

**From:** [katie harrison](#)  
**To:** [commission](#)  
**Cc:** [MayorAndCouncil](#); [Lita Pepion](#); [manyhands58@gmail.com](#); [Pastor Amy Sell](#); [Pastor Seth Rumble](#); [josiahhugs@weareunspokenwords.com](#); [URI BARNEA](#); [Adam mallak](#); [Marcus Frye](#); [St. John, Rich](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] BILLINGS FAITH & SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY LEADERS LETTER TO OUR CITY AND COUNTY  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 3, 2026 6:42:53 AM

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**Dear Billings City Council Members, Yellowstone County Commissioners, and other Montana State Leaders:**

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, an open forum and discussion was held, with an audience of over fifty people and a panel of seven local faith and community leaders from various denominations and backgrounds. The goal was to share stories and experiences of discrimination that the panel members and their congregations have experienced here, as well as ideas for solutions moving forward. Following this raw and heartfelt event, it was made clear that for decades it has been community members and ordinary residents who have stepped up to address hate, while remaining welcoming in the face of many terrifying and devastating incidents.

Through the November forum, as well as a series of recent incidents of hate, it has become apparent that in most cases, a strong response from our city, county, and state leaders has been missing.

**We write you all to ask that this changes starting today.**

There are multiple ways that our city, county, and other leaders could better address these issues, such as through the creation of a Non-Discrimination Ordinance (NDO); establishing policies that better track and focus on hate related crimes and incidents; and using government resources to support and empower the various groups that are already working on these issues. Billings must have a solution and a path forward tailored to our community's needs, so that perpetrators - and perpetuators - no longer go unpunished, and so that all of our community members feel safe and included. The fact that, to date, it has been extremely difficult to get an NDO passed in Billings after so many attempts, speaks volumes not only about our community's values, but even moreso about our city and county leaders' priorities.

All Montanans deserve to experience a welcoming and safe community where they can live and work unintimidated, and where they can fulfill their dreams. We all dream, and all of us - regardless of race, religion, gender, sexuality, or disability - should be able to dream without fear of discrimination

or being the target of a hateful or violent crime.

We welcome a serious discussion on this very important matter. We sincerely hope you will consider stronger, meaningful and workable solutions to this issue which, thus far, have been lacking in our leadership.

Thank you kindly for your consideration of this important issue, and bless you all for your dedication and work on behalf of the residents of Billings and Yellowstone County,

**Tracy Starr** - Pastor and Founder of Many Hands Outreach Ministry, and Co-Pastor of All Nations Christian Fellowship Church

**Lita Pepion** - Blackfeet Tribe, Founder of Warrior Women For Justice

**Imam Adam Mallack** - Billings Islamic Center

**Rabbi (Ret.) Uri Barnea** - Beth Aaron Synagogue

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**Pastor Amy Sell** - Grace United Methodist Church

**Pastor Amy Carter** - Mayflower Church

**Rev. (Ret.) Barbara Miner** - Mayflower Church

**Pastor Marcus Frye** - Billings First Congregational Church

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For our earth & for each other,

**Katie Harrison (She / Her)**  
Founder, Billings Stronger Together

\*Residing on the traditional lands of the Salish, Kootenai, Kalispel, Apsáalooke (Crow), and Cheyenne peoples, among many others who share this land. I recognize that we are settlers to this land and dedicate myself to honoring this history and these peoples, listening and learning, and working to repair the harms of colonization by teaching a new generation of civic leaders and supporting the work of our Native partners.

**From:** [URI BARNEA](#)  
**To:** [commission](#); [katie harrison](#)  
**Cc:** [MayorAndCouncil](#); [Lita Pepion](#); [manyhands58@gmail.com](#); [Pastor Amy Sell](#); [Pastor Seth Rumage](#); [josiahhugs@weareunspokenwords.com](#); [Adam mallak](#); [Marcus Frye](#); [St. John, Rich](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: BILLINGS FAITH & SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY LEADERS LETTER TO OUR CITY AND COUNTY  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 3, 2026 9:20:34 AM

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Thank you, Katie, for finalizing this project and moving it forward. Let's hope that you get a positive response from, if not all, at least some of the community leaders to whom this letter is addressed.

