of Montana under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act to promote water quality restoration. It will be important that the proposed MATL transmission line project be consistent with the MDEQ's preparation of TMDLs and Water Quality Plans for impaired waters.

Consistency with a TMDL that has not yet been completed means that any additional degradation of the impaired water (i.e., pollutant increase) should be avoided and if pollutants may be generated that would enter impaired waters during project activities (e.g., sediment), mitigation or restoration activities should also be included in the project to reduce pollutant sources to offset or compensate for pollutants generated during project activities. Recognizing uncertainties and desiring a margin of safety, such compensation should more than offset pollutants generated, resulting in overall reductions in pollution. Watershed restoration activities that compensate for pollutant production during management activities in watersheds of 303(d) listed streams should be included in such projects, and restoration activities should be implemented within a reasonable period of time in relation to pollutant producing activities (e.g., within 5 years).

The aforementioned MATL environmental protection measures and MDEQ environmental specifications, including preparation of an Erosion Control Plan (page 2-20) and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP, page 2-22) appear to address the need to use adequate BMPs and erosion and sediment control measures during and following construction. The State contact for construction storm water permitting activities is Brian Heckenberger of the Montana DEQ at 406-444-5310. These mitigation activities should reduce or minimize erosion and sediment production and transport during construction, however, even with use of BMPs it is likely that some additional pollutant (sediment) delivery to 303(d) listed streams may still occur.

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Response 903: Comment noted.

Response 904: Because sites of structures and roads would be chosen to avoid surface streams and because Best Management Practices would be used to minimize construction site erosion and sedimentation, impacts to surface streams are expected to be negligible. Erosion Control Plans and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plans would be developed and implemented, as recommended. The DEQ Watershed Protection staff and TMDL staff are aware of the proposed project. Additional measures aimed at reducing sediment from other sources are voluntary actions MATL may undertake if these measures cannot be required in another water quality permit. At this time it appears that the line could be constructed without any specific permits. Also see Legal and Regulatory Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

We believe the FEIS should identify and discuss watershed restoration activities to control other existing sediment sources in order to provide compensation for the sediment production and transport associated with transmission line and road construction activities for 303(d) listed streams (e.g., stabilize existing eroding banks; improve/install BMPs on additional existing roads perhaps in cooperation with local governments to reduce existing road sediment sources). Activities to control and reduce existing sediment sources are needed to provide full assurance that no further degradation occurs to 303(d) listed streams during transmission line and road construction, since a small amount of sediment transport is still likely to occur even with use of BMPs during transmission line and road construction. Unless existing sediment sources are reduced, 303(d) listed streams will be further degraded by transmission line and road construction.

We also encourage the DOE and MDEQ Major Facility Siting Act staff to contact MDEQ's TMDL Program staff to assure that the MDEQ Watershed Protection and TMDL staff consider the proposed project to be consistent with MDEQ's development TMDLs and Water Quality Plans for the applicable TMDL Planning Areas (contact Robert Ray of the MDEQ in Helena at 444-5319).

6. Comment 905 EPA considers the protection, improvement, and restoration of riparian areas and wetlands to be a high priority. Wetlands and riparian areas increase landscape and species diversity, support many species of western wildlife, and are critical to the protection of water quality and designated beneficial water uses. Potential impacts on riparian areas and wetlands include: water quality, habitat for aquatic and terrestrial life, flood storage, ground water recharge and discharge, sources of primary production, and recreation and aesthetics.

Executive Order 11990 requires that Federal Agencies *"take action to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out the agency's responsibilities..."* and agencies are further directed to *"avoid undertaking or providing assistance for new construction located in wetlands unless the head of the agency finds (1) that there is no practicable alternative to such construction, and (2) that the proposed action includes all practicable measures to minimize harm to wetlands which may result from such use..."*. In addition national wetlands policy has established an interim goal of **No Overall Net Loss of the Nation's remaining wetlands**, and a long-term goal of increasing quantity and quality of the Nation's wetlands resource base.

We are pleased that impacts to wetlands, riparian areas and floodplains are discussed (Section 3.6), and that wherever possible placement of new structures constructed and associated construction activities would occur outside wetland areas (pages 2-23, 3-8). Although we would rather see a strict prohibition on placing new structures and access roads in wetland areas, rather than just doing this "wherever possible." We would like to see wetland and riparian areas fully spanned to avoid any direct impacts. We also support the MDEQ environmental specification to delineate wetlands along the selected alignment (page 3-81), and further recommend that wetland areas along the ROW be

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Response 905 to 913: The agencies agree that the protection, improvement, and restoration of riparian areas and wetlands are high priorities.

MATL has stated that its goal is to avoid impacts to wetlands by avoiding placement of any structure within a jurisdictional wetland. MATL would use construction buffers to eliminate any and all, including inadvertent, impacts to wetlands or other waters of the United States. It is currently expected that the project could be completed without any direct disturbances to streams and wetlands. Thus, no compensatory mitigation would be needed. If, however, any disturbance were found to be unavoidable, the applicant would be required to comply with all applicable regulatory requirements. If, during construction, a site specific wetland impact issue arises, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers would be contacted to assure compliance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Additional mitigation measures to help minimize the potential unavoidable construction-related impacts to wetlands would then be required for MATL and their construction contractors under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Nationwide #12 Permit (Utilities Line Activities).

If work in streams or wetlands is necessary, the measures listed in sections 2.11.5, 2.11.6, and 2.11.9 of the revised draft Environmental Specifications in Appendix F would become conditions to the Certificate of Compliance if it is approved. In addition, if DOE grants the Presidential permit, it may place any conditions in the permit that it deems necessary and appropriate to protect the public interest. DOE has typically placed conditions in Presidential permits that require the permittee to employ the mitigation measures identified in the NEPA document and that formed the basis of any impact analysis.

Under MFSA rules applicants are required to identify wetlands greater than 20 acres in size (Circular MFSA-2, Section 3.4(1)(u)). This size was selected to recognize that smaller wetlands can usually be spanned. Under MFSA no other local permits are required after a certificate has been issued. Therefore, DEQ's Environmental Specifications would require on-site inspections of perennial stream crossings prior to the start of construction. If no in-stream activities would be required, then no 310 permit is necessary.

The numerical values in the EIS for areas of wetlands crossed include all wetlands within a 500-ft-wide corridor. These numbers overstate the potential impact because they include areas that would not be included in the narrower 105-foot right-of-way in which the project would be built. Although Alternative 4 would cross the largest area of wetlands, it would cross the least area of wetlands associated with lakes.

The very few sites with riparian vegetation in the study area are located low in drainages adjacent to wetlands and streams. Transmission line structures are usually located at high points or in uplands making it possible to span wetlands and riparian areas. If a wetland could not be spanned by the transmission line, compensation or other mitigation would be required. It is, however, unlikely that any wetlands or riparian areas could not be spanned, except for one angle structure in Black Horse Lake under Alternative 2.

The draft Environmental Specifications (Appendix F) have been revised; they would (if adopted), require delineation of wetlands within 250 feet of the approved location, prohibit access through wetlands, and require that all wetlands be spanned. Additionally, the agencies are considering requiring a 50-foot buffer zone around wetlands within which no disturbance would be allowed, and the draft Environmental Specifications have been revised to include this possible requirement.

flagged on the ground to facilitate wetland avoidance and "inadvertent" impacts by the contractor during construction.

Comment 906 It will be important to obtain appropriate State, local and Federal permits and authorizations for conduct of construction work in or near streams and wetlands (e.g., Section 318 short term turbidity exceedance authorization, 310 or 124 permits, MPDES Stormwater permits, Corps of Engineers 404 permit, etc.). As you know discharges of fill material into wetlands and other waters of the United States are regulated by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, 33 U.S.C. 1344, which is administered jointly by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and EPA. It is important that MATL and the DOE and MDEQ consult with the Corps of Engineers in regard to 404 permit requirements for construction activities in or near streams or wetlands, (e.g., contact Mr. Allan Steinle of Corps of Engineers Montana Office in Helena at 406-441-1375). The 404(b)(1) Guidelines (found at 40 CFR Part 230) provide the environmental criteria by which 404 permits are evaluated. See Corps of Engineers Montana Regulatory Office website for further information, https://www.nwo.usace.army.mil/html/od-rmt/mthome.htm .

The DEIS states that there could be alterations to wetland hydrology, wetland plant communities and filling of wetlands or sedimentation of wetlands (page 3-74), although no direct filling of wetlands is intended. The DEIS suggests that wetland impacts would be minor and of short duration (page 3-76). Presently the DEIS identifies wetland acreage within the 500 foot ROW, but the estimated acreage of wetlands to be filled or altered is not clearly identified. It is stated that construction activities adjacent to wetlands could inadvertently result in disturbance to wetlands. We recommend that a wetland buffer zone be applied to avoid even inadvertent construction impacts to wetlands (e.g., 50 foot wetland buffer zone). Comment 907

Comment 908 If construction buffer zones that avoid even inadvertent impacts to wetlands are not used the impacts to wetlands should be quantified as much as possible. The FEIS should either include a requirement for wetland buffers to achieve no impacts, or clearer identification and quantification of the "inadvertent" impacts to wetlands should be provided. We suggest that a table be provided in the FEIS showing the acreage of wetlands likely to be impacted by the project alternatives, along with a discussion of the associated wetland functions and values that may be impacted.

Comment 909 If it appears that wetland impacts are more significant, and particularly if there are significant wetland and/or river and stream dredge and fill impacts, we generally recommend that a 404(b)(1) analysis be included as an Appendix to the FEIS, since inclusion of a draft 404(b)(1) analysis helps assure that 404 permit requirements are properly integrated into the NEPA process in accordance with 40 CFR 1500.2(c).

Comment 910 Section 404 Dredge and Fill Permit rules/policies require that adverse impacts to aquatic resources be avoided and minimized as much as possible, and that unavoidable impacts to wetlands be compensated for. If there will be impacts to wetlands including "inadvertent filling" these impacts should be mitigated via wetlands restoration/creation/enhancement

to compensate for wetlands impacted by transmission line and/or road construction to assure that there will be no net loss of wetlands as a result of the proposed project. The goal of wetland mitigation should be to replace the functions and values of impacted wetlands in areas adjacent to or as close as possible to the area of wetlands loss. Wetland restoration is preferred to wetland creation or enhancement because restoration has a higher rate of success.

