



Water Quality Division
Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES)

Environmental Assessment (EA)

Permit: Pesticide General Permit (PGP)

Permit No.: MTG870000

Receiving Water: State Surface Waters

Facility Name/Information: Multiple

Location: Statewide (except within the boundaries of Indian Reservations)

Ownership: FEDERAL ☒ STATE ☒ MUNICIPAL ☒ PRIVATE ☒

EA Date: August 26, 2026

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1. OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED ACTION

1.1. Authorizing Action

Under the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), Montana agencies are required to prepare an environmental review for state actions that may have an impact on the Montana environment. The Proposed Action is considered to be a state action that may have an impact on the Montana environment and, therefore, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) must prepare an environmental review. This EA will examine the proposed action and alternatives to the proposed action and disclose potential and proximate impacts that may result from the proposed and alternative actions. DEQ will determine the need for additional environmental review based on consideration of the criteria set forth in Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) 17.4.608.

1.2. Description of DEQ Regulatory Oversight

DEQ implements the Water Quality Act of Montana, issuing discharge permits in conformance with the federal Clean Water Act under the Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) pursuant to Section 75-5-101, *et. seq.*, Montana Code Annotated (MCA), and ARM Title 17, Chapter 30, *et. seq.*

1.3. Proposed Action

DEQ is proposing to re-issue the Pesticide General Permit (PGP) for another five-year renewal cycle, which would be the MPDES permitting mechanism for any owner/operator that applies pesticides into, over, or near state surface waters (such that the pesticide is unavoidably discharged into surface water). The PGP is designed to provide the permit coverage needed for eligible activities without requiring further agency review for each. This EA covers the re-issuance of the master PGP and any owner/operators authorized under it.

The proposed project would be located statewide (except within the boundaries of Indian Reservations).

The renewed PGP would continue to require anyone that applies pesticides into or over state surface waters, including near (such that the pesticide is unavoidably discharged into the surface water), to:

- Submit a Notice of Intent (NOI) application form to the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) for review;
- Apply pesticides in accordance with the pesticide label;
- Have the pesticide label accessible; and
- Report adverse incidents.

In addition, the PGP would continue to require the subset of larger owner/operators that exceed annual thresholds (provided in Table 1 of the Permit) to take the following additional actions:

- Prepare a Pesticide Discharge Management Plan (PDMP) which includes pest identification and development of action levels (pest activity trigger values such as density of mosquito larvae), alternative evaluation, equipment maintenance and calibration;

- Conduct pest surveillance prior to pesticide application to ensure the action threshold has been met;
- Assess environmental conditions after application to ensure no adverse impacts;
- Maintain records; and
- Submit annual reports to DEQ.

Please refer to the permit Fact Sheet (MT DEQ, 2026) for additional information.

Table 1. Summary of Proposed Action

General Overview	DEQ is proposing to renew the PGP, which is a Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination (MPDES) General Permit. The PGP provides coverage to owner/operators who propose to apply pesticides into or over state surface waters, including near (such that the pesticide is unavoidably discharged into the surface water).
Duration & Hours of Operation	The proposed action is to renew the PGP for another five-year cycle. Pesticide applications are generally short-term and intermittent.
Estimated Disturbance	The renewal of the PGP would not authorize ground disturbance.
Personnel Onsite	Personnel sufficient to comply with the terms of the MPDES permit.
Location and Analysis Area	State-wide (except within the boundaries of Indian Reservations)

Table 2. The applicant is required to comply with all applicable local, county, state, and federal requirements pertaining to the following resource areas.

Air Quality	No Air Quality permit coverage.
Water Quality	The PGP provides coverage to owner/operators who propose to apply pesticides into or over state surface waters, including near (such that the pesticide is unavoidably discharged into the surface water). The permit includes effluent limitations and other conditions designed to protect water quality, ensuring that water quality standards are not violated.
Erosion Control and Sediment Transport	No erosion control or sediment transport is considered in the permit coverage, other than the requirement to follow the pesticide label.
Solid Waste	No Solid Waste permit coverage.
Cultural Resources	DEQ accessed the Montana Cultural Resource Database on January 22, 2026. There are historical sites present throughout the state of Montana.

Hazardous Substances	No Hazardous Waste permit coverage.
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1.4. Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative effects are collective impacts on the human environment when considered in conjunction with other past, present, and future actions related to the proposed action by location and generic type. The analysis includes review of state and non-state activities that have occurred, are occurring, or will occur in the future (but are undergoing concurrent evaluation).

