



Environmental Assessment Worksheets

Comments due on November 1, 2000

Benson Municipal Utilities-Five Additional Diesel Electrical Generating Units

Description: The city of Benson proposes to expand the electrical generating capacity of its existing power plant by replacing the two existing (600 kilowatt and 340 kilowatt) engine/generators with five 1825 kilowatt engine/generator sets. The engines would burn number two fuel oil to produce an additional 19.3 megawatts of electricity. The five new engine/generators would be installed within the existing power plant building; no new construction would occur. A copy of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet will be posted on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency web site at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html>

RGU: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Contact: Kevin J. Kain, Project Manager, Metro District, Operations and Planning Section, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 520 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155; 651-296-7432

Hibbing Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion

Description: The city of Hibbing proposes to abandon an existing wastewater treatment facility

ABOUT THE EQB MONITOR

The *EQB Monitor* is a biweekly publication of the Environmental Quality Board that lists descriptions and deadlines for Environmental Assessment Worksheets, Environmental Impact Statements and other notices.

The *EQB Monitor* is also posted on the Environmental Quality Board home page at www.mnplan.state.mn.us

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on the north side of the city (North Plant) and expand the existing wastewater treatment facility on the south side of the city (South Plant) to treat all wastewater from the city. To accept this additional wastewater and to provide some reserve for future growth, the capacity of the South Plant will be expanded from 2.0 million gallons per day to 4.5 million gallons per day. The South Plant will continue to discharge to East Swan Creek. The current North Plant discharge to Penobscot Creek will be ended. A copy of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet will be posted on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency web site at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html>

RGU: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Contact: Craig N. Affeldt, Project Manager, Operations and Planning Unit, North District, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 520 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155; 651-296-7796

Agra Resources Cooperative, dba EXOL Ethanol Plant Expansion

Description: Agra Resources Cooperative, dba EXOL, proposes to expand the existing ethanol production facility and increase ethanol production from a maximum 18 million gallons per year to 50 million gallons per year. Current plant production of 60,330 tons per year of distillers dried grain with solubles which is used as animal feed, will increase to 167,875 tons per year. Corn throughput for the plant will increase from approximately 6.9 million bushels of corn per year, to approximately 19.2 million bushels of corn per year. A copy of the Environmental Assessment Worksheet will be posted on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency web site at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/news/eaw/index.html>

RGU: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Contact: John Elling, Project Manager, North and South Districts, Operations and Planning Section, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 520 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155; 651-296-8011

EAW Withdrawn

Northern States Power Company's Project for PowerLine Agricultural Soil Amendment

Description: The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency prepared an EAW on NSP's proposal to use flue gas desulfurization material and coal ash as an agricultural soil amendment. The public notice period for the EAW was announced in the December 13, 1999 *EQB Monitor*. During the EAW process, several potential issues were raised regarding air emissions, runoff and water quality. In a letter dated August 30, 2000, NSP informed the MPCA that the company is withdrawing its permit applications for the proposed project. The MPCA is therefore withdrawing the EAW. The MPCA would like to express its appreciation to those who submitted comments on the proposed project.

Contact: Barbara Conti, Project Manager, Metro District, Operations and Planning Section, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, 520 Lafayette Rd., St. Paul, MN 55155; 651-296-6703

Petitions Filed

The following petitions have been filed with the EQB requesting preparation of an EAW. The EQB has assigned the indicated unit of government to review the petition and decide on the need for an EAW.

- Rice Lake residential development, Becker County
- Residential development on Westgate Boulevard, City of Duluth
- Pope County Ditch Number 29, Pope County
- Minneapolis and St. Paul stormwater treatment systems improvement projects, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency
- EAW for Jonathon Square, Chaska Commons and Cortina Woods, City of Chaska

EAW Need Decision

The noted responsible government unit has made a decision regarding the need for an EAW in response to a citizen petition.