Comment 911 EPA/Corps policy has accepted acre-for-acre replacement of wetlands as a surrogate for replacement of functions and values when there is a lack of definitive information on functions and values, although adjustments may be necessary to reflect the expected degree of success of mitigation, and provide an adequate margin of safety to reflect anticipated success (i.e., greater than acre-for-acre replacement is suggested when impacted wetlands have high function & value and likelihood of replacement of functions is low). Traditional mitigation is often not successful in fully restoring wetland function, and 2:1 or higher mitigation ratios are sometimes required to mitigate wetlands impacts. Construction/enhancement of wetlands to compensate for impacted wetlands should occur in advance or concurrent with activities causing wetlands impacts to reduce temporal losses of wetland functions.

Comment 912 If a project has significant wetland impacts we also generally recommend that a Wetland Mitigation Plan be prepared to assure that adequate replacement of lost wetland functions and values occurs. This mitigation plan should include consideration of direct, indirect, and cumulative effects. It should contain a statement of goals, a monitoring plan, long-term management/protection objectives and a contingency plan (a commitment to conduct additional work if required to meet the goals of the plan). The mitigation plan should also include best management practices and mitigation measures that will manage stormwater runoff from roadways before it reaches wetlands, streams and other aquatic habitats. In general, wetlands, including mitigation wetlands, should not be used for treatment of stormwater. This Plan should be approved by the appropriate agencies before implementation of the proposed project.

Comment 913 The final EIS should more clearly identify and disclose probable wetland impacts, as well as the mitigation activities that would compensate for unavoidable impacts to wetlands. This information could be provided in the narrative of the EIS or in the 404(b)(1) analysis appended to the EIS. This may be most necessary for Alternative 4 that is stated to have the highest potential for wetland impacts (page 3-77).

7. Comment 914 As you know construction activities that involve soil disturbance create conditions favoring the spread of noxious weeds. We support use of noxious weed mitigation and control methods during transmission line construction, since many noxious weeds can out-compete native plants and produce a monoculture that has little or no plant species diversity or benefit to wildlife. We are pleased that the MATL and MDEQ environmental measures include measure to limit and control weeds along the transmission line ROW, and that a MATL integrated weed control plan would be prepared, and that MATL would report annually on the condition and progress of weed

Responses 914 to 922: Within the right-of-way MATL would be responsible for controlling weeds due to the company's activities. The provisions of MATL's proposed integrated weed control program, which is mentioned in the comment, would be incorporated into the DEQ certificate. MATL's proposed weed control plan includes the suggested practice of requiring washing of vehicles and construction equipment before entering the right-of-way area to reduce the spread of noxious weeds.

The agencies have considered the recommendation for use of gates on access roads. However, much of the land that would be traversed by the proposed line is flat and unfenced. Adding a gate across a road where there is no fence would have little mitigation value. Where fences exist, MATL would be required to consult with the landowner and where requested by the landowner, all fences crossed by permanent access roads would be provided with a gate (Appendix F, Section 2.5.7). Where gates are not requested, the existing fence would be replaced to prevent unauthorized access (Appendix F, Section 2.5.4).

Spraying of target weed species would be done in coordination with the BLM, state weed coordinator, and county weed boards and groups (see Appendix C – MATL Noxious Weed Control Plan, and Appendix F – Revised draft DEQ Environmental Specifications). As noted in the comment, MATL would be required to use Montana licensed applicators. All use of herbicides, pesticides, or other toxicants would be required to be done in accordance with Federal label instructions and restrictions. Adherence to label requirements against using certain herbicides near surface waters should make it unnecessary to require a 50-foot buffer around streams and wetlands within which no spraying would be allowed.

The recommendations provided in the comments regarding picloram (Tordon), including application rate, number of applications per year, and restrictions on application around roadside drainage areas leading to intermittent and perennial streams are noted.

Also see Vegetation, Wetland and Weed Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

control efforts (page 3-91).

Comment 915 We note that while the MDEQ measures generally appear to be more detailed and comprehensive than the MATL measures (Table 2.3-4), the MATL measures identify the need to wash vehicles and construction equipment before entering the transmission line ROW to reduce spread of weed seeds. We support this measure did not see it in the MDEQ environmental specifications. We recommend careful review of the MATL measures in comparison to the MDEQ measure to assure that the most comprehensive and effective set of environmental protection measures are used.

Comment 916 Weed prevention is the most cost-effective way to manage and control weeds by avoiding new infestations and spread of weeds, and thus, avoiding the need for subsequent weed treatments (e.g., weed prevention practices such as minimizing ground disturbance, revegetating disturbed areas, use of weed free seed, cleaning vehicles and equipment, and other practices that prevent infestation and spread of weeds). Early recognition and control of new infestations avoids wider future use of herbicides and other control methods. We also support use of gates on access roads to discourage ATV/recreational vehicle travel on these roads, since such motorized uses disturb soil, create weed seedbeds, and disperse weed seeds.

Comment 917 We appreciate the recognition in the MDEQ environmental specifications of the need to use certified herbicide applicators, and to use herbicides in accordance with label specifications, and to be cautious in spraying near streams and wetlands with use of no spray buffer zones along streams and wetlands. Herbicide drift into streams and wetlands could adversely affect aquatic life and wetland functions such as food chain support and habitat for wetland species.

We recommend use of 50 feet no spray buffer zones adjacent to streams and wetlands, and mechanical weed removal or hand-pulling of weeds adjacent to aquatic areas. Hand-pulling can be effective for weeds that do not contain extensive root systems near surface waters. It may be helpful to add a list of those weed species which can be effectively hand-pulled (i.e. those without large tap roots and spreading rhizomatous root systems). The herbicide application technique of hand or manual wipe-on (especially applicable for contact systemic herbicides such as glyphosate) is an option to control individual weed plants up to the existing water level adjacent to streams or sensitive aquatic sites.

Herbicides should be applied at the lowest rate effective in meeting weed control objectives and according to guidelines for protecting public health and the environment. All efforts should be made to avoid movement or transport of herbicides into surface waters that could adversely affect public health, fisheries or other water uses. The Montana Water Quality Standards include a general narrative standard requiring surface waters to *be free from substances that create concentrations which are toxic or harmful to aquatic life.*

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Comment 918 It is important that the water contamination concerns of herbicide usage be fully evaluated and mitigated. All efforts should be made to avoid movement or transport of herbicides into surface waters that could adversely affect fisheries or other water uses. Herbicides, pesticides, and other toxicants and chemicals must be used in a safe manner in accordance with Federal label instructions and restrictions that allow protection and maintenance of water quality standards and ecological integrity, and avoid public health and safety problems.

Comment 919 Herbicide applicators should be advised of the potential for runoff of herbicides at toxic concentrations into the streams. The applicators should take precautions during spraying (e.g., applying herbicide only after careful review of weather reports to ensure minimal likelihood of rainfall within 24 hours of spraying; special precautions adjacent to the stream to reduce runoff potential; etc.). It should be unequivocally stated that no herbicide spraying will occur in streams and wetlands or other aquatic areas (seeps, springs, etc.). Streams and wetlands in any area to be sprayed be identified and flagged on the ground to assure that herbicide applicators are aware of the location of wetlands, and thus, can avoid spraying in or near wetlands.

Comment 920 We are particularly concerned about potential use of more toxic and persistent herbicides such as picloram (Tordon), since they have higher potential for more serious stream and/or groundwater contamination. We recommend that roadside drainage areas leading to intermittent and perennial streams be flagged as no-spray zones and not sprayed with picloram based herbicides. We also recommend that picloram not be used at rates greater than 0.25 lbs/acre, and suggest that MATL and the agencies consider applications of persistent herbicides such as picloram only once per year.to reduce potential for accumulation in soil. Potential for persistant herbicides to accumulate in soil in harmful amounts are reduced if sites are treated only once per year (twice being the limit). Trade-offs between effective weed control and effects on soil productivity and leaching concerns may need to be considered. A second treatment application if needed should only occur after 30 days (or according to label directions).

Comment 921 For your information, Dow AgroSciences, the manufacturer of Tordon 22K, has recently developed supplemental labeling for Tordon 22K for areas west of the Mississippi River. They have directions for wick or carpet roller applications. Tordon 22K herbicide can be applied using wick or carpet roller equipment where drift presents a hazard to susceptible crops, surface waters, and other sensitive areas. One part Tordon 22K is mixed with 2 parts water to prepare a 33% solution. The wick method of application is more labor intensive but very effective at targeting particular noxious weeds adjacent to surface waters, wetlands, or protected plants.

Comment 922 Most picloram products, including Tordon 22K, are Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs) requiring pesticide applicator certification to purchase and apply. It is important that herbicide applicators be certified throughout the duration of the project. If commercial applicators will be contracted for RUP applications, we recommend checking to make sure their MT commercial RUP license is current. Please contact Montana Dept. of

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Agriculture at (406) 444-5400 for more information. Also, please note that registration for Access (which has picloram as an active ingredient) is cancelled.

For your information, the website for EPA information regarding pesticides and herbicides is http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/ . The National Pesticide Telecommunication Network (NPTN) website at http://nptn.orst.edu/tech.htm which operates under a cooperative agreement with EPA and Oregon State University and has a wealth of information on toxicity, mobility, and environmental fate on pesticides which may be helpful (phone number 800-858-7378).

8. Comment 923 As you know transmission lines can result in avian mortality particularly due to bird collisions with the transmission line. We are pleased that the DEIS states that areas with a higher likelihood of collisions, known flyways, would be avoided (Page 3-107). It would be of interest to identify in the FEIS the known avian flyways that will be avoided. We recommend that the FEIS include maps that identify locations of important migration corridors of birds and along with identified potential collision hazard areas. This will provide the public and the decision maker with a clear understanding of the locations where effects to avian species are likely to be the greatest, and assist in selecting alignments that avoid flyways, and help focus the identification and evaluation of mitigation measures needed to eliminate or reduce avian effects.

Comment 924 We are pleased that MATL would apply. *"Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006"* developed by the EEI, APLIC and the California Energy Commission (2006), during design and construction of overhead structures and the substation additions; and that avian collisions would be reduced as approved line marking devices would be installed, at intervals suggested by manufacturer's recommendations, on overhead ground wires within all stream, river and wetland crossings, such as crossings of the Marias River, the Dry Fork Marias River, Teton River, east of the Benton Lake NWR boundary and within a ½ mile of the refuge boundary. Line marking devices would also be placed within a ¼ mile buffer on either side of streams, rivers, or wetlands.

In addition, the DEIS states that annual mortality surveys would be conducted to ensure that line marking devices are functioning properly. We recommend that the field surveys be conducted during the spring and fall migratory periods and the spring nesting period to locate birds which have been electrocuted or have struck transmission lines to aid in the process of identifying and modifying problem areas.

