

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pondera County Commission Applauds Montana Renewables' Commitment to Build a Water Treatment Facility

Montana Renewables should Abandon its Proposed Injection of Wastewater in Pondera County

Conrad, Montana – Montana Renewables announced Tuesday, July 22nd that it would build a water treatment facility to treat the high strength industrial wastewater generated by production of aviation and other biofuels at its Great Falls refinery

The Pondera County Commission, which has been vocal in pushing Montana Renewables to build a water treatment facility and abandon plans to inject its wastewater into the Madison Aquifer via two non-producing oil and gas wells southwest of Valier, welcomed Montana Renewables commitment to build a water treatment facility. The facility will be constructed using money from a \$1.67 billion federal loan guarantee granted by the Department of Energy in February.

The announcement stopped short of addressing whether Montana Renewables would still try to utilize the two wells in Pondera County while the treatment plant is under construction. The EPA has not yet decided whether to issue the permits and aquifer exemption to the wells' owner, Montalban Oil and Gas Operations, required before Montana Renewables could inject its wastewater.

The Pondera County Commissioners issued the following statements in response to the news:

The Pondera County Commission is pleased that Montana Renewables has finally committed to responsibly managing its wastewater and build a water treatment facility at its refinery in Great Falls. Treating the wastewater, which other biofuel manufacturers commonly do, is a far more responsible and sustainable solution than trucking and injecting it underground via old oil and gas wells where it could potentially contaminate the Madison Aquifer or other sources of clean water that people in our community depend on. We strongly encourage the Department of

Energy and Sen. Daines to work with Montana Renewables to get the water treatment plant designed, permitted and built right away.

However, this announcement does not include any mention of whether or not Montana Renewables will utilize these wells in Pondera County if the EPA issues the necessary permits currently under consideration.

Therefore, we ask Montana Renewables to demonstrate their commitment to environmental stewardship and civic responsibility by publicly rejecting the use of these wells. We also call on the EPA to protect clean drinking and agricultural water resources by denying the permits and aquifer exemption requested for these wells by Montalban.

In response to the statement, the County Sanitarian issued the following statement:

Montana Renewables announcement that they will build a water treatment plant is encouraging news for farmers and ranchers and for rural residents of our county. Clean water is one of our most precious resources. Montana Renewables wastewater contains potentially unacceptable levels of nutrients, heavy metals, residual pesticides or other contaminants that could pollute drinking and agricultural water sources. Their proposal to inject this wastewater underground needlessly puts these valuable water resources at risk. Water treatment is a far better, more sustainable option that does not negatively impact Montana Renewables' rural neighbors, farmers, and ranchers. I'm grateful to see Montana Renewables finally commit to this common-sense solution. Now it's time Montana Renewables take the injection well proposal off the table once and for all, and for the EPA to do its part to protect our water by denying these unnecessary permits.

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