- Meeker County, Bauerly Companies proposed gravel pit/asphalt plant located in section one of Greenleaf Township, EAW ordered

EIS Need Decisions

Responsible governmental units have determined the following projects do not require preparation of an EIS. The dates given are, respectively, the date of the determination and the date the EAW notice was published in the *EQB Monitor*.

- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Corn Plus Ethanol Plant, September 12, 2000 (July 24, 2000)
- Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Heartland Corn Products Ethanol Plant Expansion, September 10, 2000 (June 26, 2000)
- City of North Mankato, Restoration and Improvement of Spring Lake, September 11, 2000 (April 3, 2000)
- St. Paul City Council, Ogden/Winthrop Sanitary Sewer project (South Highwood), September 11, 2000 (May 29, 2000)
- St. Cloud City Council, Westwood Parkway Project located in the vicinity of County Road 134 and Rolling Ridge Road in St. Cloud, Minnesota, September 11, 2000 (July 10, 2000)
- Federal Highway Administration issued a Finding of No Significant Impact on August 21, 2000, CSAH 81 (Third Street North). The FONSI concluded that the proposed improvements will not significantly impact the human environment. This concludes the environmental review process per the code of Federal Regulations 771.121. Any questions regarding this project may be directed to Mitch Anderson, 320-255-6180 or Ron Bray, 763-277-5787.

EIS Preparation Notice

Pine Island Bog Horticultural Peat Development, Koochiching County, Minnesota

The Department of Natural Resources will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the Pine Island Bog horticultural peat development proposed by Berger Horticultural Products, Ltd., near Big Falls in Koochiching County, Minnesota.

In April, 2000, the DNR distributed a Scoping EAW and Draft Scoping Decision Document to all agencies listed on the EQB distribution list and all interested parties. Availability of the EAW and Decision Document were noticed in the May 1, 2000 *EQB Monitor*. The DNR held a public scoping meeting in Big Falls, Minnesota, and accepted comments during a 30-day public comment period

concluding May 31, 2000.

The DNR considered comments on the proposed scope, made revisions to the Draft Scoping Decision Document, and issued a Final Scoping Decision. The Scoping Decision identifies those project alternatives and issues that will be addressed in the EIS and presents a tentative schedule for EIS completion.

Summary of Scoping Decision

The EIS will address the following issues: fisheries; listed species and ecologically sensitive resources; site suitability for septic system construction; solid and hazardous wastes; traffic; emissions; noise; dust; cultural, historic, and archaeological resources; recreation; scenic views; potential impacts to peatland scientific and natural areas; infrastructure requirements and impacts; cumulative effects; fire risk; effects to tribal lands; wildlife; impacts on water resources including wetlands; dewatering; erosion and sedimentation; water quality; and socioeconomic effects.

The EIS will evaluate the following alternatives:

- Proposed Alternative – As proposed, the project would include 840 acres of commercial horticultural peat fields, portions of 320 acres north of the fields for drainage ditches and settling basins, approximately 64 acres for associated processing facilities and packaged peat storage areas adjoining the bog, and 39 acres for a shipping and distribution peat stockpile yard to be located approximately 3 miles west of the City of Big Falls. The entire 840-acre mine area, 320-acre settling basins area, and 30-acre equipment storage and bog access area is land leased from the State of Minnesota, within the Pine Island State Forest. The land would be cleared of vegetation. Drainage ditches would be constructed to drain the surface of the harvesting area. The surface layers of peat would be raked, dried, vacuum harvested and packed into bales for shipment.
- No-Build Alternative – The EIS will describe the effects of the no-build alternative.
- Technology Alternatives – The “milled peat” method is proposed for mining; the EIS also will address the impacts of “wet” mining methods, specifically dredging.
- Configurational Alternatives – The EIS will evaluate the effects of moving the perimeter ditches 400 feet inward from their proposed locations.
- Scale Alternatives – The EIS will evaluate the effects of a reduced-scale project.
- Incorporation of mitigation measures – The EIS will include the “fully mitigated” alternative.