Uri Barnea

On Tuesday, February 3, 2026 at 06:42:46 AM MST, katie harrison <[sustainabillings@gmail.com](mailto:sustainabillings@gmail.com)> wrote:

**Dear Billings City Council Members, Yellowstone County Commissioners, and other Montana State Leaders:**

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025, an open forum and discussion was held, with an audience of over fifty people and a panel of seven local faith and community leaders from various denominations and backgrounds. The goal was to share stories and experiences of discrimination that the panel members and their congregations have experienced here, as well as ideas for solutions moving forward. Following this raw and heartfelt event, it was made clear that for decades it has been community members and ordinary residents who have stepped up to address hate, while remaining welcoming in the face of many terrifying and devastating incidents.

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**From:** [Lita Pepion](#)  
**To:** [katie harrison](#); [commission](#)  
**Cc:** [.MayorAndCouncil](#); [manyhands58@gmail.com](#); [Pastor Amy Sell](#); [Pastor Seth Rumble](#); [josiahhugs@weareunspokenwords.com](#); [URI BARNEA](#); [Adam mallak](#); [Marcus Frye](#); [St. John, Rich](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Re: BILLINGS FAITH & SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY LEADERS LETTER TO OUR CITY AND COUNTY  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 3, 2026 10:21:05 AM

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Thank you Katie - Let me know how I can help.

L

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**From:** katie harrison <[sustainabilings@gmail.com](mailto:sustainabilings@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, February 3, 2026 6:42 AM  
**To:** commission <[Commissioners@yellowstonecountymt.gov](mailto:Commissioners@yellowstonecountymt.gov)>  
**Cc:** .MayorAndCouncil <[Mayor&Council@billingsmt.gov](mailto:Mayor&Council@billingsmt.gov)>; Lita Pepion <[LitaPepion@hotmail.com](mailto:LitaPepion@hotmail.com)>; [manyhands58@gmail.com](mailto:manyhands58@gmail.com) <[manyhands58@gmail.com](mailto:manyhands58@gmail.com)>; Pastor Amy Sell <[pastoram@graceumcbillings.org](mailto:pastoram@graceumcbillings.org)>; Pastor Seth Rumble <[pastorrumage@gmail.com](mailto:pastorrumage@gmail.com)>; [josiahhugs@weareunspokenwords.com](mailto:josiahhugs@weareunspokenwords.com) <[josiahhugs@weareunspokenwords.com](mailto:josiahhugs@weareunspokenwords.com)>; URI BARNEA <[u\\_barnea@yahoo.com](mailto:u_barnea@yahoo.com)>; Adam mallak <[Admallak@yahoo.com](mailto:Admallak@yahoo.com)>; Marcus Frye <[marcus@billingsfirstchurch.org](mailto:marcus@billingsfirstchurch.org)>; St. John, Rich <[stjohnr@billingsmt.gov](mailto:stjohnr@billingsmt.gov)>  
**Subject:** BILLINGS FAITH & SPIRITUAL COMMUNITY LEADERS LETTER TO OUR CITY AND COUNTY