9. Comment 925 The DEIS indicates that the proposed action would result in an increase in activities that could adversely affect air quality during construction (short term), and during operation and maintenance of the transmission line (long term) (page 3-136). The DEIS does not report any air quality non-attainment areas along the alternative alignments, and states that Federal/State air quality Class I areas located within 100 miles of the project area include Scapegoat Wilderness (50 miles west), Bob Marshall Wilderness (50 miles west),Glacier National Park (40 miles west), and Gates of the Mountains Wilderness (50

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Response 923: See Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section. A map of flyways has been added to Section 4.9, but fine scale flyway maps for the area traversed by the proposed transmission line are not available.

Response 924: See Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section for additional discussion of measures to prevent avian collisions.

Response 925: Comment noted

miles southwest). The project area has meteorological conditions that provide for good dispersion of air pollutants.

Air quality impacts would result from use of equipment and vehicles during construction and during operation and maintenance (i.e., pollutant emissions of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, sulfuroxides, PM-2.5, nitrogen oxides, volatile organic hydrocarbons, aldehydes, and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons), and creation of fugitive dust and particulates during construction.

Comment 926 We are pleased that fugitive dust would be controlled through dust control measures such as water sprays, limiting the speed of construction equipment, and reseeding the disturbed areas at the end of the construction period, and that gaseous emissions would be limited through construction management and scheduling. In addition we recommend limiting diesel emissions by reduced idling and modern diesel engines and/or use of Ultra Low Sulfur Diesel in the construction equipment, and including rock crushing and other material production and processing that may be needed during construction of access roads in the efforts to minimize fugitive dust.

10. Comment 927 Executive Order 12898, "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations," requires federal agencies to make environmental justice part of their missions by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations (e.g. Native American) and low-income populations. We are pleased that the DEIS includes evaluation of environmental justice considerations for the proposed transmission line (page 3-176), concludes that no that no disproportionately high and adverse impacts would be expected for minority or low-income populations (page 3-181).

11. Comment 928 The DEIS states that wind farms have purchased all the power shipping capacity of the proposed transmission line (Table 4.1-1, page 4-2), but that because capacity rights are a commodity that may be resold or traded, the original wind farm purchasers may not be the power suppliers that use the line. Accordingly, the DOE does not consider wind farms that may be served by the proposed transmission line to be "connected actions as defined in 40 CFR 1508.25(a) (page 4-2). The DOE believes the proposed MATL line has an existence and utility independent from the wind farms, and impacts from potential wind farms are evaluated as cumulative impacts in accordance with 40 CFR 1508.7.

Comment 929 Table 4.1-2 (page 4-6) shows the potential reasonably foreseeable future power generation projects in the vicinity of the MATL line. These include several wind farms as well as the 250 MW Highwood Coal Fired Generating Station, and the 275 MW Great Falls Energy Partners Gas Fired Power Plant. We have concerns regarding the cumulative effects of the reasonably foreseeable future actions, particularly the cumulative effects of air pollutant emissions of new power plants and the effects of many new wind farms on avian species.

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Response 926: The agencies will consider the recommendation regarding the use of ultra-low sulfur diesel and reduced vehicle idling time. Rock crushing operations would have to comply with Montana air quality regulations.

Response 927: Comment noted.

Response 928 to 930: Cumulative impacts of reasonably foreseeable future actions, including those named in the comment are presented in sections 4.1 to 4.16. Your concerns about cumulative impacts of future power plant and wind farm development are noted. Note that future privately funded wind generation projects located on private land would not be subject to site-specific NEPA review. Also see Avian and Wildlife Issues in the Consolidated Responses section.

Comment 930 It will be important that additional site-specific NEPA analysis occur to evaluate and mitigate adverse effects for these future actions to the maximum extent possible. As noted above, we recommend that the FEIS include maps that identify locations of important migration corridors of birds and along with identified potential collision hazard areas, since this information may also assist in locating new wind farms away from avian flyways.

12. Comment 931 The DEIS states that the proposed transmission line would extend north in Alberta, Canada to a new substation to be constructed northeast of Lethbridge, Alberta (page 1-1). The proposed line would be part of the Western Interconnection, and a phase shifting transformer would be installed at the substation near Lethbridge to control the direction of power flows on the line. The DEIS does not provide much information about the 77 construction of the transmission line and new substation in Alberta, Canada or the proposed 77 mile route of the Canadian transmission line.

We recommend that the FEIS identify the agency responsible for construction of the transmission line in Canada, and a contact person with that agency, and provide a discussion of the applicability of Executive Order 12114 *Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions* and *CEQ's Guidance on NEPA Analyses for Transboundary Effects, July 1, 1997* in regard to the proposed MATL transmission line (http://www.nepa.gov/nepa/regs/transguide.html). We recommend that additional information about project implementation in Canada and any significant environmental effects that may occur as a result should be provided in the FEIS.

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Response 931: See response to comment 884.

PART 3. LIST OF COMMENTERS

C = Conrad Public Hearing; CB = Cut Bank Public Hearing; GF = Great Falls Public Hearing

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49	Clinton Anderson	Anderson	538
5	Jim Anderson	Anderson	28, 605
134	Mary Anderson	Anderson	614
C	Ray Anderson	Anderson	490
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202	Sen. Keith Bales	Bales	818
37	Doug Banka	Banka	526, 579, 580, 581, 582
118	Brian Banons	Banons	568, 569
152	Aidan Banows	Banows	568, 569
154	Brian Banows	Banows	568, 569
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47	Dawn Barrett	Barrett	536
10	David Baumann	Bauman	36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45,
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204	Fred And Pat Becker	Becker	820, 822
GF	Peggy Beltrone	Beltrone	209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214,
194	Dan Bennett	Bennett	718, 719, 720
C	Chris Berg	Berg	419, 420, 421, 422, 423,
187	Vernon Berger	Berger	694, 695
2	MT FWP (Gary Bertellotti)	Bertellotti	12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,
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70	Jeff Billman	Billman	548
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202	Sen. Jerry Black	Black	811
107	Ronald S. Block	Block	568, 569
204	Howard Bouma	Bouma	820
157	Bill Brandon	Brandon	568, 569
123	Deb Brandon	Brandon	610, 611
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180	Deb Brandon	Brandon	665
C	Rich Branning	Branning	485, 486, 487
GF	Everett Breding	Breding	303, 820
204	Sandra Broesder	Breosder	822
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204	Kaye Broesder	Broesder	822
204	Phil Broesder	Broesder	821
GF	Sandra Broesder	Broesder	224, 411, 411, 412, 412, 413, 413, 414, 414, 415, 415, 416, 416, 417, 417, 566, 391, 392, 393,
186	Shane Broesder	Broesder	691, 692, 693
3	Glacier Electric (Jasen Bronec)	Bronec	20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26,
204	Angela D. Brown	Brown	820
119	Dede Brown	Brown	600, 601
202	Sen. Roy Brown	Brown	812
CB	Dave Brownell	Brownell	328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 341, 342,
51	Stephanie Browning	Browning	540
202	Sen. John Bruggeman	Bruggeman	813
GF	Vanessa Buckland - Letter Read By Carol Jones	Buckland	301, 302
26	Vanessa Bucklin	Bucklin	102, 528
24	USFWS (Kathleen A Burchett)	Burchett	532
180	Alice Burchser	Burchser	666
88	Linda Burley	Burley	576, 577
86	Vincent Burley	Burley	568, 569

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79	Jamey Byrnes	Byrnes	566, 577
202	Rep. Tim Callahan	Callahan	810
174	Robert Carney	Carney	648, 649, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657,
12	Lorette Carter	Carter	53, 54, 55, 56, 141, 142, 143, 144, 68, 69, 70, 71,
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108	Ray Christians	Christians	568, 569
109	Shawn Christians	Christians	568, 569
6	Lew & Christy Clark	Clark	29
202	Rep. Edith Clark	Clark	811
144	Dave Colavito	Colavito	631, 632, 633
180	Krystina Z. Cole	Cole	
CB	Jackie Coolidge	Coolidge	350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 568, 568, 569, 569,
C	Ted Crawford	Crawford	410
180	Mark A. Cron	Cron	666
7	Jim Cummings	Cummings	30
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33	Cheryl Curry	Curry	137, 138, 139, 140, 462, 462, 463, 463, 464, 464, 465, 466,
204	Cheryl Curry	Curry	822
202	Sen. Aubyn Curtis	Curtis	814
190	Steve Dahlman	Dahlman	707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714,
78	John Dallum	Dallum	473, 562, 563, 564, 565,
GF	Steve Dalton	Dalton	282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292,
149	Christy Dennison	Dennison	568, 569
200	Terri Denzer, Allen Denzer, Darlene Denzer	Denzer	776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781,
133	Michael Desrosier	Desrosier	613, 618
139	Joe Deftaffany	Detaffany	619, 620
92	USGS (James Devine)	Devine	588
202	Rep. Sue Dickenson	Dickenson	812

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C	Shawn Dolan	Dolan	436, 436, 437, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 441, 442, 442, 443, 443, 444, 445, 446, 446, 447, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 550, 454, 455, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559,
C	Brett Doney	Doney	402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 406, 407, 408, 408, 409,
183	Brett Doney	Doney	677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682,
4	Noel Duram	Duram	27
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201	Janet Ellis (MT Audubon)	Ellis	782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 807, 808,
GF	Brad Elman	Elman	
169	US EPA	EPA	875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 923, 924, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 923, 924,
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83	Pat Fetger	Fetger	477
204	J. Findlayson	Findlayson	821
79	Jim & Kit Finlayson	Finlayson	566
GF	Dan Flynn	Flynn	316, 317
202	Rep. Julie French	French	813
60	Jackie Galespe	Galespe	349
165	Garcia	Garcia	577
145	Bethann Garramon	Garramon	634, 635, 636, 637, 638
180	Renae Gates	Gates	666
202	Sen. Kelly Gebhardt	Gebhardt	816
165	Carle Gebhart	Gebhart	577
202	Sen. Kim Gillan	Gillan	817
CB	Roxy Gillespie	Gillespie	349

