

**BALLOT LANGUAGE FOR INITIATIVE REFERENDUM NO. 126 (IR-126)**

**INITIATIVE REFERENDUM NO. 126**

**AN INITIATIVE REFERENDUM PROPOSED BY INITIATIVE PETITION**

IR-126 repeals House Bill (HB) 273 passed by the 2021 Montana Legislature. HB 273 repealed the requirement that Montana voters approve the construction of new nuclear facilities in Montana that generate 50 megawatts of electricity or more. HB 273 also repealed the strict owner liability and safety requirements imposed on only nuclear facilities. These requirements had been in effect since I-80 passed in 1978.

IR-126 would put back into law the requirement that Montana voters approve the construction of new nuclear facilities in Montana that generate 50 megawatts of electricity or more and the strict owner liability and safety requirements imposed on only nuclear facilities.

☐ YES on Referendum 126

☐ NO on Referendum 126

AN ACT REPEALING THE LAWS AUTHORIZING THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA THROUGH STATEWIDE VOTE TO APPROVE OR REJECT A PROPOSED NUCLEAR POWER FACILITY CERTIFIED UNDER THE MONTANA MAJOR FACILITY SITING ACT; AMENDING SECTIONS 75-1-207, 75-2-103, 75-5-103, 75-20-104, AND 75-20-201, MCA; REPEALING SECTIONS 75-20-1201, 75-20-1202, 75-20-1203, 75-20-1204, AND 75-20-1205, MCA; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

**Section 1.** Section 75-1-207, MCA, is amended to read:

**"75-1-207. Major facility siting applications excepted.** (1) Except as provided in subsection (2), a fee as prescribed by this part may not be assessed against any person, corporation, partnership, firm, association, or other private entity filing an application for a certificate under the provisions of the Montana Major Facility Siting Act, Title 75, chapter 20.

(2) The department of environmental quality may require payment of costs under 75-1-205(1)(a) by a person who files a petition under ~~75-20-201(5)~~ 75-20-201(4)."

**Section 2.** Section 75-2-103, MCA, is amended to read:

**"75-2-103. Definitions.** Unless the context requires otherwise, in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Air contaminant" means dust, fumes, mist, smoke, other particulate matter, vapor, gas, odorous substances, or any combination of those air contaminants.

(2) "Air pollutants" means one or more air contaminants that are present in the outdoor atmosphere, including those pollutants regulated pursuant to section 7412 and Subchapter V of the federal Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. 7401, et seq.

(3) "Air pollution" means the presence of air pollutants in a quantity and for a duration that are or tend to be injurious to human health or welfare, animal or plant life, or property or that would unreasonably interfere with the enjoyment of life, property, or the conduct of business.

(4) "Associated supporting infrastructure" means:

(a) electric transmission and distribution facilities;

(b) pipeline facilities;

(c) aboveground ponds and reservoirs and underground storage reservoirs;

(d) rail transportation;

(e) aqueducts and diversion dams;

(f) devices or equipment associated with the delivery of an energy form or product produced at an energy development project; or

(g) other supporting infrastructure, as defined by board rule, that is necessary for an energy development project.

(5) "Board" means the board of environmental review provided for in 2-15-3502.

(6) (a) "Commercial hazardous waste incinerator" means:

(i) an incinerator that burns hazardous waste; or

(ii) a boiler or industrial furnace subject to the provisions of 75-10-406.

(b) Commercial hazardous waste incinerator does not include a research and development facility that receives federal or state research funds and that burns hazardous waste primarily to test and evaluate waste treatment remediation technologies.

(7) "Department" means the department of environmental quality provided for in 2-15-3501.

(8) "Emission" means a release into the outdoor atmosphere of air contaminants.

(9) ~~(a)~~ "Energy development project" means each plant, unit, or other development and associated developments, including any associated supporting infrastructure, designed for or capable of:

~~(i)~~(a) generating electricity;

~~(ii)~~(b) producing gas derived from coal;

~~(iii)~~(c) producing liquid hydrocarbon products;

~~(iv)~~(d) refining crude oil or natural gas;

~~(v)~~(e) producing alcohol to be blended for ethanol-blended gasoline and that are eligible for a tax incentive pursuant to Title 15, chapter 70, part 5;

~~(vi)~~(f) producing biodiesel and that are eligible for a tax incentive for the production of biodiesel pursuant to 15-32-701; or

~~(vii)~~(g) transmitting electricity through an electric transmission line with a design capacity of equal to or greater than 50 kilovolts.

~~(b) The term does not include a nuclear facility as defined in 75-20-1202.~~

(10) "Environmental protection law" means a law contained in or an administrative rule adopted pursuant to Title 75, chapter 2, 5, 10, or 11.

