

RESOLUTION on IMPACT STUDY for PROPOSED MADISON FOOD PARK (II)

WHEREAS a special use permit in Cascade County has been proposed to authorize the construction and operation of the Madison Food Park, a food processing plant to be used as a wholesale feedlot, meat packing plant, slaughterhouse, rendering plant, value-added agricultural commodity processing facility, and distillery; and

WHEREAS the original proposal, which has not been withdrawn, projects the employment of as many as 3,000 workers; the processing of approximately 1,800 head of cattle, 9,200 hogs and 135,000 chickens daily; and the use of an estimated 3.5 million gallons of water daily from the Madison aquifer; and

WHEREAS the urban center nearest to the proposed food park is the city of Great Falls, making our city and its residents the largest human population likely to be affected, whether positively or negatively, by the proposed development; and

WHEREAS, our city counts among its community assets our clean and abundant water supply, our clean (albeit gusty) air, our recreational, historical and cultural heritage, our award-winning schools, our short commute times, and countless other quality-of-life attributes; and

WHEREAS among the community's unique assets is a first-magnitude Madison aquifer spring abutting the city, a significant cultural and historical landmark and a natural phenomenon that serves as the existential resource for Montana's most-visited state park, a fish hatchery, and at least two community-based industries; and

WHEREAS the direct, secondary, and cumulative impacts, both beneficial and harmful, of a project of this size and scope on the physical, social, biological, economic, cultural and aesthetic factors of the human environment of Great Falls and, indeed, the sustainability of our community itself could be transformative and irreversible and are as yet unknown; and

WHEREAS the citizens of Great Falls represented by all nine of the City's Neighborhood Councils have formally requested that the Great Falls City Commission take the initiative to ensure that the potential impacts of the Madison Food Park are studied, documented, and considered as part of the permitting process; and

WHEREAS the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) was created to ensure that the actions of state government significantly affecting the quality of the human environment are the result of "thoughtful, informed and deliberate consideration of the consequences and impacts"¹ not just on the natural environment but on the human population to be affected by the proposed action, along with evaluation and analysis of reasonable alternatives, mitigation, stipulations and controls for the proposed action; and

WHEREAS the philosophy behind MEPA is that, when presented with proposals with potentially significant impacts, the state "looks before it leaps"; and

¹ Stockwell, Hope. "A Guide to the Montana Environmental Policy Act" at Foreward by George Darrow, at p. 9 (2019).

WHEREAS the proposal for the Madison Food Park represents a significant leap that should be taken not on faith, but on facts systematically gathered, analyzed, and, if needed, addressed;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT THE CITY OF GREAT FALLS respectfully requests of the Governor of Montana and the relevant state agencies overseen by the Governor – to include, at a minimum, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality, the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation, and the Montana Department of Transportation – that:

When and if the original proposal for the Madison Food Park advances, the coordinated studies by state agencies of the direct, secondary and cumulative impacts of the proposal required by the Montana Environmental Protection Act include in their scope the potential impacts of the proposed project on the City of Great Falls and its residents in the areas of:

Transportation	Water quality and quantity
Sanitation	Employment
Schools	Emergency and law enforcement services
Medical services	Recreational, historical, cultural and economic assets
Social services	Housing, including property values
Other environmental impacts (noise, odor, air quality, etc.)	

Upon passage of this resolution, the Great Falls City Commission will notify the Governor and request his assistance in communicating this request to the relevant state agencies.

The City Commission reserves the right to amend this request as appropriate for any modified proposal and, with the concurrence of a majority of the Neighborhood Councils, to submit the amended request to the Governor and appropriate state agencies.

For feedback/suggestions, contact:

Commissioner Mary Moe – [406-868-9427/msheehymoe@greatfalls.net](mailto:msheehymoe@greatfalls.net)

If this alternative goes forward, Commissioner Moe will request time to discuss it at these Neighborhood Council meetings (she is unavailable for other February meetings):

NC 6: Feb. 5 at Sunnyside School
NC 7: Feb. 10 in Gibson Room of Civic Center
NC 1: Feb. 11 at Meadowlark School
NC 9: Feb. 13 at First Church of the Nazarene
NC 5: Feb. 17 at Great Falls Clinic Specialty Center

Perhaps other councils could be invited to attend one of these.