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177	Brianna Gillund	Gillund	568, 569, 568, 569, 568, 569
197	John Goodmundson	Goodmunson	758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765,
18	Heather A Gottfried	Gottfried	78, 79, 80
204	Heather Gottfired	Gottfried	822
53	Jeff Gottlob	Gottlob	542
52	Tori Gottlob	Gottlob	541
39	Bob Guditis	Guditis	527
90	Mary Guse	Guse	586, 587
57	Colleen Gustafson (Triangle Land & Livestock)	Gustafson	334, 335, 336
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204	G. Gustafson	Gustafson	820
14	Greg Habel	Habel	652, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67
202	Sen. Ken Hanson	Hanson	818
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180	Mary Ann Harwood	Harwood	666
105	Diane Hastings	Hastings	568, 569
21	Jack Hayne	Hayne	88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93,
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202	Rep. Gordon Hendrick	Hendrick	815
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79	Debbie Hicks	Hicks	566, 822
206	Stephanie Hilger (Mt Dot)	Hilger	825, 826
GF	Ray Hollandsworth	Hollandsworth	249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 400, 401, 820
208	Heather Holloway	Holoway	827
167	Brad Huffman	Huffman	642, 643, 644, 645, 646
202	Rep. Pat Ingraham	Ingraham	816
CB	Gary Iverson	Iverson	356, 357, 456, 457, 568, 569,
165	Alyssa Jackson	Jackson	577
180	Boyd Jackson	Jackson	666
46	David Jacobson	Jacobson	535
180	Paulette Jacobson	Jacobson	666
158	Holly Jaeger	Jaeger	568, 569
163	Megan Jaeger	Jaeger	568, 569

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164	Tech Jaye	Jaye	568, 569
129	Clive Johanin	Johanin	568, 569
130	Jonelle Johannsec	Johannsec	568, 569
204	Cynthia A. Johnson	Johnson	821
11	Wade Johnson	Johnson	31, 32, 33, 34, 35,
GF	Carol Jones	Jones	300
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204	Katie Jones	Jones	821
GF	Lew Jones	Jones	225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 363, 364, 365, 366, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369,
204	Marjorie Jones	Jones	822
202	Rep. Llew Jones	Jones	819
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182	Joseph & Diane Karcher	Karcher	672, 673, 674, 675, 676,
165	Wendy Kasun	Kasun	577
41	Leanne Kavanagh	Kavanagh	215, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 388,
CB	Marvin Kemmitt	Kemmitt	386, 387
106	Susan Kimmet	Kimmet	568, 569
180	J. Kline	Kline	666
202	Rep. Harry Klock	Klock	817
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30	Koepke Farms	Koepke	517, 518
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GF	Ted Kronebush	Kronebush	246, 247, 248
141	Geni Laden	Laden	621
140	Mick Laden	Laden	621
142	Scott Laden	Laden	621543
202	Sen. Rick Laibbe	Laibbe	819

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202	Sen. Lane Larson	Larson	810
96	Ken Larson	Larson	570, 575
202	Sen. Jesse Laslovich	Laslovich	811
GF	Robert Lee	Lee	304, 305
131	John Lemme	Lemme	568, 569
202	Sen. Dave Lewis	Lewis	812
79	Mike & Jessi Lytle	Lytle	566
202	Rep. Gary Maclaren	MacLaren	811
89	Dan Majerus	Majerus	578, 584, 585
GF	Katrina Martin	Martin	103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 755, 754, 755, 756, 757,
208	H. Mattsen	Mattsen	827
11	Larry L. Maurer	Maurer	46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52,
127	Wendy Mcairene	McAirene	568, 569
CB	Bill Mccauley	McCauley	343, 344, 345, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 344, 345
24	Burke Mccormick	McCormick	95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101
79	John & Janice Mcfarland	McFarland	566
18	John L Mcfarland (Conrad Building Center)	McFarland	81, 82, 83, 84, 293, 294, 467, 468, 822
GF	Jerry Mcrae	McRae	194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 525, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 851,
74	Melisa Mcrae	McRae	458, 489, 460, 461, 458, 459, 460, 461,
14	Locke Mellott	Mellott	57, 58, 59, 60, 61
202	Rep. Scott Mendenhall	Mendenhall	819
199	Alan Merrill	Merrill	772, 773, 774, 775
202	Rep. Mike Milburn	Milburn	814
112	David Mildrexler	Mildrexler	589, 590, 591, 592
23	Dave Miller	Miler	94
179	Dave Miller	Miller	659
180	David T. Miller	Miller	666

Log Number	Name	Last Name	Response Number
124	Mary Miller	Miller	568, 569
204	G. Mills	Mills	822
128	Jerry Mioem	Miom	568, 569
180	Rachel Monty	Monty	662
176	Carol Morgan	Morgan	568, 569
180	Jewel Moritz	Moritz	666
165	Kim Mosley	Mosley	577
55	Juanita Muhr	Muhr	544
205	Robert & Ali Newkirk	Newkirk	823, 824
125	Tamie Nic	Nic	568, 569
202	Rep. Bill Nooney	Niiney	810
43	Ben Ober	Ober	531, 568
202	Rep Jesse O'hara	O'Hara	811
180	Jeannie Olmstead	Olmstead	666
204	Betty Olson	Olson	822
79	Harold & Betty Olson	Olson	566
204	Harold D. Olson	Olson	820
GF	Harold Olson	Olson	130, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435,
202	Rep. Alan Olson	Olson	812
180	Melissa Osther	Osther	663
122	Sean Pahut	Pahut	606, 607, 608, 609
202	Rep. Hjohn Parker	Parker	812
GF	Jesse Parks	Parks	132
CB	Gabriel Pearson	Pearson	394
180	Sandra Peen	Peen	666
209	Philip Perszyk	Perszyk	828
202	Rep. Ken Peterson	Peterson	810
202	Sen. Jim Peterson	Peterson	813
202	Rep. Mike Phillips	Phillips	813
79	Karla Pogreba	Pogreba	566
180	Nancy Potter	Potter	666
168	Kathleen Rankin	Rankin	568, 569
C	Doug Ray	Ray	418

Log Number	Name	Last Name	Response Number
GF	Doug Ray - Read Letter #3 From Jason R. Bonec	Ray	269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275,
133	John Ray	Ray	613, 618
117	Cheryl Reichert	Reichert	596, 597, 598, 599
94	Julie Reighard	Reighard	568, 569, 568
C	Ronald Reis	Reis	476
CB	Marty Reynolds	Reynolds	568, 569
82	Shari Richter	Richter	567
133	Ron Rides At The Door	Rides at the Door	613, 618
204	Bernard Ries	Ries	821
204	Curtis Ries	Ries	821
79	Deborah Ries	Ries	566, 566, 821
204	Maryann Ries	Ries	822
204	Ronald Ries	Ries	820
202	Rep. Rick Ripley	Ripley	814
85	Brian Roark	Roark	568, 569
19	Scott Robar	Robar	85, 86, 87
180	Phyllis Robertson	Robertson	666
165	Sherry Roos	Roos	577
71	Corrine Rose	Rose	549, 549, 820
156	Robert Ross	Ross	568, 569
173	Ruth Rudner	Rudner	647, 717
165	Mike Rudolf	Rudolf	577
107	Dave A Ryan	Ryan	568, 569, 568, 569
202	Sen. Don Ryan	Ryan	818
79	Cheryl A. Sawyer	Sawyer	566, 821
185	Brenda Schilling	Schilling	689, 690
202	Sen. Trudi Schmidt	Schmidt	814
153	Andrew Scott	Scott	568, 569
161	Kathy Semmli	Semmli	568, 569
162	William Semmli	Semmli	568, 569
159	Matt Sendor	Sendor	568, 569
143	Gene Sentz	Sentz	622, 622, 623, 623, 624, 624, 625, 625, 626, 626, 627, 627, 628, 628, 629, 629, 630, 630,

Log Number	Name	Last Name	Response Number
202	Rep. Jon Sesso	Sesso	815
35	Steve Sheffels	Sheffels	145, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 192, 193,
188	Jessica Sherburne	Sherburne	696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703,
189	Steven Sherburne	Sherburne	704, 705, 706,
GF	John Shevlin	Shevlin	205, 205, 206, 207, 208
79	Lohn P. & Penny Shevlin	Shevlin	566
GF	Tom Shock	Shock	276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281,
GF	Dale Siefert	Siefert	295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 820
CB	Tony Sitzman	Sitzman	396, 397, 358, 359, 360, 361, 358, 359, 360,
GF	Gordon Smesdrud	Smedsrud	131
56	Fritz Smith	Smith	545
98	Michael Smith	Smith	568, 569
76	Everett Snortland	Snortland	560, 561, 821
135	Dennis Someday	Someday	568, 569
180	Don South	South	666
93	Phil Springer	Springer	570, 571, 575
202	Rep. Wayne Stahl	Stahl	816
180	Julie Stakes	Stakes	666
202	Sen. Don Steinbeisser	Steinbeisser	817
72	Chris Stephens	Stephens	425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 847, 848, 849, 850, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874,
CB	Joni Stewart (Mayor Of Cut Bank)	Stewart	346, 346, 347, 348, 348
44	Robert Stewart (National Park Service)	Stewart	615, 616
C	Eric Strom	Strom	471, 472, 473, 474, 475,
208	Greg Strutz	Strutz	827
204	Sandy Syvertson	Syvertson	821
120	Maurice Tack	Tack	602, 603, 604

Log Number	Name	Last Name	Response Number
155	Fredrick Trafelet	Trafelet	639, 640, 641
42.5	Buck Traxler	Traxler	529, 530, 566
202	Sen. Joe Tropila	Tropila	816
C	George Tsonga	Tsonga	482, 483, 484
GF	Allan	Underdal	122, 123, 124, 125, 510, 511, 513,
179	Allan Underdal	Underdal	659, 664
1	Unknown 1	Unknown 1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10,
87	Lynn Utterback	Utterback	568, 570, 572, 573, 574,
204	Gerri Vandenbos	VandenBos	821
79	John Vandyke	VanDyke	566,
CB	Dave Brownell Read Letter From Valerie Vermohlen	Vermohlen	337, 338
67	Valerie Vermohlen	Vermulm	547, 547, 547, 548
79	William Vandenbos	Vnadenbos	566
208	Fred And Carletta Vroman	Vroman	827
180	Karla A. Wagner	Wagner	666
180	Myrna Wallan	Wallan	666
165	Kathy Walter	Walter	577
208	Tracey War	War	827
202	Rep. John Ward	Ward	817
99	Peggy Warm	Warm	568, 569
180	White	White	666
204	Bev Widhalm	Widhalm	821
204	Ronald Widhalm	Widhalm	822
195	Bob Williams (MATL)	Williams	721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735,
166	Todd Williams	Williams	568, 569
GF	Del Wilson	Wilson	309, 310, 311, 312
202	Rep. Bill Wilson	Wilson	818
202	Rep. Jonathan Windy Boy	Windy Boy	819
184	Zack Winestine	Winestine	683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688,
208	Rebekah Wright	Wright	827
137	George Wuerthner	Wuerthner	617
165	Dave Illegible		577
172	Diane F Illegible		568, 569

Log Number	Name	Last Name	Response Number
CB	Female Speaker		398, 399, 490, 491
79	Ilegible 1		566, 566
82	Ilegible 2		567
180	Illegible 3		666, 666, 666, 666
204	Illegible4		820, 820, 820, 820, 821, 822, 822, 822
165	Illegible 5		577, 577, 577, 577
C	Jackie ?		489, 490, 490
165	James Illegible		577, 577
202	List Of Senators & Representatives		809
CB	Male Speaker, Cut Bank		390
C	Male Speaker, Conrad		490
126	M-SOMEBODY Illegible		568, 569
79	Paul Illegible		566
198	Robert Stewart (National Park Service)		766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771,
103	Ronald Illegible		568, 569
79	Sandy Illegible		566
C	Unknown		481
79	Multiple signers		566
204	Multiple signers		204
208	Multiple signers		827
165	Multiple signers		577
180	Multiple signers		660
CB	Woman Speaker		370

PART 4. ATTACHMENT

The following letters were read at the public hearings and comments are addressed above. The letters were submitted at a later date and are included in this attachment.

