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Decision Reached on Permit for Marathon Oil Refinery

The Department of Environmental Quality announced today its decision to approve the pending air permit for the Marathon Refinery Heavy Oil Upgrade Project in Detroit. The department's decision follows a period of extensive review by the DEQ of public comments and supporting information to determine whether Marathon's proposal met the strict standards contained within federal and state air quality regulations. The DEQ is required to make its decision based solely on whether a proposal meets those standards.

The public participation process was enhanced by the DEQ due to the anticipated interest in this project. The permit applications were available on the DEQ web page along with supporting information, and three public information sessions were held to make DEQ staff available to answer any questions. The DEQ staff also met on several occasions personally with representatives of local groups, and made personal contact with individuals who expressed interest in the project.

The enhanced public outreach efforts resulted in specific air permit conditions and commitments by Marathon to improve the overall environment in the vicinity of the refinery in conjunction with the development of the project. The permit issued by the DEQ today includes the following provisions, which go beyond federal regulatory requirements and are not normally included in this type of permit:

- Marathon will install, operate, and maintain at least four air monitoring stations located in and around the refinery. The resulting emission data will be available to the DEQ and the public.
- An enhanced street sweeping program for paved roads in the vicinity of the refinery will be initiated and maintained to reduce particulates.

Additional actions that Marathon has committed to implementing include:

- All existing Detroit Public School buses without particulate matter emission controls will be retrofitted with particulate matter controls to reduce children's exposure to diesel exhaust and air pollution created by diesel school buses.
- Particulate matter controls will be installed on the Marathon truck fleet that will be used to transport petroleum coke from the refinery.
- Marathon, in consultation with appropriate Detroit city officials, will fund a community improvement and/or developmental project such as a local park, playground, or community center.
- The refinery, in collaboration with Detroit and Wayne County, will utilize the local community alert system ("Reverse 911"), to communicate emergency information regarding the refinery to the local community, including residents of the 48217 zip code who have signed up for the service.
- Regular meetings will be conducted with the local Detroit Refinery Community Advisory Panel, to communicate and advise on issues related to the refinery.
- Marathon has purchased approximately 80 tons per year of particulate matter emissions off-sets for the area in and around the refinery and has donated those to the state of Michigan to assure that they will be permanently retired.

A Response to Comments document has been prepared that provides the DEQ responses to comments received during the public comment periods and at the public hearings. The document also identifies special conditions which were modified and provides our rationale for additional special conditions. A separate document, A Comparison of Draft and Final Permit to Install 63-08, has been prepared that compares the draft permit conditions to the final, approved permit conditions. Copies of these documents are available via the internet at <http://www.deq.state.mi.us/aps/cwerp.shtml>.

You may also call (517) 335-4607 to request copies of these documents.

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Editor's note: DEQ news releases are available on the department's Internet home page at www.michigan.gov/deq.

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