

## Board of County Commissioners

Jim Morren, Chairman  
Thomas A. Kuka, Member  
Zane Drishinski, Member



Pondera County  
20 Fourth Ave SW, Ste 205  
Conrad, MT 59425-2340

Phone (406) 271-4010  
Fax (406) 271-4070  
[commissioner@ponderacounty.org](mailto:commissioner@ponderacounty.org)

## PONDERA COUNTY MONTANA

### News Release

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#### Contacts:

Jim Morren, Tom Kuka, or Zane Drishinski,  
Pondera County Commissioner  
406-271-4010  
[commissioner@ponderacounty.org](mailto:commissioner@ponderacounty.org)

### **Pondera County Commission Calls for Montana Renewables to Prioritize Construction of Wastewater Treatment Plant with Federal Loan** *Montana Renewables Should Abandon Wastewater Injection Plans that Threaten Clean Water in Pondera County*

Conrad, MT – On Tuesday, February 11<sup>th</sup>, the Department of Energy approved the release of a \$1.44 billion guaranteed loan to Calumet to enable their subsidiary, Montana Renewables to significantly increase production of renewable transportation fuels at their refinery in Great Falls. The planned expansion covered by the loan includes future investment in on-site wastewater treatment and recycling capabilities. Montana Renewables' operations currently generate tens of millions of gallons of industrial wastewater that it ships out of state for disposal because it is too contaminated for the City of Great Falls wastewater treatment facility to accept. To reduce shipment costs, Montana Renewables has been seeking federal permits to inject its industrial wastewater underground via two wells near Lake Frances in Pondera County. The Pondera County Commission, along with many local farmers and ranchers, and other residents, have strongly opposed this effort due to potential impacts to sources of clean drinking and agricultural water, sensitive wildlife habitat, county infrastructure, and public safety.

#### **In response to the news of the loan's release, the Pondera County Commission issued the following statement:**

“Montana Renewables’ plans to truck high strength industrial wastewater into Pondera County for injection into the Madison Aquifer poses unacceptable risks to clean drinking and agricultural water that is essential to the health and livelihoods of so many people in our county, as well as to fish and wildlife and county roads and bridges. With the federal loan guarantee in hand, Montana Renewables no longer has any excuses to not do the right thing and treat its wastewater on-site at its refinery in Great Falls rather than continuing to try to dump it on our community.

Montana Renewables has repeatedly indicated that a wastewater treatment facility is feasible and desirable for its operations, they just needed to secure the capital to construct it. The environmental analysis supporting the loan repeatedly indicated that Montana Renewables planned to build such a facility and that in the interim, would not dispose of any of its wastewater in Pondera County or elsewhere in Montana.

Yet despite the guarantee of well over a billion dollars in federal funding, Montana Renewables has so far refused to take its plans to dump their wastewater in our county off the table because it might save them money until a wastewater treatment facility is constructed. This is unacceptable. The Pondera County Commission asks Montana Renewables, a company that says it is committed to environmental sustainability and civic responsibility, to be a good neighbor. Publicly abandon your plans to dump your waste on us. Prioritize investment in on-site wastewater treatment and recycling. You now have all the taxpayer-guaranteed money you need to do so.”