DEQ considered the fact that the PGP continues to authorize the legal use of pesticides into or over state surface waters state-wide. DEQ identified non-regulated agricultural, residential, and land-development pesticide and fertilizer use as the primary sources of potential cumulative impacts. These are analyzed by resource in Section 2 of the EA. DEQ may modify the PGP if new information is received in the future indicating that cumulative effects on the environment are unacceptable [see ARM 17.30.1341(2)(b)].

1.5. Purpose, Need, and Benefits

On January 9, 2009, the Sixth Circuit held that the CWA unambiguously includes “biological pesticides” and “chemical pesticides” with residuals within its definition of “pollutant.” As such, Montana Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (MPDES) permit coverage is required for discharges to state surface waters of biological pesticides, and of chemical pesticides that leave a residue.

From 1993 until the first PGP became effective in 2011, DEQ authorized short-term exemptions from Montana water quality standards for the application of a pesticide... ‘when it is used to control nuisance aquatic organisms or to eliminate undesirable and nonnative aquatic species’ under the Montana Water Quality Act (MCA) 75-5-308. Once the PGP became effective in 2011, DEQ could no longer issue 308 authorizations for those activities [Section 75-5-308(3), MCA]. As a result, many of the pesticide applicators that were previously subject to 308 authorization requirements are instead subject to the PGP. The PGP is designed to provide the MPDES permit coverage needed for eligible activities without requiring further agency review for each.

The PGP provides coverage to owners/operators that apply pesticides to or over state surface waters in one of the six pesticide use patterns identified in the Permit. The PGP designates two Tiers of dischargers (Tier I and Tier II) based on exceedance of annual thresholds (provided in Table 1 of the Permit) and the use class of the receiving water. The PGP articulates planning, control, monitoring, reporting, and recordkeeping for application of pesticides to or over water, with additional requirements for Tier II dischargers. Authorization under the PGP allows both decision-makers and pesticide applicators to be more aware of options in pest management and promote better control in the applications.

1.6. Other Governmental Agencies and Programs with Jurisdiction

Other governmental agencies which may have overlapped, or additional jurisdiction related to activities regulated under their MPDES permit include but may not be limited

to: the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA), Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (FWP), Montana Department of Natural Resources & Conservation (DNRC), and local governments/districts.

2. EVALUATION OF AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACT BY RESOURCE

The impact analysis will identify and evaluate the proximate direct and secondary impacts to the physical environment and population in the area to be affected by the proposed project. Note that this EA focuses on the impacts of pesticide application into, over, and near surface waters; the method of delivery of pesticides into, over, or near the surface water is beyond the scope of the EA.

Direct impacts occur at the same time and place as the action that causes the impact.

Secondary impacts are a further impact to Montana's environment that may be stimulated, induced by, or otherwise result from a direct impact of the action (ARM 17.4.603(18)). Where impacts would occur, the impacts will be described in this analysis. When the analysis discloses environmental impacts, these are proximate impacts pursuant to 75-1-201(1)(b)(iv)(A), MCA.

Cumulative impacts are the collective impacts on Montana's environment when considered in conjunction with other past and present actions related to the Proposed Action by location and generic type. Related future actions must also be considered when these actions are under concurrent consideration by any state agency through pre-impact statement studies, separate impact statement evaluation, or permit processing procedures. The projects identified in Table 1 were analyzed as part of the cumulative impacts assessment for each resource.

2.1. Geology and Soil Quality, Stability, and Moisture

Direct Impacts

The proposed permit renewal is expected to have no direct impact on the soil geology, soil quality, or stability during the course of the permit term. This permit does not authorize ground disturbance.

Secondary Impacts & Cumulative Impacts

There may be minor secondary and cumulative impacts from pesticide application under the PGP to soil quality in areas that use and discharge pesticides from agriculture, residential, and other non-regulated sites, or other land-development activities such as subdivisions. Physical and chemical properties of the pesticide decide their behavior and biological activity in soil and their persistence in the soil or environment.

Removal of streamside vegetation may impact soil stability.