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**From:** [Erin Anderson](#)  
**To:** [Aguirre, Amy](#)  
**Cc:** [Sonja Nowakowski](#); [r8eisc@epa.gov](#); [tribbett.kate@epa.gov](#); [Roger Hoogerheide](#); [payne.joe@epa.gov](#); [James Fehr](#); [Kevin Stone](#); [Council](#); [Bohlman, Denise](#); [Timothy Erickson](#); [1glenlfo@gmail.com](#); [stears@fiberpipe.net](#); [erin.robbins@mdu.com](#); [neil@secondnature.consulting](#); [rhafer@highplainsarchitects.com](#); [speakup@billingsgazette.com](#); [info@yellowstonecountynews.com](#); [news@kulr.com](#); [pohnemus@kulr.com](#); [news@ktvg.com](#); [heather@montanafreepress.org](#); [amanda@montanafreepress.org](#); [tips@montanafreepress.org](#); [news@mtpr.org](#); [ellis.juhlin@mso.umt.edu](#); [dianne.parker@ktvg.com](#); [press@vice.com](#); [issues.pitches@vice.com](#); [oliver.milman@theguardian.com](#); [dharna.noor@theguardian.com](#); [jessica.glenza@theguardian.com](#)  
**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Formal Statement of Health Concerns, Environmental Exposure, Violent Crime, and Request for Accountability – Billings, MT Superfund Plume & Refinery Wastewater  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 3, 2026 8:47:31 AM

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Hello Everyone,

Just looking for updates on this and if there is an opportunity to meet with a larger group to discuss. Thank you for your attention.

With gratitude,  
Erin

On Wed, Jan 28, 2026 at 8:27 PM Aguirre, Amy <[AguirreA@billingsmt.gov](mailto:AguirreA@billingsmt.gov)> wrote:

Sonja,

Thank you for making yourself available to Erin. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance.

Amy Aguirre

Ward3

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**From:** [Erin Anderson](#) <[erinkayanderson7@gmail.com](mailto:erinkayanderson7@gmail.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, January 28, 2026 10:27 AM  
**To:** [Sonja Nowakowski](#) <[Sonja.Nowakowski@mt.gov](mailto:Sonja.Nowakowski@mt.gov)>  
**Cc:** [r8eisc@epa.gov](#); [tribbett.kate@epa.gov](#); [Roger Hoogerheide](#) <[hoogerheide.roger@epa.gov](mailto:hoogerheide.roger@epa.gov)>; [payne.joe@epa.gov](#); [James Fehr](#) <[james.fehr@mt.gov](mailto:james.fehr@mt.gov)>; [Kevin Stone](#) <[Kevin.Stone@mt.gov](mailto:Kevin.Stone@mt.gov)>; [Council](#) <[council@billingsmt.gov](mailto:council@billingsmt.gov)>; [Bohlman, Denise](#) <[bohlmand@billingsmt.gov](mailto:bohlmand@billingsmt.gov)>; [Timothy Erickson](#) <[timothy.erickson@hdrinc.com](mailto:timothy.erickson@hdrinc.com)>; [1glenlfo@gmail.com](#); [stears@fiberpipe.net](#); [erin.robbins@mdu.com](#); [neil@secondnature.consulting](#); [rhafer@highplainsarchitects.com](#); [speakup@billingsgazette.com](#); [info@yellowstonecountynews.com](#); [news@kulr.com](#); [pohnemus@kulr.com](#); [news@ktvg.com](#); [heather@montanafreepress.org](#); [amanda@montanafreepress.org](#); [tips@montanafreepress.org](#); [news@mtpr.org](#); [ellis.juhlin@mso.umt.edu](#); [dianne.parker@ktvg.com](#); [press@vice.com](#); [issues.pitches@vice.com](#); [oliver.milman@theguardian.com](#); [dharna.noor@theguardian.com](#);

[jessica.glenza@theguardian.com](mailto:jessica.glenza@theguardian.com)

**Subject:** Re: [EXTERNAL] Formal Statement of Health Concerns, Environmental Exposure, Violent Crime, and Request for Accountability – Billings, MT Superfund Plume & Refinery Wastewater

Dear Sonja,

Thank you for your response. I very much appreciate it, and I also want to thank you for recognizing the complexity of my concerns.

I am deeply concerned for my family who still lives in Billings, as well as for my friends and their children there. I understand that this remediation process is not something that can happen overnight; however, I do believe that there has been negligence involved.