Connected or Related Actions: The EIS will evaluate the potential effects of upgrading the Pine Island Forest Road, a connected action to the proposed project.

EIS Schedule: The tentative EIS preparation schedule includes Draft EIS publication in April 2001, Final EIS publication in June 2001, and determination of EIS adequacy in July 2001.

RGU: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Contact: Rebecca Wooden, Environmental Planner, 500 Lafayette Rd., Box 10, St. Paul, MN 55155-4010; 651-297-3355; fax 651-296-6047.

Transgenic Herbicide Tolerant Corn - Commercial Use Exemption

Monsanto Company has requested an exemption from the Minnesota Department of Agriculture’s Genetically Engineered Organism Release Permit for Roundup Ready® corn line, NK603, and its progeny. This corn line contains the stably integrated gene, *CP4 EPSPS* whose expression confers tolerance to the herbicide. This gene was isolated from *Agrobacterium* sp., encoding the enzyme, 5-enol-pyruvylshikimate-3-phosphate synthase. This corn line is no longer regulated under USDA/APHIS guidelines. Under this exemption from state permit, Monsanto Company will be allowed to commercially use this herbicide tolerant corn line and its progeny without further regulation. For additional information contact Mary Hanks, Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 651-296-1277.

Public Hearing Postponed and Comment Period Extended

Hiawatha Light Rail Transit Project

The public hearing schedule to reconvene on September 13, 2000 then rescheduled to September 28 has been postponed. Its purpose was to announce the design/build contractor's cost for adding the realignment so that the public could comment on the actual cost. Unfortunately, the contractor's cost for realignment cannot be disclosed until the design/build contract has been signed and that process has still not been completed. Consequently, the hearing has been postponed. You will be informed when the second stage of the hearing is rescheduled.

The deadline for public comments will be extended to at least

October 20, 2000. Please continue to submit written comments to: Mike Schadauer, Hiawatha Project Office, Minnesota Department of Transportation, 155 Fifth Ave. S., Minneapolis, MN 55401.

Reclamation Projects Planned for Fish Rearing Ponds-DNR Section of Fisheries

Carey Lake Fish Rearing Ponds, Cottonwood County (T106, R 38, Sec 24, 25)

Round Lake Fish Rearing Pond, Martin County (T104, R31, S18)

The DNR Section of Fisheries is planning to reclaim Carey and Round Lake fish rearing ponds this fall or winter. The projects involve the application of rotenone, a federal and state registered pesticide, to remove black bullheads from the ponds. The goal of these projects is to improve the ponds for the rearing of walleye fingerlings used in stocking area lakes. The sites will be treated in the fall by boat or through the ice in winter. Target concentrations are 150 ppb. Comments or questions concerning these projects should be addressed to Robert Davis, Area Fisheries Supervisor, Route 2, Box 245, Windom, MN 56101.

EQB Decisions

The Environmental Quality Board, at its September 21 meeting, approved the release of a draft scoping document for the Urban Development Generic Environmental Impact Statement. The draft is now available for public review and comment.

The draft scoping document is the work product of the Urban Development GEIS Steering Committee, a panel of citizens appointed by the EQB chair to advise the EQB on the appropriate scope and content of the study. The draft scoping document contains the consensus recommendations of the committee concerning topics that should be addressed in the GEIS and the specific research questions that should be investigated. For a printed copy of the scoping document, contact Andrea Dick at 651-297-1257. To view it online, go to www.mnplan.state.mn.us/eqb.

In other action, the board deferred acting on the Hancock Pro Pork Environmental Impact Statement cost agreement dispute until October and directed the staff to develop additional information about whether the EIS scope could be reduced, especially with regard to the alternatives to be addressed and socioeconomic impacts.

The board approved *Minnesota Watermarks: Gauging the Flow of Progress 2000-2010* for transmission to the Legislature. *Watermarks* heralds the start of a 10-year process toward unifying water management in Minnesota. It is a major component of the Governor's Water Management Unification Initiative. The report will be available in early October.



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