

Chris A. Linkenhoker
Corvallis, MT

Dear Mr. Daniel M. Norderud, Robert Peccia & Associates Wednesday, June 25, 2014

Please accept this document as official public comment on the Ravalli County airport expansion proposal. I have read the accompanying environmental assessment on your website (rpa-hin.com). I have been monitoring this proposal for several years.

I vehemently oppose the proposed expansion (Alternative ?). A major expansion of the Ravalli County Airport is not in the best interests of the citizens of Ravalli County. It will result in serious degradation to our quality of life, which many of us value as much as life itself. It will facilitate development for the benefit of a few, providing infrastructure for them at taxpayer's expense, while degrading our local environment and social structure. Eminent Domain will likely be necessary to "take" land from those landowners in the expansion area opposed to the expansion. This is contrary to the belief systems of many citizens of Ravalli County, including the County Commission (likely, based on previous comments from them).

Air quality is a very serious concern in Ravalli County, but your environmental assessment white-washes the issue to the proponents demise. In the summer we have smoke from wildfires. In the winter we have major temperature inversions that trap air pollution that we all have to breath. In the spring and fall, there is major field burning going on, continuously. We have gravel pits and a concrete company that produces large volumes of dust, with zero accountability. We live in a box canyon that does not facilitate the escape of polluted air. Missoula's air pollution problems are aggravated by our own as some of our polluted air eventually makes its way to that city. I have asthma and had to go to the emergency room during the 2010 and 2012 fire seasons. Increasing levels of plane exhaust will just aggravate my asthma even more. I was at LAX airport ten days ago and had difficulty breathing. The smell was offensive.

In your own EA you admit that only one of six major pollutants is even being monitored, and then have the gall to call our precious home an "attainment" area. Or, you can call it an "unclassifiable" area because no one is monitoring the remaining five air pollutants. Our pro-development commission has no desire to spend the time and money to monitor these other pollutants because they are afraid that the truth will shut down much of their "fantasy developments", including this airport expansion proposal. These remaining five pollutants (carbon monoxide, ozone, sulfur dioxide, oxides of nitrogen and lead) are dangerous to human health and the Clean Air Act requires that states develop EPA-approved State Implementation Plans to achieve or maintain the air quality standards within timeframes set under the CCA. Any major expansion of the Ravalli County Airport needs to be delayed until adequate air quality monitoring has occurred.

From your EA, you state: "Ravalli County was recommended to EPA for designation as a federal non-attainment area for PM25 in 2007 by MDEQ: however, this designation has not been made by the agency. You really expect us to believe that an obvious political decision is in the best interests of the citizens of Ravalli County.

The expansion proponents and their friends on the Commission don't want to hear from me or any other opponent, which is why they slipped the notification about the EA in a part of the local newspaper that most citizens never read, on May 14. It took more than a month for me (and many others) to find out about it, leaving just a few days to provide input into the process. You can't find it in the newspaper archives because they only digitize primary news articles.

Jets of various sizes produce huge amounts of exhaust when taking off, equivalent to thousands of miles driven by an automobile. Your analysis fails to analyze the short term, long term and cumulative effects of airplane exhaust on our community. If this airport expansion moves forward, many folks who use wood stoves will be forced to change to alternate heating systems. This is not fair to these folks; many of them ranchers.

I am surprised that you missed this, but the Missoulian printed an important piece of news on April 30 called "Missoula, Ravalli counties fail State of the Air analysis". Ravalli County received an "F" from the American Lung Association and has the eighth worst ozone and short-term particulate pollution in the nation. You can find more about this at <http://www.stateoftheair.org/#>. According to their data, 35,391 citizens of Ravalli County are at risk due to a variety of reasons from Pediatric Asthma, COPD, to children, to old folks. Airplane exhaust will exacerbate these problems even more.

The expansion proponents state that safety is the major reason for this proposal.. It is obvious to just about everyone that the primary reason is financial gain and convenience for a small handful of people, again, at taxpayers' expense.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposal to expand the Ravalli County Airport and hope that you take my comments seriously.

Sincerely,

Chris A. Linkenhoker