2.2. Water Quality, Quantity, and Distribution

Direct Impacts

The PGP is applicable to all state surface waters, including Outstanding Resource Waters, A-Closed, and A-1 waterbodies. Overall, impact from pesticide applications into or over surface waters is expected to have only short-term impacts. Review by DEQ determined that discharges from pesticide activities authorized under the PGP would be considered nonsignificant and, therefore, would not be subject to review under Montana's

nondegradation statute, § 75-5-303, MCA. See 2026 Fact Sheet Section II.D. for further information.

The PGP is designed to ensure that the discharge of pesticides (either the residual pesticide or breakdown products) will not cause or contribute to exceedances of ambient water quality standards, which includes both aquatic and human health standards:

- The PGP requires owner/operators to use the pesticide in accordance with the FIFRA label. When EPA determines that a pesticide product can be registered for use, the Agency has concluded that the use of the pesticide product will not cause unreasonable adverse effect when applied according to the label directions and restrictions.
- The PGP does not allow use of pesticides in any waterbody listed as impaired for the pesticide or its breakdown products – including Hauser Lake, listed impaired for endosulfan sulfate in 1996, and roughly 185 waterbody segments listed as impaired for copper.

The Montana Department of Agriculture (MDA) and DEQ, jointly, are required to conduct monitoring to determine ground water quality, assess the presence of agricultural chemicals in ground water, determine the vulnerability and sensitivity of Montana aquifers, and evaluate the effectiveness of management plans implemented for the protection of ground water resources (§ 80-15-104, MCA). Whenever MDA monitoring results detect a new pesticide compound in state water, MDA requests DEQ develop Water Quality Standards (WQS) for the protection of human health. Montana currently has WQS for approximately 170 pesticide active ingredients or breakdown products, as contained in Circular DEQ-7. The PGP has no foreseen effect on the ground water concentration of any of these pesticides.

Spray additives and adjuvants used in conjunction with pesticide applications are regulated under II.B.1.c of the PGP, which requires adjuvants to be used in accordance with manufacturer guidelines and managed so that any biological, excess chemical, or residual chemical pollutant discharge meets water quality standards. DEQ may require permittees to submit aquatic toxicity, human health, and persistence information for any adjuvant proposed for use. Tier II permittees and any permittees discharging to A-Closed or Outstanding Resource Waters are subject to additional adjuvant monitoring (II.C) and recordkeeping (II.D), and must list planned adjuvant use on the NOI and report actual adjuvant use on the AR3. Effects from adjuvants are typically minor and short-term given these conditions, application rates, and dilution, but may include localized water-quality changes (e.g., temporary turbidity from dyes, surfactant-driven changes in surface tension affecting non-target organisms). These provisions, added during the 2021 reissuance in response to EPA Region VIII Comment 3, carry forward into this reissuance.

Water quality impacts to vegetation, terrestrial/avian/aquatic life, and human health are discussed in Sections 2.4, 2.5, and 2.8 of the EA, respectively.

The PGP does not authorize the withdrawal, storage, or conveyance of water. No direct impacts to water quantity or distribution are anticipated.

Secondary Impacts

Localized changes in aquatic vegetation may have minor impacts to flow within a

waterbody. Excessive weed growth can clog water channels and restrict flow; removal of growth may improve flow.

Cumulative Impacts

There may be minor cumulative impacts to water quality in areas that use and discharge pesticides from agriculture, residential, and other non-regulated sites, or other land-development activities such as subdivisions. Under the scope of the PGP, there is little overlap in pesticide applications in terms of location/waterbody, use pattern, and target pest.

EPA conducts Cumulative Risk Assessments, as well as other risk assessments, and uses the conclusions of these assessments to make decisions regarding whether to approve a pesticide or use as proposed, or whether additional protective measures are necessary to limit exposure to a pesticide.

2.3. Air Quality

Pesticide Application may occur in a Class I airshed. See <https://www.epa.gov/visibility/list-areas-protected-regional-haze-program> for list of Class I airsheds in Montana. The PGP does not impose Class I airshed-specific conditions because pesticide-application air emissions are de minimis and FIFRA labeling addresses applicator-level air-quality concerns.

Direct & Secondary Impacts

An unintended consequence of pesticide application is spray drift – the airborne movement of pesticide sprays away from the target application site. Spray drift of pesticides during application is not an activity covered under the federal or Montana’s PGP as it is considered a non-point source of pollution.

