

NEWS | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | Dec. 12, 2022

NDDEQ issues water quality certification for BNSF federal bridge permit

BISMARCK, N.D. – On Monday, Dec. 12, the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) provided clean water certification that the United States Coast Guard (USCG) permit for the removal and construction of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad bridge linking Bismarck and Mandan will comply with North Dakota’s water quality standards.

“The NDDEQ reviewed the USCG permit certification request and found it to be protective of our water quality when certain conditions are followed,” said Karl Rockeman, Director of the Division of Water Quality. “Some commenters mentioned the historical ownership and cultural significance of the bridge; however, those concerns are outside the scope of our water quality certification process.”

The certification conditions the federal permit to provide reasonable assurance that the Missouri River’s water quality will be protected during deconstruction and construction. Water quality certification is required under federal and state water pollution control rules to ensure that a federally permitted action does not violate state law or violate state water quality standards. The conditions are substantial and include restrictions such as no explosives during deconstruction, requiring emergency response equipment on hand in the case of an accidental discharge, and removal of dredged material and debris. Water quality monitoring during construction is also required to ensure and document that the certification conditions can effectively protect the waters.

During the public comment period, the NDDEQ received and reviewed comments from three individuals or organizations. Revisions were made to the certification to address those comments relevant to water quality.

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