(11) "Hazardous waste" means:

(a) a substance defined as hazardous under 75-10-403 or defined as hazardous in department administrative rules adopted pursuant to Title 75, chapter 10, part 4; or

(b) a waste containing 2 parts or more per million of polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB).

(12) (a) "Incinerator" means any single- or multiple-chambered combustion device that burns combustible material, alone or with a supplemental fuel or with catalytic combustion assistance, primarily for the purpose of removal, destruction, disposal, or volume reduction of any portion of the input material.

(b) Incinerator does not include:

(i) safety flares used to combust or dispose of hazardous or toxic gases at industrial facilities, such as refineries, gas sweetening plants, oil and gas wells, sulfur recovery plants, or elemental phosphorus plants;

(ii) space heaters that burn used oil;

(iii) wood-fired boilers; or

(iv) wood waste burners, such as tepee, wigwam, truncated cone, or silo burners.

(13) "Medical waste" means any waste that is generated in the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of human beings or animals, in medical research on humans or animals, or in the production or testing of biologicals. The term includes:

(a) cultures and stocks of infectious agents;

(b) human pathological wastes;

(c) waste human blood or products of human blood;

(d) sharps;

(e) contaminated animal carcasses, body parts, and bedding that were known to have been exposed to infectious agents during research;

(f) laboratory wastes and wastes from autopsy or surgery that were in contact with infectious agents; and

(g) biological waste and discarded material contaminated with blood, excretion, exudates, or secretions from humans or animals.

(14) (a) "Oil or gas well facility" means a well that produces oil or natural gas. The term includes:

(i) equipment associated with the well and used for the purpose of producing, treating, separating, or storing oil, natural gas, or other liquids produced by the well; and

(ii) a group of wells under common ownership or control that produce oil or natural gas and that share common equipment used for the purpose of producing, treating, separating, or storing oil, natural gas, or other liquids produced by the wells.

(b) The equipment referred to in subsection (14)(a) includes but is not limited to wellhead assemblies, amine units, prime mover engines, phase separators, heater treater units, dehydrator units, tanks, and connecting tubing.

(c) The term does not include equipment such as compressor engines used for transmission of oil or natural gas.

(15) "Person" means an individual, a partnership, a firm, an association, a municipality, a public or private corporation, the state or a subdivision or agency of the state, a trust, an estate, an interstate body, the federal government or an agency of the federal government, or any other legal entity and includes persons resident in Canada.

(16) "Principal" means a principal of a corporation, including but not limited to a partner, associate, officer, parent corporation, or subsidiary corporation.

(17) "Small business stationary source" means a stationary source that:

(a) is owned or operated by a person who employs 100 or fewer individuals;

(b) is a small business concern as defined in the Small Business Act, 15 U.S.C. 631, et seq.;

(c) is not a major stationary source as defined in Subchapter V of the federal Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. 7661, et seq.;

(d) emits less than 50 tons per year of an air pollutant;

(e) emits less than a total of 75 tons per year of all air pollutants combined; and

(f) is not excluded from this definition under 75-2-108(3).

(18) (a) "Solid waste" means all putrescible and nonputrescible solid, semisolid, liquid, or gaseous wastes, including but not limited to garbage; rubbish; refuse; ashes; swill; food wastes; commercial or industrial wastes; medical waste; sludge from sewage treatment plants, water supply treatment plants, or air pollution control facilities; construction, demolition, or salvage wastes; dead animals, dead animal parts, offal, animal droppings, or litter; discarded home and industrial appliances; automobile bodies, tires, interiors, or parts thereof; wood products or wood byproducts and inert materials; styrofoam and other plastics; rubber materials; asphalt shingles; tarpaper; electrical equipment, transformers, or insulated wire; oil or petroleum products or oil or petroleum products and inert materials; treated lumber and timbers; and pathogenic or infectious waste.

(b) Solid waste does not include municipal sewage, industrial wastewater effluents, mining wastes regulated under the mining and reclamation laws administered by the department of environmental quality, or slash and forest debris regulated under laws administered by the department of natural resources and conservation."

**Section 3.** Section 75-5-103, MCA, is amended to read:

**"75-5-103. (Temporary) Definitions.** Unless the context requires otherwise, in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Associated supporting infrastructure" means:

(a) electric transmission and distribution facilities;

(b) pipeline facilities;

(c) aboveground ponds and reservoirs and underground storage reservoirs;

(d) rail transportation;

(e) aqueducts and diversion dams;

(f) devices or equipment associated with the delivery of an energy form or product produced at an energy development project; or

(g) other supporting infrastructure, as defined by board rule, that is necessary for an energy development project.

(2) (a) "Base numeric nutrient standards" means numeric water quality criteria for nutrients in surface water that are adopted to protect the designated uses of a surface water body.

(b) The term does not include numeric water quality standards for nitrate, nitrate plus nitrite, or nitrite that are adopted to protect human health.

