

February 16, 2020

Jason Thomas, WYPDES Permitting Supervisor  
WDEQ – Water Quality  
200 West 17th Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82002

**Re: WYPDES Permit No. WY0002062, Comments to Revised Draft Permit**

Dear Mr. Thomas:

As a citizen of Riverton, Wyoming, I submitted a public comment in support of the initial draft proposal WYPDES permit WY0002062: Aethon's (Moneta Divide) Proposed Discharge Permit issued in March 2019, which increased the Total Dissolved Solids (TDS) load limit while protecting the environment, including Class 1 designated surface water. The initial permit would allow Aethon Energy, who is committed to its core values of responsible resource development, environmental stewardship, social responsibility and safety to expand its operation, hiring additional personnel, and increasing the state and local tax base.

The revised second draft issued 1/17/2020, which removed the TDS load limit increase, effectively prevents Aethon from expanding its operations in Moneta Divide and providing significant economic development for our region of Wyoming. This is not only detrimental to Aethon but to our local and regional economy. I encourage you and the WY DEQ to reconsider the revised draft permit and move forward with a permit that more closely emulates the initial draft proposal with updates to the mixing model, load allocation, and protection of Badwater creek and its connected waterways.

First, Aethon Energy continues to be a committed, responsible business in our community, dedicated to of responsible resource development, environmental stewardship, social responsibility and safety. The Moneta Divide Energy Project (MDEP) is responsible energy development, protecting the environment by meeting all applicable regulatory requirements and being environmentally protective while providing long-term economic benefits to the local communities and the State of Wyoming.

Second, the protection of Class 1 designated surface water is critical and can be accomplished by utilizing the proposed feedback control loop which incorporates real-time monitoring of waterways using high tech sensor to ensure TDS are within the acceptable range as established by the Wyoming DEQ and the EPA. I believe Aethon has correctly utilized the scientific method to determine the MDEP will protect the environment by meeting all applicable

regulatory requirements. Environmental Resource Management Inc. (ERM) a leading global provider of environmental, health, safety, risk, and social consulting services, completed a study of the Moneta Divide project called the Water Quality Compliance Analysis of the Long-Range Development Plan. ERM's analysis used the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) watershed model and Generalized Environmental Modeling System for Surface Waters (GEMSS) water quality model, both are widely used and accepted by water quality experts. The modeling was highly conservative, including multiple factors of safety, to provide an additional level of environmental protection. As stated in the initial study conclusion; provided the discharge concentration and load levels are not exceeded, the regulatory antidegradation criteria would be met and the various downstream receiving waters will continue to be protected and their existing uses maintained.

Third, the economic impacts to Riverton, Fremont County, and the state of Wyoming are significant. The Bureau of Land Management estimates the Moneta project could generate \$71 million every year in federal royalties, \$57.7 million in annual severance taxes – which go to the state – and \$70 million in local production taxes for counties. Based on Alternative 2 in the United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management's Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), an average of 740 and 327 jobs during the development and production phases would be created, respectively. Each core job would create four service sector jobs to service the individuals and their families in the surrounding communities of Riverton and Casper.

The initial proposed permit would be mutually beneficial by protecting our environment and providing a positive economic impact for Fremont County, Wyoming. I encourage the Wyoming Department of Environmental Quality to withdraw the revised second draft and approve an updated version of the initial draft of the Aethon (Moneta Divide) Proposed Discharge Permit and govern the discharge for the benefit of Wyoming citizens.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kevin Kershisnik". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Kevin Kershisnik