3-11-08
Great Falls
Katrina Martin

Comments on the MATL Project – Great Falls – 11 March 2008

Comment 111

My name is Katrina Martin; I live on a farm east of Dutton. I would like to express my appreciation for the opportunity to participate in this hearing process and to acknowledge the hard work done by the staffs of the US Department of Energy and Montana Department of Environmental Quality in preparation of the joint EIS. Your mandate under federal and state law is a complicated one; I am grateful for your efforts.

Comment 112

I want to first emphasize I do not rise in opposition to the MATL project. Never have I stood in support of the No Action alternative. I rely on electricity and acknowledge the need for more transmission facilities. What I am not willing to support is to have one company's short-term economic gain take precedence over long-term negative impacts to the farmers whose land is taken pursuant to the construction of this line.

Comment 113

More than two years ago a group of the affected landowners in Pondera and Teton counties met with MATL officials. These farmers were unanimous in expressing to the company their willingness to partner with MATL in this project if the company were just willing to use a route which followed field lines and was built with monopole structures in cropland and CRP. This willingness was reiterated at every subsequent meeting or communication with the company. These farmers accepted that they needed to cooperate in economic development for the region even though it meant dealing with permanent structures placed in cropland.

Comment 114

Comment 115

Somehow, these farmers, in standing up for themselves and their families, seem to have been painted as "bad guys" by the supporters of the project. Such a characterization is incredibly unfair and counterproductive; the requests of farmers are not unreasonable. Placing power poles

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L28

on a diagonal running through cropland and CRP should be a thing of the past. New farming techniques and larger equipment make such transmission structures environmentally unsound and too economically burdensome. Comment 116

Comment 117 I do not begrudge this company and its investors the chance to make a handsome profit from filling a well recognized need for increased electric transmission – more power to them (no pun intended). To see the extent of that profit, simply visit the Tonbridge website where it is reported the company projects revenues of nearly a billion dollars from the twenty-five year contracts now in place. It thus defies the imagination to take as credible, the company's current claim it cannot possibly be expected to spend around $5 million extra dollars to implement the alternative (Alternative 4) which the agencies have analyzed as being "... the most protective alternative for the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity of the environment while benefitting socioeconomic resources."[1] Comment 118

Comment 119 Our state has accorded MATL many advantages since its application was filed. From the outset, the economic development staff in the Governor's Office has worked closely with the company to help it achieve its goals. The 2007 Legislature created an energy infrastructure promotion office with a $330,000 annual budget whose sole mission includes assuring the MATL project gets built. The Legislature also enacted a 75% property tax cut for the company from which it will reap nearly $800,000 each year (a tax break for property owners whose land is taken amounts to $40,000).

With all this help from the government, it seems impossible to view this company as persecuted because the farmers who will forever bear the burden of the line are not willing to just Comment 120

[1] §4.19, Draft EIS

let the company build the line as cheaply as possible. Over a 50-year life of the facility, the property tax break dollars by themselves will nearly pay for the construction of the line in Montana, projected at approximately $40 million. Comment 122 It is not unreasonable for farmers to push for adoption of Alternative 4 when that agency alternative clearly recognizes the validity of the producers' position and mitigates serious adverse effects on production agriculture. Comment 123

But let's return for a moment to the advantages accorded to this company by our state. Looming over every affected property owner is the knowledge that this Canadian company, building a for-profit merchant line, has the power to condemn the land it says it needs. This company (with its billion dollar revenue projection) has the authority to invoke eminent domain over property owners. These farmers' private property rights can be extinguished to make way for this merchant line, a line which is not regulated by the PSC because under the law it does not constitute a "public utility" from which Montana consumers are guaranteed to benefit. Is it any wonder these landowners hope the regulators will at least insure that the chosen alternative reduces negative environmental and economic impacts to those owners? Comment 124 Comment 125

Not long ago I came across a clear policy statement issued by the Montana Legislature that seems relevant to the current permit application: Comment 126

> It is the policy of the state of Montana to promote energy conservation, production, and consumption of a reliable mix of energy sources that represent the least social, environmental, and economic costs and the greatest long-term benefits to Montana citizens.[2]

Alternative 2 does not represent the least environmental and economic costs to Montana citizens; instead, it represents the least cost to the company. Alternative 4, the agencies' alternative, **does** Comment 127

[2] §90-4-1001, MCA.

represent the least social, environmental, and economic costs and the greatest long-term benefits to Montana citizens. Comment 128

I do not oppose this project, even though I can't say I look forward to having yet another large transmission line in my neighborhood. I do support the issuance of a permit based upon Alternative 4. This line, and the future lines which we know are coming, need to be built on an orientation with field lines and the use of monopoles in cropland and CRP. Farmers who have been stewards of these lands for generations should not have to bear the burden of unsafe, costly structures in their cropland and CRP simply because a company wants to keep a bit of extra money in its pocket. That should not be the way we do business in Montana; good public policy prescribes the choice of Alternative 4 as the basis for the permits at issue here. Comment 129

Thank you for your consideration.

Katrina Wilson Martin
1720 24th Ln. NE
Dutton, MT 59433
406-463-2337

Page 4 of 4

March 10, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 134

I'm a producer in Glacier County. The MATL line will be going through my property. I want to be on record that I'm in support of the MATL line and wind generation in Glacier County.

This is an opportunity for me personally to help the economy of Glacier County and for myself. I have no mineral rights to the land that I bought in 1987. This will give me the chance to have an additional income source for my farm. Glacier County has been suffering through a drought. Comment 528

Change is hard to deal with but this is an opportunity for our area to bring in a new business that is clean and friendly for the environment. I'm willing to deal with some inconvenience to do my part to help bring new business to Glacier County. Comment 529

The MATL line and wind generation will increase the tax base for the County. This will help our tax bills, provide more for our schools, and help build our infrastructure. Comment 530

I support the MATL line.

Thank you.

Mike Koepke

L29

P.O. Box 777
Conrad, MT 59425

Pondera Regional Port Authority

1-406-271-4010
1-406-278-7525
pococo@3rivers.net

March 11, 2008

Mr. Chairman:

I am Cheryl Curry, Executive Director for the Pondera Regional Port Authority.

A Port Authority is defined in Montana law and is created by resolution and public vote with our purpose: to promote, stimulate, develop and advance the general welfare, commerce, economic development and prosperity of its jurisdiction and of the state and its citizens. A Port Authority also is to act in cooperation and in conjunction with other organizations to develop industry, manufacturing, natural resources, services, agriculture, health care, and other economic activity.

Our goal is to help create a vital community for future generations of rural Montanans.

The Pondera Regional Port Authority supports the Montana Alberta Transmission Line. The construction of this line will have strong positive economic impact in the area and creates the potential to develop wind power in the future. The power line and associated wind development will add jobs and tax base to our struggling economy. It is clean and has low impact on the environment. I have read the environmental impact statement and believe the economic benefit outweighs the few minor environmental concerns. There are inconveniences to affected farmers and ranchers, but they are compensated to a certain extent by annual and one-time payments from MATL as well as by tax reductions on the affected land. Comment 145 Comment 146 Comment 147

As a nation, our energy demands are ever increasing and our options for production are limited. The development of clean wind power and the lines to transport it makes sense.

Please support the construction of the MATL Transmission Line. The environmental impacts are minor and the economic benefits are great. Comment 148

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Curry

Cheryl Curry
Executive Director
Pondera Regional Port Authority
311 South Main, Suite D
Conrad, MT 59425
406 271-7237
pcpconrad@3rivers.net

Local Economic Development Solutions

L33

Lorette Carter
112 1st St. So.
Shelby, MT 59474

March 11, 2008

Comment 149

Good evening, my name is Lorette Carter, Economic Development Director for the City of Shelby. I am not here tonight to speak as city government, but as a parent. We are very fortunate here in Montana to have exceptional colleges and universities for our children to receive a post-secondary education. I have three sons, one who has graduated and 2 that presently attend Montana Tech. These boys are receiving an incredible education, yet we are educating them to leave the state. In 2006 statistical information for Montana Tech School of Mines & Engineering graduates, 76% went to work out-of-state. My son is an Occupational Safety & Health Engineer in Paramus, New Jersey and my second son is now pursuing a second degree in the hopes to remain in Montana after graduation. Projects such as the Montana Alberta Transmission Line have the potential to create opportunity and employment for our children. This project may have limited permanent employment opportunity but has tremendous potential to open the doors to other clean viable industry in our state. Projects of this magnitude require numerous secondary services and project related employment. It will generate tremendous tax reductions and wealth within our communities that may translate into new industry and job creation. Ultimately, it announces to all that Montana welcomes clean viable industry and that our best and brightest need not leave the state to find good jobs. Outside interests have many voices, but I hope you will consider the voices of those who live, work and raise our families here. Help us keep our small rural communities alive for our children to return and to benefit generations to come Comment 150 Comment 151 Comment 152

Lorette Carter

Lorette Carter
112 1st St. So.
Shelby, MT 59474
(406) 424-8799

L34

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

March 11, 2008

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

Re: 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

Dear Mr. Ring;

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the subject documents. As you know, we farm near the south termination of this line just north of Great Falls. We have several concerns that were not addressed by the draft proposal and new concerns that have arisen since our last opportunity to comment.