Pesticide drift can pose health risks when sprays and dusts are carried by wind. EPA is actively engaged in several initiatives to help minimize pesticide drift problems, see <https://www.epa.gov/reducing-pesticide-drift>.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts to air quality may occur in areas that use and discharge pesticides from agriculture, residential, and other non-regulated sites, or other land-development activities such as subdivisions. Pesticide applicators are encouraged to recognize environmental conditions conducive to drift and areas vulnerable to potential drift prior to application.

2.4. Vegetation Cover, Quantity, and Quality

Based on a search of the Natural Heritage Database, there are 222 vegetative Species of Concern (SOC) listed across Montana that may be impacted by pesticide applications covered under this PGP (i.e., aquatic/riparian/wetland/etc.). None of the species on the SOC list identify the use of aquatic pesticides as a potential threat.

- Lichens: Fourteen (14) species
- Mosses: Forty-three (43) species
- Vascular Plants: One hundred sixty-five (165) species

The SOC list is maintained on file.

Direct Impacts

Herbicides, by definition, are chemical agents used to destroy or inhibit plant growth; they are used to manipulate or control undesirable vegetation.

Pesticide application covered under the PGP includes herbicides to control nuisance weeds and algae in aquatic systems, including invasive species. Nuisance weeds and algae can decrease populations of native aquatic species including threatened and endangered species as well as reduce aquatic biodiversity by preventing desirable species growth and unbalancing desirable aquatic species populations and development.

The PGP requires owner/operators to apply pesticides in accordance with the FIFRA label and to have the pesticide label available. Label instructions (including dosage, timing, and buffer zones) are written to mitigate risks to non-target organisms. The pesticide must be labeled for use in controlling the target pest. Prior to approving a pesticide for use, EPA conducts risks assessments to determine whether the pesticide meets the safety standards under FIFRA. Approved pesticides have been determined by EPA not to cause unreasonable adverse effects on the environment.

In addition, the PGP requires any observed adverse incidents to be reported to DEQ. Larger pesticide applicators have additional requirements including maintaining and calibrating their pesticide application equipment and the development of a Pesticide Discharge Management Plan (PDMP) to provide a pest management strategy.

The PGP is applicable to all state surface waters, including Outstanding Resource Waters, A-Closed, and A-1 waterbodies. Overall, impact from pesticide applications into or over surface waters is expected to have only short-term impacts.

Secondary Impacts

Removal of target species may result in changes in plant community composition and structure. Decline of a dominant weed, for example, may result in an increase in diversity of the plant community.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts may be seen in the form of plant community shifts or impacts to non-target organisms in areas that use and discharge pesticides from agriculture, residential, and other non-regulated sites, or other land-development activities such as subdivisions. Pesticide applicators must apply pesticides in accordance with the FIFRA label, which are written to mitigate impacts.

Under the scope of the PGP, there is little spatial overlap in pesticide applications in terms of location/waterbody, use pattern, and target pest. Applications occur at a frequency directed by the label.

2.5. Terrestrial, Avian, and Aquatic Life and Habitats

Based on a search of the Natural Heritage Database, there are 170 terrestrial, avian, and aquatic Life Species of Concern (SOC) listed across Montana that may be impacted by pesticide applications covered under this PGP (i.e., aquatic/riparian/wetland/etc.). None of the species on the SOC list identify the use of aquatic pesticides as a potential threat. A breakdown of the species is as follows:

- Amphibians: Six (6) species

- Birds: Fifty-one (51) species
- Fish: Twenty (20) species
- Invertebrates: Seventy-seven (77) species
- Mammals: Thirteen (13) species
- Reptiles: Three (3) species

The SOC list is maintained on file.

Direct Impacts

Pesticide application covered under the PGP would include piscicides, lampricides, larvicides, and any other pesticide application to or over state surface waters. As above, the PGP requires owners/operators to apply pesticides in accordance with the FIFRA label and to have the label available. The pesticide must be labeled for use in controlling the target pest. It also requires any observed adverse incidents to be reported to DEQ. Additional requirements apply to larger pesticide applicators. The pesticide must be labeled for use in controlling the target pest.

While the PGP requires owners/operators to select pesticides designed for controlling the target pest, selective control is difficult to achieve, and some damage to non-target organisms may occur. Prior to approving a pesticide for use, EPA conducts risks assessments to determine whether the pesticide meets the safety standards under FIFRA. Approved pesticides have been determined by EPA not to cause unreasonable adverse effects on the environment. Label instructions (including dosage, timing, and buffer zones) are written to mitigate risks to non-target organisms.