(3) "Board" means the board of environmental review provided for in 2-15-3502.

(4) "Contamination" means impairment of the quality of state waters by sewage, industrial wastes, or other wastes, creating a hazard to human health.

(5) "Council" means the water pollution control advisory council provided for in 2-15-2107.

(6) (a) "Currently available data" means data that is readily available to the department at the time a decision is made, including information supporting its previous lists of water bodies that are threatened or impaired.

(b) The term does not mean new data to be obtained as a result of department efforts.

(7) "Degradation" means a change in water quality that lowers the quality of high-quality waters for a parameter. The term does not include those changes in water quality determined to be nonsignificant pursuant to 75-5-301(5)(c).

(8) "Department" means the department of environmental quality provided for in 2-15-3501.

(9) "Disposal system" means a system for disposing of sewage, industrial, or other wastes and includes sewage systems and treatment works.

(10) "Effluent standard" means a restriction or prohibition on quantities, rates, and concentrations of chemical, physical, biological, and other constituents that are discharged into state waters.

(11) ~~(a)~~ "Energy development project" means each plant, unit, or other development and associated developments, including any associated supporting infrastructure, designed for or capable of:

~~(i)~~(a) generating electricity;

~~(ii)~~(b) producing gas derived from coal;

~~(iii)~~(c) producing liquid hydrocarbon products;

~~(iv)~~(d) refining crude oil or natural gas;

~~(v)~~(e) producing alcohol to be blended for ethanol-blended gasoline and that are eligible for a tax incentive pursuant to Title 15, chapter 70, part 5;

~~(vi)~~(f) producing biodiesel and that are eligible for a tax incentive for the production of biodiesel pursuant to 15-32-701; or

~~(vii)~~(g) transmitting electricity through an electric transmission line with a design capacity of equal to or greater than 50 kilovolts.

~~(b) The term does not include a nuclear facility as defined in 75-20-1202.~~

(12) "Existing uses" means those uses actually attained in state waters on or after July 1, 1971, whether or not those uses are included in the water quality standards.

(13) "High-quality waters" means all state waters, except:

(a) ground water classified as of January 1, 1995, within the "III" or "IV" classifications established by the board's classification rules; and

(b) surface waters that:

(i) are not capable of supporting any one of the designated uses for their classification; or

(ii) have zero flow or surface expression for more than 270 days during most years.

(14) "Impaired water body" means a water body or stream segment for which sufficient credible data shows that the water body or stream segment is failing to achieve compliance with applicable water quality standards.

(15) "Industrial waste" means a waste substance from the process of business or industry or from the development of any natural resource, together with any sewage that may be present.

(16) "Interested person" means a person who has a real property interest, a water right, or an economic interest that is or may be directly and adversely affected by the department's preliminary decision regarding degradation of state waters, pursuant to 75-5-303. The term includes a person who has requested authorization to degrade high-quality waters.

(17) "Load allocation" means the portion of a receiving water's loading capacity that is allocated to one of its existing or future nonpoint sources or to natural background sources.

(18) "Loading capacity" means the mass of a pollutant that a water body can assimilate without a violation of water quality standards. For pollutants that cannot be measured in terms of mass, it means the maximum change that can occur from the best practicable condition in a surface water without causing a violation of the surface water quality standards.

(19) "Local department of health" means the staff, including health officers, employed by a county, city, city-county, or district board of health.

(20) "Metal parameters" includes but is not limited to aluminum, antimony, arsenic, beryllium, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, fluoride, iron, lead, manganese, mercury, nickel, selenium, silver, thallium, and zinc.

(21) "Mixing zone" means an area established in a permit or final decision on nondegradation issued by the department where water quality standards may be exceeded, subject to conditions that are imposed by the department and that are consistent with the rules adopted by the board.

(22) "Nutrient standards variance" means numeric water quality criteria for nutrients based on a determination that base numeric nutrient standards cannot be achieved because of economic impacts or because of the limits of technology. The term includes individual, general, and alternative nutrient standards variances in accordance with 75-5-313.

(23) "Nutrient work group" means an advisory work group, convened by the department, representing publicly owned and privately owned point sources of pollution, nonpoint sources of pollution, and other interested parties that will advise the department on the base numeric nutrient standards, the development of nutrient standards variances, and the implementation of those standards and variances together with associated economic impacts.

(24) "Other wastes" means garbage, municipal refuse, decayed wood, sawdust, shavings, bark, lime, sand, ashes, offal, night soil, oil, grease, tar, heat, chemicals, dead animals, sediment, wrecked or discarded equipment, radioactive materials, solid waste, and all other substances that may pollute state waters.

(25) "Outstanding resource waters" means:

(a) state surface waters located wholly within the boundaries of areas designated as national parks or national wilderness areas as of October 1, 1995; or

(b) other surface waters or ground waters classified by the board under the provisions of 75-5-316 and approved by the legislature.