Some of the concerns that we feel need to be addressed are as follows:

- Comment 153 Long-span monopoles with 6.5 foot-wide concrete foundations should be required for any portion of the transmission line that cross or border farm fields. It has been reported that the Alberta portion of the proposed Montana Alberta Tie Line is being required to use single poles through farming lands. Is this true? Comment 154 Although the initial cost might be somewhat higher, these lines are built to last a long time. We have been farming around existing lines for over 70 years. Comment 155 Less land is removed from production and it is much easier to maneuver around a single pole than a double pole design. Very serious consideration should be given to weigh the difference in short-term, up-front costs against the long-term costs to the farmer who will be living with these decisions for generations. What justification could be used to treat farmers differently on each side of the border? Comment 156

- Comment 157 How will the alternate routes of the MATL be evaluated? Will there be a public, open process? How will the weighting of the various factors be decided? Who decides the weighing factors? Who decides between the alternatives?

- Comment 158 House Bill 3 of the May 2007 Special Session permanently reduces the property tax rate from 12% to 3% for new investments in transmission lines that are constructed after June 2007. For alternative 4, this change has reduced the total property tax income from $3,157,952 to $789,488. Cascade County's income is reduced from $435,360 to $108,840. How does this new rate affect the approval process of the MATL line? What, if any, taxes will MATL be paying to the state of Montana for the revenue they receive from doing business in the state (above and beyond property taxes)?

- Comment 159 Landowners of wind towers are being compensated ~$2,500 per tower per year. How does this compare with what is being proposed for transmission line easement owners? It seems that wind tower owners are receiving much more. Both project types are being funded by private investment. Both project types impact the landowner in similar ways. Why isn't MATL required to pay market rates for land use like the wind tower project owners are?

- Comment 160 Does MATL comply with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Order 890? If not, why not? What changes occurred or would be required for compliance? Will the EIS be updated to reflect these changes/requirements?

- Comment 161 MATL claims in the EIS that they will be responsible for damages to land and crops from emergency repair operations. What will the process be for making these claims? If there is a dispute, what recourse will the landowner have? Comment 162 What Comment 163 will be the differences in dealing with a Canadian corporation vs. a US corporation? Should some sort of a bond be required of a foreign corporation to guarantee their obligations? Comment 164

- Comment 165 What will happen if MATL goes out of business? Who will own the line? Will all of the obligations that MATL is entering into upon building the line transfer to whomever buys it? Comment 166

- Comment 167 MATL has received numerous comments suggesting farm machinery can reach 25 feet in height. Has MATL changed their plans to account for this information? What is MATL doing differently? (It is reasonable to expect that farm equipment will be used under the line that will require 20-25 feet of clearance. Current air drills have a travel height of 19 feet. The current models are not large enough to be of economic use on our property. We expect that larger equipment will be available in the future and that we will use it.) If further restrictions (i.e. limiting equipment height under the line) on our land use are required, will there be additional compensation? Comment 168

- Comment 169 Market forces have significantly changed the cost of inputs described in Attachment DL-xx. Here are some examples:

Input	EIS cost	Current cost	Units	% Change
Roundup (RT3)	$21.50	$37.00**	Gallon	77%
Crop	$6.00	$12.50	Bushel	108%
Seed	$16.00	$28.00	Bushel	75%

** RT3 over $50/gal in some areas today.

Comment 170 RT3 @ $50/gal is a 133% increase over the original EIS. Dramatic changes in costs can occur in relatively short time frames. Our family has been farming our land for over 90 years. How will farmers be compensated for changing costs over the life of the power line? Will the EIS be updated to reflect current costs? Comment 171a What changes will result in MATL planning/policy as a result of this new information? Will annual per-pole compensation be adjusted? Comment 171b

- There are a number of planned projects bringing power to the Great Falls area:

Comment 172

Rainbow dam upgrade	-	25MW (increase)
MATL line	-	300MW
Highwood generating station	-	250MW
Cutbank wind farm	-	210MW (total – some portion to come to Great Falls)

Where is the EIS/analysis of the construction needed to move this power out of the Great Falls area? These projects alone would cause an 80% increase in power exported out of Montana. What is the environmental/economic impact of not having a process for planning changes to power infrastructure? Comment 173 With the withdrawal of federal funding from the Highwood generating station, will MATL be responsible for determining the impact of transmission lines required to move power from Great Falls? If not MATL, who? Comment 174

- Why bring the MATL line to Great Falls? With the projects noted above, there will be little or no capacity to transfer the power south of Great Falls (already noted as constrained by the EIS). Comment 175

- Where is the benefit to Montanans? As noted above, the power is likely to flow from Montana to Alberta a vast majority of the time. If the purpose of the line is to export power, why not say so? Comment 176 Comment 177 Is it in the best interests of Montanans to ship our clean, renewable hydro and wind power to Canada? If the purpose of the line is to make money for MATL (which it should be) why shouldn't MATL be paying market rates for their easements like wind farm owners? Comment 178 Are there other power line connections between the US and Canada? How did local power prices change after the connection? Comment 179

- Comment 181 How can MATL justify building ~100 miles of transmission line just to avoid tariffs at the Cutbank or Shelby substations? Do MATL's profits weigh higher with regulatory authorities than all of the impacted landowners to the south? Comment 182 The attitude seems to be, 'If the project is described correctly, eminent domain can be used to 'take' the required right-of-way to maximize profits for the corporation.' Comment 183

- With the Cutbank wind farm, there probably won't be any capacity to move power from the Cutbank substation to the south. However, that is true for Great

Falls as well. With the new wind farm, is there enough capacity at the Cutbank station to supply MATL with 300MW into Alberta? If MATL connected near Cutbank, would there be enough capacity for the Cutbank wind farm to complete their Phase 3 plans? Comment 184

- Comment 185 Power poles on farmland will be hit by farm equipment. (Farmers are expected to maneuver their 30-130 foot-wide implements around these poles 5-10 times per year for decades. Getting too close to poles risks impact. Being too far away takes land out of production and invites weeds.) What plans are being implemented to ensure the safety of farmers, their equipment, their crops, and power consumers? Comment 186 At what point do farmers become liable for hitting power poles? (A nick, a scratch, a dent, damage that requires replacement of a pole?) Comment 187 Comment 188 How much force would damage each of the proposed pole designs? If a farmer lost control of his tractor (heart attack or stroke) and it took down a pole, how much liability could the farmer have? Comment 189

- Comment 190 Poorly maintained power lines have been known to cause fires. Will MATL be liable for any damage caused by their line? What limits will there be?

- Comment 191 Should portions of the line near the terminations be constructed to enable additional capacity or multiple lines? We are interested in encouraging some intelligent design and future planning with regards to the clutter now existing around substations.

- Comment 192 The line itself should be designed for increased capacity to avoid the necessity of adding new poles in the future. Is the provision for 230KV enough? MATL suggests that the capacity can be increased to 400MW in each direction. Comment 193 What changes need to be made to increase this capacity? Will easements need to change? How will landowners be compensated? Comment 194

- Comment 195 Was MATL a party to The Northwest Wind Integration Action Plan? If not, why not? Who was MATL's representative? What, if any, actions does MATL plan with regards to The Northwest Wind Integration Action Plan?

- Comment 196 As the MATL line is behind schedule, what is the current state of the TSRs that have been awarded thus far? When do the bids expire? How is it that MATL has accepted bids for 300MW north to south when there is not capacity to move this power from Great Falls? Comment 197

We are sure that the average person does not understand just how difficult it is to farm around obstacles such as power poles. We will probably always object to having them forced upon us. That said our objections would be reduced significantly by receiving fair, annual, cost-adjusted compensation and by having a reasonable plan for future development that optimized the impact to our land, the state, and our community. Comment 198

Comment 199

We are extremely concerned that there is not a plan, nor does there seem to be a planning process for transmission line development. We currently have four lines running across our property. The MATL transmission line would be the fifth. Without a comprehensive plan, it is difficult to know how many there may be in the future. Given this lack of planning, and given the lack of capacity out of Great Falls, we believe that Alternative 1, or the status quo, is the right alternative for now.

Thank you,

Sheffels Farms, Inc.

Jim Sheffels John Sheffels Steve Sheffels

5

JOHN SHEVLIN
Mayor

AGNES FOWLER
Finance Officer

AUDREY BROWN
City Judge

GARY DENT
Police Chief

CITY OF CONRAD
411 1/2 SOUTH MAIN
CONRAD, MONTANA 59425
PHONE: 406-271-3623 FAX 406-271-5602

GARY BROWN
SANDY SYVERTSON
WALLY McHENRY
WENDY JUDISCH
Aldermen

March 10, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

Comment 210

As Mayor of Conrad I strongly support the Montana Alberta Transmission Line (MATL). The economic benefits to our community would be very substantial. The benefits from the line and the resulting wind farms would go a long way in easing the tax burden on the county level. An example would be the large infusion of tax money from the Judith Gap wind farm.

Comment 211

Due to low unemployment, permanent workers with families and children would relocate to our area. This would greatly help our school systems. Currently the school system is looking at remodeling the local high school and elementary school. The additional tax money would ease the burden on existing tax payers.

Comment 212

In this area we do not get a lot of opportunities for economic development. When projects like the MATL Line and wind farms come along they should be embraced and supported by the whole community.

Comment 213

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the D.E.Q. and the D.O.E. to give favorable status to this project.

Sincerely,

John P. Shevlin
Mayor
City of Conrad

L36

Discover Cut Bank

March 10, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 220

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Transmission Line. 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 approximately 140 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 221

We applaud the steps taken by MATL officials to respond to the concerns raised by landowners, whose property would be affected by the line. We support the new law which provides a property tax break to land owners whose land is crossed by the line and transfers the responsibility for the tax on the affected land to MATL. 222 The Chamber supports MATL's decision to use monopoles instead of "H frame" structures along the 53 miles of cultivated land where the line crosses fields diagonally, thereby lessening the impact of the line on farm and ranch operations. 223 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 changes proposed by MATL officials will result in a "win-wind" situation for all parties involved. 224

The Cut Bank Chamber believes the 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. 225 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. 226

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. Comment 227

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for this project. We look forward to hearing very soon that a Presidential Permit has been issued for the project and we urge the Montana DEQ and BLM issue the needed certificates of compliance and right-of-ways as required. Comment 228

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

L41

Great Falls

February 14, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
Mr. Tom Ring, Environmental Science Specialist
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 274

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.

