



ADMINISTRATIVE RULES OF MONTANA

17.4.610 PUBLIC REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS

- (1) The level of analysis in an EA will vary with the complexity and seriousness of environmental issues associated with a proposed action. The level of public interest will also vary. The agency is responsible for adjusting public review to match these factors.
- (2) An EA is a public document and may be inspected upon request. Any person may obtain a copy of an EA by making a request to the agency. If the document is out-of-print, a copying charge may be levied.
- (3) The agency is responsible for providing additional opportunities for public review consistent with the seriousness and complexity of the environmental issues associated with a proposed action and the level of public interest. Methods of accomplishing public review include publishing a news release or legal notice to announce the availability of an EA, summarizing its content and soliciting public comment; holding public meetings or hearings; maintaining mailing lists of persons interested in a particular action or type of action and notifying them of the availability of EAs on such actions; and distributing copies of EAs for review and comment.
- (4) For an action with limited environmental impact and little public interest, no further public review may be warranted. However, where an action is one that normally requires an EIS, but effects that otherwise might be deemed significant are mitigated in the project proposal or by controls imposed by the agency, public involvement must include the opportunity for public comment, a public meeting or hearing, and adequate notice. The agency is responsible for determining appropriate methods to ensure adequate public review on a case by case basis.
- (5) The agency shall maintain a log of all EAs completed by the agency and shall submit a list of any new EAs completed to the office of the governor and the environmental quality council on a quarterly basis. In addition, the agency shall submit a copy of each completed EA to the EQC.
- (6) The agency shall consider the substantive comments received in response to an EA and proceed in accordance with one of the following steps, as appropriate:
 - (a) determine that an EIS is necessary;
 - (b) determine that the EA did not adequately reflect the issues raised by the proposed action and issue a revised document; or
 - (c) determine that an EIS is not necessary and make a final decision on the proposed action, with appropriate modification resulting from the analysis in the EA and analysis of public comment.

Authorizing statute(s): 2-3-103, 2-4-201, MCA

Implementing statute(s): 2-3-104, 75-1-201, MCA

History: NEW, 1989 MAR p. 226, Eff. 1/27/89; TRANS, from DHES, 1996 MAR p. 1497.