(26) "Owner or operator" means a person who owns, leases, operates, controls, or supervises a point source.

(27) "Parameter" means a physical, biological, or chemical property of state water when a value of that property affects the quality of the state water.

(28) "Person" means the state, a political subdivision of the state, institution, firm, corporation, partnership, individual, or other entity and includes persons resident in Canada.

(29) "Point source" means a discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, including but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container, rolling stock, or vessel or other floating craft, from which pollutants are or may be discharged.

(30) (a) "Pollution" means:

(i) contamination or other alteration of the physical, chemical, or biological properties of state waters that exceeds that permitted by Montana water quality standards, including but not limited to standards relating to change in temperature, taste, color, turbidity, or odor; or

(ii) the discharge, seepage, drainage, infiltration, or flow of liquid, gaseous, solid, radioactive, or other substance into state water that will or is likely to create a nuisance or render the waters harmful, detrimental, or injurious to public health, recreation, safety, or welfare, to livestock, or to wild animals, birds, fish, or other wildlife.

(b) The term does not include:

(i) a discharge, seepage, drainage, infiltration, or flow that is authorized under the pollution discharge permit rules adopted by the board under this chapter;

(ii) activities conducted under this chapter that comply with the conditions imposed by the department in short-term authorizations pursuant to 75-5-308;

(iii) contamination of ground water within the boundaries of an underground mine using in situ coal gasification and operating in accordance with a permit issued under 82-4-221.

(c) Contamination referred to in subsection (30)(b)(iii) does not require a mixing zone.

(31) "Sewage" means water-carried waste products from residences, public buildings, institutions, or other buildings, including discharge from human beings or animals, together with ground water infiltration and surface water present.

(32) "Sewage system" means a device for collecting or conducting sewage, industrial wastes, or other wastes to an ultimate disposal point.

(33) "Standard of performance" means a standard adopted by the board for the control of the discharge of pollutants that reflects the greatest degree of effluent reduction achievable through



application of the best available demonstrated control technology, processes, operating methods, or other alternatives, including, when practicable, a standard permitting no discharge of pollutants.

(34) (a) "State waters" means a body of water, irrigation system, or drainage system, either surface or underground.

(b) The term does not apply to:

- (i) ponds or lagoons used solely for treating, transporting, or impounding pollutants; or
- (ii) irrigation waters or land application disposal waters when the waters are used up within the irrigation or land application disposal system and the waters are not returned to state waters.

(35) "Sufficient credible data" means chemical, physical, or biological monitoring data, alone or in combination with narrative information, that supports a finding as to whether a water body is achieving compliance with applicable water quality standards.

(36) "Threatened water body" means a water body or stream segment for which sufficient credible data and calculated increases in loads show that the water body or stream segment is fully supporting its designated uses but threatened for a particular designated use because of:

(a) proposed sources that are not subject to pollution prevention or control actions required by a discharge permit, the nondegradation provisions, or reasonable land, soil, and water conservation practices; or

(b) documented adverse pollution trends.

(37) "Total maximum daily load" or "TMDL" means the sum of the individual waste load allocations for point sources and load allocations for both nonpoint sources and natural background sources established at a level necessary to achieve compliance with applicable surface water quality standards.

(38) "Treatment works" means works, including sewage lagoons, installed for treating or holding sewage, industrial wastes, or other wastes.

(39) "Waste load allocation" means the portion of a receiving water's loading capacity that is allocated to one of its existing or future point sources.

(40) "Water quality protection practices" means those activities, prohibitions, maintenance procedures, or other management practices applied to point and nonpoint sources designed to protect, maintain, and improve the quality of state waters. Water quality protection practices include but are not limited to treatment requirements, standards of performance, effluent standards, and operating procedures and practices to control site runoff, spillage or leaks, sludge or water disposal, or drainage from material storage.

(41) "Water well" means an excavation that is drilled, cored, bored, washed, driven, dug, jetted, or otherwise constructed and intended for the location, diversion, artificial recharge, or acquisition of ground water.

(42) "Watershed advisory group" means a group of individuals who wish to participate in an advisory capacity in revising and reprioritizing the list of water bodies developed under 75-5-702 and in

the development of TMDLs under 75-5-703, including those groups or individuals requested by the department to participate in an advisory capacity as provided in 75-5-704.