Construction of the tie line, and the associated wind generation facility, will create a positive impact on our area in many ways. Comment 275

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 276

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 277

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 278

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 279

Letter #40

Mr. Tom Ring
page 2
February 14, 2008

Comment 280

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

Triangle Land & Livestock Co., Inc.
Barr & Colleen Gustafson
P.O. Box 568
Browning, MT 59417
Ph: (406) 338-5220 FAX (406) 338-5220
e-mail docbarr@3rivers.net

March 12, 2008

To: Montana Department of Environmental Quality
From: Colleen Gustafson

To Whom It May Concern:

We are sorry we are not able to attend the hearing in person, but we are in the midst of calving.

Comment 340

We would like to express our strong support for the Montana Alberta Tie Line. It is imperative that this region develops infrastructure and business opportunities to bolster the economy and expand the tax base. It is increasingly difficult for the existing small business owners to bear the burden of business and real property taxes.

Comment 341

This is a tremendous opportunity to open the doors to new and responsible development. We encourage all parties to work together to mitigate any problems with the placement of this line, and offer our strong support for proceeding with the Montana Alberta Tie Line.

Comment 342

Sincerely,

Colleen Gustafson

Colleen Gustafson

257

3-12-08

CUT BANK
BUILDING SERVICE
227 East Railroad
Cut Bank, Montana 59427

BUS. 406-873-2293 • FAX: 406-873-4423

TO: State of Montana Dept. of Environmental Quality
FROM: Bill McCauley
SUBJECT: Montana Alberta Tie LTD (MATL)
DATE: 3-11-08

To Whom it may Concern. Comment 353

As a local business person and city Council person I wish to go on record as supporting the project, but would request that the farmers and ranchers that the line crosses are taken care of both financially and by future agreements in writing for all parties

Comment 354 This project is a great boost to our over burdened tax base. I have heard the argument that we are allowing the line owner to reach short term tax bank, but I ask you what is 100% of 0 which we have now.

Comment 355 Our Rural co-operatives are the backbone of electrical rural America and if they feel its a good deal which they do, shouldn't we.

Once again on behalf of a taxpayer from many places I fully support this project

Bill McCauley
318 1ST AVE S.W.
CUT BANK, MONT. 59427

L62

Cut Bank

CITY of CUT BANK

221 West Main • (406) 873-5526 • Fax: (406) 873-2455 • Cut Bank, MT 59427

March 12, 2008

Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 356

The purpose of this letter is to indicate the City of Cut Bank's full support for the electric transmission line proposed by Montana Alberta Tie, Ltd. (MATL). We have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and find this project to of great benefit to Glacier County and the surrounding area.

Comment 357

We believe MATL response to the concerns raised in previous public meetings have been thoroughly addressed and commend MATL officials on their efforts to create a positive situation for all involved. Wind energy projects are one of the most viable answers to developing clean and green industries for Northern Montana.

Comment 358

On behalf of the City of Cut Bank, we urge MDEQ and BLM to issue the certificates required for compliance and right-of-ways and look forward to hearing a Presidential Permit has been issued.

Should you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me at 406-873-5526 or at the above address.

Sincerely,

Joni Stewart

Joni Stewart, Mayor

Cut Bank MONTANA Where the Rockies meet the Plains

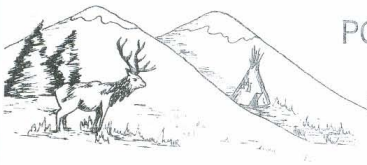
L61

Jackie Balogna gp.?

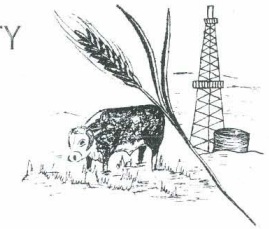
3-12-08
Cut Bank

Eco Development
Growth in school population Comment 359
Growth in small business
Youth opportunities → career opportunities - stay in Montana
~~Outreach to urban communities~~
Construction → Help our business

L60



PONDERA COUNTY
20 4TH AVENUE S.W.
CONRAD, MONTANA 59425



March 11, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Re: MATL Transmission Line

Comment 421

The Pondera County Board of Commissioners strongly supports the construction of the Montana Alberta Tie LTD 240/230 kV merchant transmission line.

There are a plethora of reasons to support the construction. If environmental concerns were your only criteria, the minimal trade-offs imposed by this new construction would be well worth the value to our society and to the environment simply for the capability to transmit clean, green power. Given the fact that most of the carrying capacity of the line has already been obligated to wind developers, transmission of renewable energy seems assured. Comment 422

As Commissioners, we are responsible for the fiscal operations of Pondera County. We look to the construction of this line and associated wind generation facilities as a way to broaden the tax base, while simultaneously alleviating the tax burden on our existing taxpayers. The approximately $260,000 dollars in property taxes directly from the line would be a more than welcome addition. The transmission line would also be the catalyst for wind farm developments such as that in Judith Gap, MT, where that wind project pays approximately $1.2 million in taxes to the county it is located in. To put that into perspective, the entire budget for Pondera County in fiscal 2008 was $7 million dollars. From an economic viewpoint, factoring in additional people, businesses and support services both for the line itself and accompanying wind towers, the positive fiscal impact of this project could be critical for the sustainability of our communities. Comment 423

As Commissioners, we also have a duty of care towards all the residents in the county which includes a variety of businesses as well as agriculture. With all three Commissioners involved in businesses and two of our three commissioners actively involved in production agriculture, it is a duty that we take very seriously. There is no denying that farming around power poles is costly, inefficient and whole variety of politically incorrect adjectives can describe the time and effort Comment 424

L81

Comment 425

involved. It logically follows that it is much simpler to farm around single pole structures that are located on section lines as opposed to the double pole structures that were initially proposed in diagonal field crossings. To the extent practical, monopoles should be utilized. This line needs to be built right, but it must be built. All stakeholders need to recognize that both MATL and farmers face serious financial consequences based on the placement decisions. An equitable balance has to be achieved. Comment 426

Many of the concerns that we have heard regarding compensation for pole placement should be business negotiations between MATL and private landowners. To that end, we would urge both the DOE and the DEQ to issue any and all necessary permits as expeditiously as possible so that MATL, Ltd. may finalize those negotiations and begin construction. Comment 427

On behalf of the entire Board of Pondera County Commissioners,

Sandra J. Broesder

Sandra J. Broesder, Vice-Chair

March 13, 2008

Chris Stephens
PO Box 94
Dutton, Mt 59433
406-463-2433, 406-788-0498

Comments for MATL EIS--Conrad hearing

My name is Chris Stephens and my family farms in the counties where this line is being built. We will have at least a mile to a mile and half of this line depending upon the route.

Comment 435

I am disappointed that all the county commissioners and local businesses are more concerned with the needs of the MATL than they are of us longtime faithful taxpayers. We aren't asking for much. We are asking only for a design of this line in a manner that the local cooperatives have long recognized as the proper design for the power infrastructure. It is not a coincidence that the resistance of this line begins with the start of the diagonal portion of this line at Conrad and continues south to Great Falls as does the diagonal. One has to remember that along this portion of line we aren't talking about one diagonal line we are talking about two as there is already a diagonal line that we have had to live with for 30 years. Comment 436

Comment 437 The northern portion of the line has all the benefits. The north-south orientation and the wind development. The southern all the impacts. The diagonal and no wind development.

Since I have owned my farm east of town here, I have had two power lines, a gas line with a pumping station and a fiber optic line cross this farm and none of them provide service to my farm. I did not oppose them. I am not against progress.

We talk about the tax base and economic development MATL brings to these communities. Let me share the tax base and economic benefits my family provide. We pay $26539 dollars property tax in Pondera county; $64210 dollars in Teton; $39896 dollars in Cascade and $2783 in Choteau county for a total of over $133,000 dollars annually. My older brother and his family, who will have line build on his property in Teton county, spent

Comment 438

$315,000 at Frontline Ag over the last three years for an average of almost $79,000 dollars a year. I myself have spent over $80,000 dollars in the last two months at Frontline Ag. This is just one business. We support many other businesses in Conrad. I am disappointed and angered by the lack of support of Conrad community. We are asking only for this line to be built so that it doesn't negatively impact the people who have supported your schools and businesses before MATL arrived and will be here long after MATL leaves.

Comment 439

The State of Montana, thru its generosity of its tax policy, has given MATL a tax break of between 2.1-2.3 million annually or over 100 million dollars for the projected 50 year lifetime of this project. It's time MATL shows its generosity and agree to spend the 4-7 seven million dollars to build alternative 4 with monopoles. After all, they are actually using our money to build it with. MATL could also show its generosity by purchasing the entire 105 foot easement that they will exercise complete control over, not just the 45 ft. The Alberta Utilities Board is requiring this in Canada, why not here in Montana?

Comment 440

Comment 441 The economic benefits of the wind farms are documented in the EIS, but the impact never mentioned is that these projects do not stand alone. There has to be a network of additional power lines to connect to this merchant line. Are these lines going to be allowed to take off any direction cross country to get to MATL and possibly use eminent domain against those who oppose these additional power lines. MATL is more than willing to use eminent domain to get where its going. In fact, there are people in this room who have already received such letters telling them this. If you live between a windy ridge and this line you too my share in the unpleasant impacts of power development, with none of the money from the towers. The profits are not shared; only the problems.

Comment 442

Comment 443 I, for one, am not interested in maintaining around these poles for MATL. That responsibility lies solely with MATL and the EIS states this; but this company is trying to pass this duty off to the farmers with a pittance of a payment included in the farming impact payments. If MATL thinks that it is possible to do this for the small amount being offered, let them hire a independent contractor do this job. I do not want to be an employee of MATL in any capacity.

In closing, I have been a member of a group of landowners who have been meeting with MATL for over two years. We have never said that we didn't want this built. We have chanted the mantra, field lines, section lines, monopoles, field lines, section lines, monopoles. MATL has not listened. They have always said too much money, too much money, too much money!

