



BCC 2010-156
July 8, 2010

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Ms. Nancy Espy, Chair
Montana Transportation Commission
Montana Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

RE: Oil Sands Process Modules Project

Dear Ms. Espy:

We wish to express our serious concerns over the transportation of oil sands process modules through Montana on their way to Canada. Based on the information we have been presented, it does not appear that the leadership within the Department of Transportation is taking the collective public concerns seriously.

Since the beginning, the Department has treated this issue strictly from a mitigation standpoint. Clearly the intention of the Department was to issue a permit, regardless of the validity of public opposition. It is also clear that this route, when permitted, will become a permanent route, despite claims by the Department to the contrary. At a minimum, an Environmental Impact Statement should be required by the Department.

This is all very unfortunate and makes us question the Department's commitment in making the environmental process objective. Respectfully, we request that the Transportation Commission intervene and require the Department to conduct a meaningful environmental review that truly evaluates alternatives and their related impacts. Given the rhetoric of the Department, objectivity of the process may be difficult to achieve, so it may make sense to utilize the services of an unbiased third party to perform the necessary environmental review.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS


Michele Landquist, Chair


Bill Carey, Commissioner


Jean Curtiss, Commissioner

BCC/ppr
cc: Greg Robertson, Public Works Director
Pat O'Herren, Rural Initiatives
Mike McMeekin, Missoula County Sheriff
Martha McClain, Deputy County Attorney
Bonner Milltown Community Council