**75-5-103. (Effective on occurrence of contingency) Definitions.** Unless the context requires otherwise, in this chapter, the following definitions apply:

- (1) "Associated supporting infrastructure" means:
  - (a) electric transmission and distribution facilities;
  - (b) pipeline facilities;
  - (c) aboveground ponds and reservoirs and underground storage reservoirs;
  - (d) rail transportation;
  - (e) aqueducts and diversion dams;
  - (f) devices or equipment associated with the delivery of an energy form or product produced at an energy development project; or
  - (g) other supporting infrastructure, as defined by board rule, that is necessary for an energy development project.
- (2) (a) "Base numeric nutrient standards" means numeric water quality criteria for nutrients in surface water that are adopted to protect the designated uses of a surface water body.
  - (b) The term does not include numeric water quality standards for nitrate, nitrate plus nitrite, or nitrite that are adopted to protect human health.
- (3) "Board" means the board of environmental review provided for in 2-15-3502.
- (4) "Contamination" means impairment of the quality of state waters by sewage, industrial wastes, or other wastes, creating a hazard to human health.
- (5) "Council" means the water pollution control advisory council provided for in 2-15-2107.
- (6) (a) "Currently available data" means data that is readily available to the department at the time a decision is made, including information supporting its previous lists of water bodies that are threatened or impaired.
  - (b) The term does not mean new data to be obtained as a result of department efforts.
- (7) "Degradation" means a change in water quality that lowers the quality of high-quality waters for a parameter. The term does not include those changes in water quality determined to be nonsignificant pursuant to 75-5-301(5)(c).
- (8) "Department" means the department of environmental quality provided for in 2-15-3501.
- (9) "Disposal system" means a system for disposing of sewage, industrial, or other wastes and includes sewage systems and treatment works.
- (10) "Effluent standard" means a restriction or prohibition on quantities, rates, and concentrations of chemical, physical, biological, and other constituents that are discharged into state waters.
- (11) ~~(a)~~ "Energy development project" means each plant, unit, or other development and associated developments, including any associated supporting infrastructure, designed for or capable of:
  - ~~(i)~~(a) generating electricity;

~~(ii)(b)~~ producing gas derived from coal;

~~(iii)(c)~~ producing liquid hydrocarbon products;

~~(iv)(d)~~ refining crude oil or natural gas;

~~(v)(e)~~ producing alcohol to be blended for ethanol-blended gasoline and that are eligible for a tax incentive pursuant to Title 15, chapter 70, part 5;

~~(vi)(f)~~ producing biodiesel and that are eligible for a tax incentive for the production of biodiesel pursuant to 15-32-701; or

~~(vii)(g)~~ transmitting electricity through an electric transmission line with a design capacity of equal to or greater than 50 kilovolts.

~~(b) The term does not include a nuclear facility as defined in 75-20-1202.~~

(12) "Existing uses" means those uses actually attained in state waters on or after July 1, 1971, whether or not those uses are included in the water quality standards.

(13) "High-quality waters" means all state waters, except:

(a) ground water classified as of January 1, 1995, within the "III" or "IV" classifications established by the board's classification rules; and

(b) surface waters that:

- (i) are not capable of supporting any one of the designated uses for their classification; or
- (ii) have zero flow or surface expression for more than 270 days during most years.

(14) "Impaired water body" means a water body or stream segment for which sufficient credible data shows that the water body or stream segment is failing to achieve compliance with applicable water quality standards.

(15) "Industrial waste" means a waste substance from the process of business or industry or from the development of any natural resource, together with any sewage that may be present.

(16) "Interested person" means a person who has a real property interest, a water right, or an economic interest that is or may be directly and adversely affected by the department's preliminary decision regarding degradation of state waters, pursuant to 75-5-303. The term includes a person who has requested authorization to degrade high-quality waters.

(17) "Load allocation" means the portion of a receiving water's loading capacity that is allocated to one of its existing or future nonpoint sources or to natural background sources.

(18) "Loading capacity" means the mass of a pollutant that a water body can assimilate without a violation of water quality standards. For pollutants that cannot be measured in terms of mass, it means the maximum change that can occur from the best practicable condition in a surface water without causing a violation of the surface water quality standards.

(19) "Local department of health" means the staff, including health officers, employed by a county, city, city-county, or district board of health.

(20) "Metal parameters" includes but is not limited to aluminum, antimony, arsenic, beryllium, barium, cadmium, chromium, copper, fluoride, iron, lead, manganese, mercury, nickel, selenium, silver, thallium, and zinc.

(21) "Mixing zone" means an area established in a permit or final decision on nondegradation issued by the department where water quality standards may be exceeded, subject to conditions that are imposed by the department and that are consistent with the rules adopted by the board.

(22) "Nutrient standards variance" means numeric water quality criteria for nutrients based on a determination that base numeric nutrient standards cannot be achieved because of economic impacts or because of the limits of technology. The term includes individual, general, and alternative nutrient standards variances in accordance with 75-5-313.

(23) "Nutrient work group" means an advisory work group, convened by the department, representing publicly owned and privately owned point sources of pollution, nonpoint sources of pollution, and other interested parties that will advise the department on the base numeric nutrient standards, the development of nutrient standards variances, and the implementation of those standards and variances together with associated economic impacts.