The PGP is applicable to all state surface waters, including Outstanding Resource Waters, A-Closed, and A-1 waterbodies. Overall, impact from pesticide applications into or over surface waters is expected to have only short-term impacts.

Secondary Impacts

Removal of target species may result in changes in community composition and structure. Decline of an invasive species, for example, may result in an increase in diversity of the community.

In addition, pesticides may be metabolized and bioaccumulated in the aquatic food chain. Pesticide applicators must apply pesticides in accordance with the FIFRA label, which are written to mitigate bioaccumulation impacts.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts may be seen in the form of impacts to non-target organisms in areas that use and discharge pesticides from agriculture, residential, and other non-regulated sites, or other land-development activities such as subdivisions. Pesticide applicators must apply pesticides in accordance with the FIFRA label, which are written to mitigate impacts.

Under the scope of the PGP, there is little overlap in pesticide applications in terms of location/waterbody, use pattern, and target pest. Individual applications occur at a frequency directed by the label. In areas where there are several other PGP authorizations within the vicinity, each of the permit authorizations protect the beneficial uses of the receiving waters at their specified locations.

2.6. Sage Grouse Executive Order 12-2015

The application of pesticides is identified as an exempt activity under Attachment F of Executive Order 12-2015:

i. Herbicide and pesticide use except for in the control of sagebrush and associated native forbs.

Since the PGP does not authorize pesticide use on sagebrush or associated native forbs, such activity would not be covered under this permit. The PGP is designed to provide MPDES permit coverage for owner/operators who apply pesticides into or over state surface water, including near (such that the pesticide is unavoidably discharged into the surface water).

Therefore, no documentation from the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program is needed for this renewal or any potential authorizations under the renewed PGP.

2.7. History, Culture, and Archaeological Uniqueness

The PGP does not authorize ground disturbance. Pesticide applications occur on or over existing waterbodies. As such, impacts to history, culture, and archaeological uniqueness are not expected with this permitting action, and further analysis was not conducted.

2.8. Demands on Environmental Resources of Land, Water, Air, or Energy

Direct Impacts

Impacts to demands on environmental resources are not anticipated. The PGP does not authorize ground disturbance or the withdrawal or storage of water.

Secondary & Cumulative Impacts

Control of invasive and nuisance pests may marginally support existing water and land uses.

2.9. Human Health and Safety

Owners/operators would be required to adhere to all applicable state and federal safety laws. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has developed rules and guidelines to reduce the risks associated with this type of labor. Few, if any, members of the public would be in immediate proximity to the project during construction or operations.

Direct Impacts

Although there are health and safety risks associated with handling pesticides, FIFRA labeling and pesticide safety training requirements are designed to reduce those risks.

Effluent limits and permit conditions in the proposed permit renewal ensure water quality standards are met and human health is protected. See Fact Sheet (MT DEQ, 2026).

Secondary & Cumulative Impacts

The application of pesticides for mosquito and other vector control is crucial for protecting public health.

There may be several other PGP authorizations within the vicinity of an activity covered

under the PGP that discharge to the same receiving water. Each of these permits protect the beneficial uses of the receiving waters at their specific locations.

2.10. Aesthetics

Direct Impacts

While many pesticides are clear and are invisible upon/shortly after application, applicators may apply dyes in conjunction with the pesticide to track coverage and ensure uniform application. Application of dyes may temporarily affect the aesthetics of the receiving waterbody. While adjuvant selection beyond label compliance is largely at applicator discretion, adjuvants are regulated under II.B.1.c of the PGP.

Secondary & Cumulative Impacts

The PGP may allow the improvement of aesthetics by permitting the legal use of herbicides to control aquatic noxious weeds and algae. Pesticide use may temporarily worsen aesthetics if target pest is allowed to decompose following pesticide application instead of being physically removed.

2.11. Socioeconomics

Direct, Secondary, and Cumulative Impacts

The project would occur on lands with various types of ownership. These projects are generally short-term in duration and not anticipated to have any permanent impacts to population where they occur. The project area would be subject to any plans or rules set forth by the respective municipalities and/or counties. Some short-term jobs may be created if a pesticide applicator is hired to conduct the pesticide application. Impacts to traffic are expected to be minimal. Projects authorized under the PGP are not expected to disrupt native or traditional lifestyles and would not add additional demand for housing.