I have to wonder how much money is enough for these people. Is the 100 million dollar tax relief that the taxpayers of Montana will have to replace enough? Is the projected revenues of over a billion dollars in the first 10 years of operations enough? Will the profits from the next 5 lines that President Johann promises his stockholders enough? Comment 444

I want to than the DEQ for designing the Agency Alternate, Alternative 4 and the work they have done. And I want to than Ellen Russell and her coworkers to be curious and concerned enough to actually to ride on a 120 foot sprayer and experience first hand the difficulty these structures are to production agriculture. This same invitation was extended to MATL officials two years ago, but they didn't find interest in it until they saw your example. Comment 445

Thank you

Chris Stephens

March 13, 2008

Chris Stephens
PO Box 94
Dutton, Mt 59433
406-463-2433, 406-788-0498

RECEIVED
APR 03 2008
Dept. Environmental Quality
Env. Management Bureau

Comments for MATL EIS--Conrad hearing

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3-13-08

Shawn and Lori Dolan
12418 N. Diamond Dr.
Hayden, ID 83835

March 12, 2008

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

Re: MATL EIS Comments

Dear Mr. Ring:

Comment 446

I would like to submit my comments on the Federal Draft of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Montana Alberta Tie Ltd. 230 kV Transmission Line. In general we felt that the document was fairly well done and we appreciate the revised economic impact projections and believe the new projections are more realistic than MATL was feeding to the press. The $240,000 annual tax impact to Pondara County may still be a little optimistic though. We are not opposed to the lines construction; however, we do have a few concerns with some of the material presented in the EIS document. I should point out that I am a registered professional engineer in the State of Montana and have been involved in power line design and construction for over 20 years. Comment 447

Under the Regulatory Restrictions Analysis Section S.7 the preparers seem to be more concerned with the potential property rights impact to MATL than the property rights impact to the various US citizens and land owners along the proposed transmission line route. The various agencies should be more concerned with the impact of MATL's activities on the various land owner's property rights. Land owners that I might add vote, unlike MATL which is a Canadian based firm. I would like to point out that MATL's right-of-way agents have been securing "options" at very nominal rates not actively purchasing right-of-way. At least the preliminary documents sent to us were option documents that stated should MATL choose to exercise the option the land owners would be paid their token right-of-way fee. So the impact to MATL's property rights by requiring them to follow the agency prepared route of Alternative 4 would be fairly minimal. Comment 451 Comment 452 Comment 453

MATL has repeated stated that it has the ability to condemn property using eminent domain in the State of Montana. How does the recent Montana legislature action last summer limiting the use of eminent domain powers for private enterprise affect MATL's ability to exercise eminent domain condemnations? Comment 561

273

Comment 562

Our family owns 400 acres in the Belgian Hill area near Valier. In Figure 2.6-7 of the EIS, three of the routing options are depicted crossing our property. The Old Belgian Hill reroute, the current Belgian Hill local routing option and the Alt 2 Proposed alignment. The current Belgian Hill local routing option goes right through the middle of our irrigated field longitudinally. If the line was located in this manner it would make our property pretty much impossible to irrigate and would drastically affect the properties value and use as irrigated farmland. We strongly oppose this option and will file a law suite if this option is chose. This route would inflict the maximum harm and damage to our property and would be in direct conflict with statements on page 1-16 pertaining to right-of-ways providing the greatest public benefit and the least private harm. The Old Belgian Hill reroute follows the field line at the edge of our property to the west and the Alt 2 Proposed alignment cuts diagonally across our property then generally parallels the road. By adding a couple guyed 90 degree corner structures or better yet, a couple unguyed self supported structures to MATL's design in this area to eliminate the running angles in the line, the impact to our property could be minimized and crossing the roll irrigated field to the south at a diagonal could be avoided. As our property is presently in CRP and will be returning to crop production shortly, we stongly advocate the use of monopole structures across our property. We would prefer Alternative 4 be selected as it has the minimum impact on our property. It runs across the northern edge. Comment 563 Comment 564 Comment 565

In reading through the EIS I noticed that the only PE stamp I saw in the document was from an engineer from California. Montana law requires that transmission lines and other utility projects constructed in the state be designed under the responsible charge of a PE licensed in the State of Montana. Subsequently, documents covering the Montana portion of this line should be sealed or stamped by a Montana PE. California PE's are not recognized by the Montana Board of Engineers and it should be noted that California does not follow the NESC. Comment 456

And finally I would like to further address the minimum line clearance issue. The EIS lists the minimum line to ground clearance design criteria of the line to be 21.2 feet. In Volume 2 of the EIS entitled response to comments, two additional minimum clearance calculations are shown, one by Mr. Wayne Bauer of HDR in Billings, the other by Mr. Dave Marne of Marne Associates of Missoula Montana. Both of these calculations were performed in response to my earlier comments regarding the line being designed with insufficient line to ground clearance to meet the requirements of the NESC. HDR calculated the minimum clearance using NESC rule 232C and MATL and Marne Associates used the alternate method provided under NESC rule 232D, which allows for reduced clearances for circuits with known switching-surge factors. The HDR minimum clearance was 22.6 feet, slightly more than I calculated due to their assuming an elevation of 4,500 feet verses the 3,300 foot elevation assumed by my calculation. The approach used by the MATL consultant resulted in a clearance of 21.8 feet. Comment 457

Comment 468

For the record, my name is Melisa McRae, and I am the fourth generation of a farm near Dutton. and I am for the MATL project, I am also graduating as a bobcat this spring with a biology degree. This is an environmental impact hearing, yet we have spoken very little about the actual environmental effects of these proposed transmission lines. Many of us understand that farming around poles is inconvenient and financially burdensome, but I would like to speak about this in detail. Much of the cost is accrued by the extra chemical and fertilizer used. 134 ft. sprayers are not designed to turn sharply, and going around a pole causes extra spray to be put down. This is a concern for the farmer, because too much chemical or fertilizer can burn the crop and result in production loss. It should also be a concern to everyone, because extra chemical is potentially hazardous to the environment. If we look towards the future, the accumulated effect of fifty years of extra chemical will be even more damaging, and in areas with ground water near the surface, everyone may feel these effects. The best solution would be to keep all poles on field edges. A more realistic solution would be to minimize the number of poles [redacted] in fields and also make sure the farmer has the financial wherewithal to farm the poles carefully. We are given incentives by the government to help pay for the extra costs of GPS and other systems that make precision spraying possible, lessening the amount of chemical used. Shouldn't we also receive help for the burden of farming around poles?

Comment 469

Comment 470

Comment 471 I know that everyone is very excited about the economic boost these poles may bring, and I hope along with you that more business ventures like this will help keep towns together and schools like the one I graduated from open. But we need to keep in mind that the ones set to profit the most from this transmission line is MATL, and they need to negotiate with landowners to make the burden of their for-profit merchant line

L74

P.O. Box 777
Conrad, MT 59425

Pondera Regional Port Authority

1-406-271-4010
1-406-278-7525
pococo@3rivers.net

March 13, 2008

Dear Sir:

Comment 472

I am again standing in support of the construction of the proposed MATL line. At the Great Falls hearing it was mentioned that the proposed Alternative #4 would be a preferred alternative. I am standing to oppose this selection. The Studies have been completed on the MATL proposal. The Alternative # 4 moves the line significantly away from the already studied area and also makes less sense. The #4 Alternative places the line west of Conrad a greater distance from the proposed wind development and farther from the already existing substations. In consideration of future environmental impacts this is not a good choice. Lines from potential wind development areas and from substations that may eventually connect would be longer and more obstacles would be encountered.

Comment 473

I support the project and urge the DEQ to move this project forward quickly in order that this area may see the benefits in our economy, rather than see another project go away.

Comment 474

Thank you sincerely,

Cheryl Curry

Cheryl Curry
Pondera Regional Port Authority
311 South Main, Suite D
Conrad, MT 59425

406 271-7237
pcpconrad@3rivers.net

Local Economic Development Solutions

L75

9-13-08
Conrad

March 13, 2008

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environmental Management Bureau
ATTN: Tom Ring
PO Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

To whom it may concern:

My name is Wendy Judisch, a resident of the City of Conrad and a member of the Conrad City Council.

I welcome the opportunity for our area to use our natural resources. One of these natural resources is our wind, a great source of renewable energy. A transmission line through our area will not only help encourage the development of wind energy but also help to spread the tax burden throughout our area. The economic boost and its inevitable spin-off will help benefit our area schools, our city, and our county. Comment 479

I encourage you to help the proposed MATL line become a reality as efficiently and expeditiously as possible. The economic pros far outweigh any environmental cons. Comment 480

Sincerely,

Wendy Judisch

Wendy Judisch
616 S. Maryland
Conrad, MT 59425

L77

9-13-08
Conrad

Comment 487 I remember no Electricty, no running water no phones not many paved roads, I don't want That again

Comment 488 I remember when REA + Montana Power Came in no one was against That many people who had no Electricty prior To That also got phones or had phones but no Electricty.

We have had boom + bust building and drought and flood but since The advent of Power on demand we have had creature Comforts.

We as an area affected by This Transmission Line may have a future of steady growth.

With power available we are in a good area we are on a Transportation Corridor with I 15 we would be on a power corridor - with a water project in The works The area is going To be looked at by other Entities

Comment 489 The inconvience of The power poles affect everyone involved with Farming and who ever has to move or build I my self would not want a pole or structure on my property That would

L83

be inconvient for me but I would not say no if it made sense,

Comment 490 I would hope that the changes made by the powerline would help my children, grandchildren, and others stay in the area so they might have the opportunity to live and work in MT

3-12-08
Cut Bank

Glacier County Regional Port Authority
PO Box 469
Browning, MT 59417
(406) 338-4015

March 12, 2008

Mr. Tom Ring
Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Environemental Management Bureau
P.O. Box 200901
Helena, MT 59620-0901

Dear Mr. Ring, Comment 368

The mission of our regional port authority is to promote, stimulate and advance the general welfare, commerce, economic development and prosperity of our region. Our region is Glacier County, and a majority of our rural county lies within the Blackfeet Reservation. The MATL will have a tremendous economic impact on our region and will assist in potential wind development projects. The MATL will pump needed revenue into the tax base of our region and will assist with our struggling economy. Comment 369

The Glacier County Regional Port Authority supports the Montana Alberta Transmission Line and views it as a means to reach our vision; which is to have a quality rural community with living experiences, opportunities and the amenities of urban living. We are encouraging you to support the line, which has little environmental impact, but large economic benefits. We appreciate the attention you have given our request. Comment 370

Sincerely,

Tony Sitzmann

Tony Sitzmann, Chair
Glacier County Regional Port Authority
PO Box 469
Browning, MT 59417
406 338-4015

L59

Comment 416

3) Our region has one of the best wind power resources in the nation, yet has seen little wind power development because of the lack of transmission capacity. We believe that the way you approve this project should set the standard for future transmission line projects that can allow for the development of this national resource while protecting the rights of property owners.

Comment 686

4) The State of Montana has recognized the importance of projects such as this to the state's economy and the nation's energy supply by creating a one quarter mile wide property tax free zone for property owners along new transmission line routes.

5) Timing of this project is critical to attract investment in wind power development. Comment 687

Thank you for supporting renewable energy development in central Montana.

Brett Doney

President

Great Falls Development Authority

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