(24) "Other wastes" means garbage, municipal refuse, decayed wood, sawdust, shavings, bark, lime, sand, ashes, offal, night soil, oil, grease, tar, heat, chemicals, dead animals, sediment, wrecked or discarded equipment, radioactive materials, solid waste, and all other substances that may pollute state waters.

(25) "Outstanding resource waters" means:

(a) state surface waters located wholly within the boundaries of areas designated as national parks or national wilderness areas as of October 1, 1995; or

(b) other surface waters or ground waters classified by the board under the provisions of 75-5-316 and approved by the legislature.

(26) "Owner or operator" means a person who owns, leases, operates, controls, or supervises a point source.

(27) "Parameter" means a physical, biological, or chemical property of state water when a value of that property affects the quality of the state water.

(28) "Person" means the state, a political subdivision of the state, institution, firm, corporation, partnership, individual, or other entity and includes persons resident in Canada.

(29) "Point source" means a discernible, confined, and discrete conveyance, including but not limited to any pipe, ditch, channel, tunnel, conduit, well, discrete fissure, container, rolling stock, or vessel or other floating craft, from which pollutants are or may be discharged.

(30) (a) "Pollution" means:

(i) contamination or other alteration of the physical, chemical, or biological properties of state waters that exceeds that permitted by Montana water quality standards, including but not limited to standards relating to change in temperature, taste, color, turbidity, or odor; or

(ii) the discharge, seepage, drainage, infiltration, or flow of liquid, gaseous, solid, radioactive, or other substance into state water that will or is likely to create a nuisance or render the waters harmful, detrimental, or injurious to public health, recreation, safety, or welfare, to livestock, or to wild animals, birds, fish, or other wildlife.

(b) The term does not include:

(i) a discharge, seepage, drainage, infiltration, or flow that is authorized under the pollution discharge permit rules adopted by the board under this chapter;

(ii) activities conducted under this chapter that comply with the conditions imposed by the department in short-term authorizations pursuant to 75-5-308;

(iii) contamination of ground water within the boundaries of a geologic storage reservoir, as defined in 82-11-101, by a carbon dioxide injection well in accordance with a permit issued pursuant to Title 82, chapter 11, part 1;

(iv) contamination of ground water within the boundaries of an underground mine using in situ coal gasification and operating in accordance with a permit issued under 82-4-221;

(c) Contamination referred to in subsections (30)(b)(iii) and (30)(b)(iv) does not require a mixing zone.

(31) "Sewage" means water-carried waste products from residences, public buildings, institutions, or other buildings, including discharge from human beings or animals, together with ground water infiltration and surface water present.

(32) "Sewage system" means a device for collecting or conducting sewage, industrial wastes, or other wastes to an ultimate disposal point.

(33) "Standard of performance" means a standard adopted by the board for the control of the discharge of pollutants that reflects the greatest degree of effluent reduction achievable through application of the best available demonstrated control technology, processes, operating methods, or other alternatives, including, when practicable, a standard permitting no discharge of pollutants.

(34) (a) "State waters" means a body of water, irrigation system, or drainage system, either surface or underground.

(b) The term does not apply to:

(i) ponds or lagoons used solely for treating, transporting, or impounding pollutants; or

(ii) irrigation waters or land application disposal waters when the waters are used up within the irrigation or land application disposal system and the waters are not returned to state waters.

(35) "Sufficient credible data" means chemical, physical, or biological monitoring data, alone or in combination with narrative information, that supports a finding as to whether a water body is achieving compliance with applicable water quality standards.

(36) "Threatened water body" means a water body or stream segment for which sufficient credible data and calculated increases in loads show that the water body or stream segment is fully supporting its designated uses but threatened for a particular designated use because of:

(a) proposed sources that are not subject to pollution prevention or control actions required by a discharge permit, the nondegradation provisions, or reasonable land, soil, and water conservation practices; or

(b) documented adverse pollution trends.

(37) "Total maximum daily load" or "TMDL" means the sum of the individual waste load allocations for point sources and load allocations for both nonpoint sources and natural background sources established at a level necessary to achieve compliance with applicable surface water quality standards.

(38) "Treatment works" means works, including sewage lagoons, installed for treating or holding sewage, industrial wastes, or other wastes.

(39) "Waste load allocation" means the portion of a receiving water's loading capacity that is allocated to one of its existing or future point sources.

(40) "Water quality protection practices" means those activities, prohibitions, maintenance procedures, or other management practices applied to point and nonpoint sources designed to protect, maintain, and improve the quality of state waters. Water quality protection practices include but are not limited to treatment requirements, standards of performance, effluent standards, and operating procedures and practices to control site runoff, spillage or leaks, sludge or water disposal, or drainage from material storage.