Invasive and nuisance pest control can support local economies and recreation by reducing disease risk and supporting beneficial uses.

2.12. Private Property Impacts

The proposed project may take place on private land owned by the owner/operator. DEQ's renewal of the facility's MPDES permit authorization would affect the applicant's real property. DEQ has determined, however, that the permit conditions are reasonably necessary to ensure compliance with applicable requirements under the Clean Water Act.

Note that the permit does not prohibit otherwise lawful pesticide use outright; it conditions point-source discharges to state waters, and the applicant retains economically viable use of the property. Therefore, the action does **not** constitute a taking or damaging of private property under Montana law and no further regulatory restriction analysis is warranted.

2.13. Greenhouse Gas Assessment

DEQ is required to evaluate greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for proposed actions that meet the statutory definition of a fossil fuel activity, in accordance with 75-1-211 and 75-1-220, MCA. However, pursuant to 75-1-220(8), this proposed action is excluded from the definition of fossil fuel activity and therefore a GHG assessment is not mandatory.

DEQ applies the MEPA standard of whether GHG emissions are potentially significant given the nature, duration, and intensity of pesticide application activities authorized under the PGP, ARM 17.4.609(3)(d)-(e). Based on the short-term and intermittent nature of pesticide applications, the absence of any combustion-based industrial process, and the lack of ground disturbance or stationary fuel-burning equipment, DEQ concludes that the activities authorized under the PGP would not meaningfully increase GHG emissions, and therefore no additional GHG assessment is necessary for purposes of this EA.

3. DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES

3.1. Additional Alternatives Considered

No Action Alternative: In addition to the proposed action, DEQ must also consider a "no action" alternative. The "no action" alternative would deny the renewal of the MPDES permit. The applicant would lack the authority to conduct the proposed activity. Any potential impacts that would result from the proposed action would not occur. The no action alternative forms the baseline from which the impacts of the proposed action can be measured.

If the applicant demonstrates compliance with all applicable rules and regulations required for approval, the "no action" alternative would not be appropriate.

Other Reasonable Alternative(s): A reasonable alternative would be the issuance of individual permits to discharge with current and proposed eligibility under the PGP. This alternative would result in similar environmental impacts.

3.2. Consultation

DEQ engaged in internal and external efforts to identify substantive issues and/or concerns related to the proposed project. Internal scoping consisted of internal review of the environmental assessment document by DEQ staff. External scoping efforts also included queries to the following websites/databases/personnel:

- Montana Natural Heritage Program
- Montana State Historic Preservation Office
- Clean Water Act Information Center
- United States Environmental Protection Agency

3.3. Significance of Potential Impacts and Need for Further Analysis

When determining whether the preparation of an environmental impact statement is needed, DEQ is required to consider the seven significance criteria set forth in ARM 17.4.608, which are as follows:

- The severity, duration, geographic extent, and frequency of the occurrence of the impact;
- The probability that the impact will occur if the proposed action occurs; or conversely, reasonable assurance in keeping with the potential severity of an impact that the impact will not occur;
- Growth-inducing or growth-inhibiting aspects of the impact, including the relationship or contribution of the impact to cumulative impacts
- The quantity and quality of each environmental resource or value that would be

- affected, including the uniqueness and fragility of those resources and values;
- The importance to the state and to society of each environmental resource or value that would be affected;
 - Any precedent that would be set as a result of an impact of the proposed action that would commit the department to future actions with significant impacts or a decision in principle about such future actions; and
 - Potential conflict with local, state, or federal laws, requirements, or formal plans.

No further environmental analysis is recommended. An EIS is not required under MEPA because the project lacks significant effects to the human and/or physical environments.

3.4. Conclusions and Findings

No significant impacts are anticipated if the MPDES permit is renewed, and the permittee complies with the terms of the permit.

The preferred action is to renew the existing MPDES permit authorization. This action is preferred because the permit program provides the regulatory mechanism for protecting water quality by enforcing the terms of the MPDES permit.

4. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

A 30-day public comment period was held from July 13, 2026, to August 12, 2026 (Public Notice No. MT-26-07) and a Public Hearing held August 12, 2026. No substantive comments were received during either the comment period or public hearing.

5. PREPARATION

Environmental Assessment and Significance Determination Prepared By:

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6. REFERENCES

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