(41) "Water well" means an excavation that is drilled, cored, bored, washed, driven, dug, jetted, or otherwise constructed and intended for the location, diversion, artificial recharge, or acquisition of ground water.

(42) "Watershed advisory group" means a group of individuals who wish to participate in an advisory capacity in revising and reprioritizing the list of water bodies developed under 75-5-702 and in the development of TMDLs under 75-5-703, including those groups or individuals requested by the department to participate in an advisory capacity as provided in 75-5-704."

**Section 4.** Section 75-20-104, MCA, is amended to read:

**"75-20-104. Definitions.** In this chapter, unless the context requires otherwise, the following definitions apply:

(1) "Addition thereto" means the installation of new machinery and equipment that would significantly change the conditions under which the facility is operated.

(2) "Application" means an application for a certificate submitted in accordance with this chapter and the rules adopted under this chapter.

(3) (a) "Associated facilities" includes but is not limited to transportation links of any kind, aqueducts, diversion dams, pipelines, storage ponds, reservoirs, and any other device or equipment associated with the delivery of the energy form or product produced by a facility.

(b) The term does not include a transmission substation, a switchyard, voltage support, or other control equipment or a facility or a natural gas or crude oil gathering line 25 inches or less in inside diameter.

(4) "Board" means the board of environmental review provided for in 2-15-3502.

(5) "Certificate" means the certificate of compliance issued by the department under this chapter that is required for the construction or operation of a facility.

(6) "Commence to construct" means:

(a) any clearing of land, excavation, construction, or other action that would affect the environment of the site or route of a facility but does not mean changes needed for temporary use of sites or routes for nonutility purposes or uses in securing geological data, including necessary borings to ascertain foundation conditions;

(b) the fracturing of underground formations by any means if the activity is related to the possible future development of a gasification facility or a facility employing geothermal resources but does not include the gathering of geological data by boring of test holes or other underground exploration, investigation, or experimentation;

(c) the commencement of eminent domain proceedings under Title 70, chapter 30, for land or rights-of-way upon or over which a facility may be constructed;

(d) the relocation or upgrading of an existing facility defined by subsection (9)(a) or (9)(b), including upgrading to a design capacity covered by subsection (9)(a), except that the term does not include normal maintenance or repair of an existing facility.

(7) (a) "Commencement of acquisition of right-of-way" means the actual, defined legal transfer of property.

(b) The term does not mean preliminary discussions, option agreements that are not within 60 days of commencement of acquisition, letters of intent, or other documents that do not conclusively result in the legal transfer of property.

(8) "Department" means the department of environmental quality provided for in 2-15-3501.

(9) "Facility" means, ~~subject to 75-20-1202~~:

(a) each electric transmission line and associated facilities of a design capacity of more than 69 kilovolts, except that the term:

(i) does not include an electric transmission line and associated facilities of a design capacity of 230 kilovolts or less and 10 miles or less in length;

(ii) does not include an electric transmission line with a design capacity of more than 69 kilovolts for which the person planning to construct the line has obtained right-of-way agreements or options for a right-of-way from more than 75% of the owners who collectively own more than 75% of the property along the centerline;

(iii) does not include electric transmission lines that are collectively less than 150 miles in length and are required under state or federal regulations and laws, with respect to reliability of service, for an

electrical generation facility, as defined in 15-24-3001(4), or a wind generation facility, biomass generation facility, or energy storage facility, as defined in 15-6-157, to interconnect to a regional transmission grid or secure firm transmission service to use the grid for which the person planning to construct the line or lines has obtained right-of-way agreements or options for a right-of-way from more than 75% of the owners who collectively own more than 75% of the property along the centerline or centerlines;

(iv) does not include an upgrade to an existing transmission line of a design capacity of 50 kilovolts or more to increase that line's capacity, including construction outside the existing easement or right-of-way. Except for a newly acquired easement or right-of-way necessary to comply with electromagnetic field standards, a newly acquired easement or right-of-way outside the existing easement or right-of-way as described in this subsection (9)(a)(iv) may not exceed a total of 10 miles in length or be more than 10% of the existing transmission right-of-way, whichever is greater, and the purpose of the easement must be to avoid sensitive areas or inhabited areas or conform to state or federal safety, reliability, and operational standards designed to safeguard the transmission network and protect electrical workers and the public.

(v) does not include a transmission substation, a switchyard, voltage support, or other control equipment;

(vi) does not include an energy storage facility, as defined in 15-6-157;

(b) (i) each pipeline, whether partially or wholly within the state, greater than 25 inches in inside diameter and 50 miles in length, and associated facilities, except that the term does not include:

(A) a pipeline within the boundaries of the state that is used exclusively for the irrigation of agricultural crops or for drinking water; or

(B) a pipeline greater than 25 inches in inside diameter and 50 miles in length for which the person planning to construct the pipeline has obtained right-of-way agreements or options for a right-of-way from more than 75% of the owners who collectively own more than 75% of the property along the centerline;

(ii) each pipeline, whether partially or wholly within the state, greater than 17 inches in inside diameter and 30 miles in length, and associated facilities used to transport coal suspended in water;

(c) any use of geothermal resources, including the use of underground space in existence or to be created, for the creation, use, or conversion of energy, designed for or capable of producing geothermally derived power equivalent to 50 megawatts or more or any addition thereto, except pollution control facilities approved by the department and added to an existing plant, except that the term does not include a compressed air energy storage facility, as defined in 15-6-157; or

(d) for the purposes of 75-20-204 only, a plant, unit, or other facility capable of generating 50 megawatts of hydroelectric power or more or any addition thereto.



(10) "Person" means any individual, group, firm, partnership, corporation, limited liability company, cooperative, association, government subdivision, government agency, local government, or other organization or entity.

(11) "Sensitive areas" means government-designated areas that have been recognized for their importance to Montana's wildlife, wilderness, culture, and historic heritage, including but not limited to national wildlife refuges, state wildlife management areas, federal areas of critical environmental concern, state parks and historic sites, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, designated wild and scenic rivers, or national parks, monuments, or historic sites.

(12) ~~"Transmission substation" means any structure, device, or equipment assemblage, commonly located and designed for voltage regulation, circuit protection, or switching necessary for the construction or operation of a proposed transmission line.~~ "Transmission reliability agencies" means the federal energy regulatory commission, the western electricity coordinating council, the national electric reliability council, and the midwest reliability organization.

(13) ~~"Transmission reliability agencies" means the federal energy regulatory commission, the western electricity coordinating council, the national electric reliability council, and the midwest reliability organization.~~ "Transmission substation" means any structure, device, or equipment assemblage, commonly located and designed for voltage regulation, circuit protection, or switching necessary for the construction or operation of a proposed transmission line.

(14) "Upgrade" means to increase the electrical carrying capacity of a transmission line by actions including but not limited to:

- (a) installing larger conductors;
- (b) replacing insulators;
- (c) replacing pole or tower structures;
- (d) changing structure spacing, design, or guying; or
- (e) installing additional circuits.

(15) "Utility" means any person engaged in any aspect of the production, storage, sale, delivery, or furnishing of heat, electricity, gas, hydrocarbon products, or energy in any form for ultimate public use."

**Section 5.** Section 75-20-201, MCA, is amended to read:

**"75-20-201. Certificate required -- operation in conformance -- certificate for nuclear facility -- applicability to federal facilities.** (1) Except for a facility under diligent onsite physical construction or in operation on January 1, 1973, a person may not commence to construct a facility in the state without first applying for and obtaining a certificate of compliance issued with respect to the facility by the department.

(2) A facility with respect to which a certificate is issued may not be constructed, operated, or maintained except in conformity with the certificate and any terms, conditions, and modifications contained within the certification.

(3) A certificate may only be issued pursuant to this chapter.

~~(4) If the department decides to issue a certificate for a nuclear facility, it shall report the recommendation to the applicant and may not issue the certificate until the recommendation is approved by a majority of the voters in a statewide election called by initiative or referendum according to the laws of this state.~~

~~(5)~~(4) A person that proposes to construct an energy-related project that is not defined as a facility pursuant to 75-20-104(9) may petition the department to review the energy-related project under the provisions of this chapter. The construction or installation of an energy storage facility, as defined in 15-6-157, is not considered an energy-related project under the provisions of this chapter. A certificate for the construction or installation of an energy storage facility is not required under this chapter.

~~(6)~~(5) This chapter applies, to the fullest extent allowed by federal law, to all federal facilities and to all facilities over which an agency of the federal government has jurisdiction.

~~(7)~~(6) All judicial challenges of certificates for projects with a project cost, as determined by the court, of more than \$1 million must have precedence over any civil cause of a different nature pending in that court. If the court determines that the challenge was without merit or was for an improper purpose, such as to harass, to cause unnecessary delay, or to impose needless or increased cost in litigation, the court may award attorney fees and costs incurred in defending the action."

**Section 6. Repealer.** The following sections of the Montana Code Annotated are repealed:

- 75-20-1201. Purpose -- findings as to nuclear safety -- reservation of nuclear facility approval powers to the people.
- 75-20-1202. Definitions.
- 75-20-1203. Additional requirements for issuance of a certificate for the siting of a nuclear facility.
- 75-20-1204. Annual review of evacuation and emergency medical aid plans.
- 75-20-1205. Emergency approval authority invalid for nuclear facilities.

**Section 6. Effective date.** [This act] is effective on passage and approval.