With that in mind, I would very much like to speak with someone—specifically DEQ staff—about regulatory roles related to this situation. If those roles cannot currently be fulfilled, or if there are gaps between DEQ and the EPA at this time, I would also like to understand what types of community-based assistance or support may be needed to help move this process forward.

Thank you again for your time and consideration. I look forward to continuing this conversation.

With gratitude,

Erin

Erin Kay Anderson

Sent from my iPhone

On Jan 28, 2026, at 9:17 AM, Nowakowski, Sonja <[Sonja.Nowakowski@mt.gov](mailto:Sonja.Nowakowski@mt.gov)> wrote:

Ms. Anderson,

Thanks for reaching out. I recognize the complexity of your concerns. If you would like to visit with DEQ staff about our regulatory role as it relates to some items discussed in your outreach, let us know.

Much appreciated,

Sonja

<image001.png>

**SONJA NOWAKOWSKI** | *Director*

Montana Department of Environmental Quality

**DESK:** 406-444-0496 **MOBILE:** 406-502-8997

[Website](#) | [Facebook](#) | [X](#) | [YouTube](#)

How did we do? Let us know here: [Feedback Survey](#)

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**From:** Erin Anderson <[erinkayanderson7@gmail.com](mailto:erinkayanderson7@gmail.com)>

**Sent:** Friday, January 23, 2026 3:05 PM

**To:** [r8eisc@epa.gov](mailto:r8eisc@epa.gov); [tribbett.kate@epa.gov](mailto:tribbett.kate@epa.gov); Hoogerheide, Roger <[hoogerheide.roger@epa.gov](mailto:hoogerheide.roger@epa.gov)>; [payne.joe@epa.gov](mailto:payne.joe@epa.gov); Nowakowski, Sonja <[Sonja.Nowakowski@mt.gov](mailto:Sonja.Nowakowski@mt.gov)>; Fehr, James <[james.fehr@mt.gov](mailto:james.fehr@mt.gov)>; Stone, Kevin <[Kevin.Stone@mt.gov](mailto:Kevin.Stone@mt.gov)>; [Council@billingsmt.gov](mailto:Council@billingsmt.gov); [bohlmand@billingsmt.gov](mailto:bohlmand@billingsmt.gov); Erickson, Timothy <[Timothy.Erickson@hdrinc.com](mailto:Timothy.Erickson@hdrinc.com)>; [1glenney@gmail.com](mailto:1glenney@gmail.com); [stears@fiberpipe.net](mailto:stears@fiberpipe.net); [erin.robbins@mdu.com](mailto:erin.robbins@mdu.com); neil@secondnature.consulting; [rhafer@highplainsarchitects.com](mailto:rhafer@highplainsarchitects.com)

**Cc:** [speakup@billingsgazette.com](mailto:speakup@billingsgazette.com); [info@yellowstonecountynews.com](mailto:info@yellowstonecountynews.com); [news@kulr.com](mailto:news@kulr.com); [pohnemus@kulr.com](mailto:pohnemus@kulr.com); [news@ktvg.com](mailto:news@ktvg.com); [heather@montanafreepress.org](mailto:heather@montanafreepress.org); [amanda@montanafreepress.org](mailto:amanda@montanafreepress.org); [tips@montanafreepress.org](mailto:tips@montanafreepress.org); [news@mtpr.org](mailto:news@mtpr.org); [ellis.juhlin@mso.umt.edu](mailto:ellis.juhlin@mso.umt.edu); [dianne.parker@ktvg.com](mailto:dianne.parker@ktvg.com); [press@vice.com](mailto:press@vice.com); [issues.pitches@vice.com](mailto:issues.pitches@vice.com); [oliver.milman@theguardian.com](mailto:oliver.milman@theguardian.com); [dharna.noor@theguardian.com](mailto:dharna.noor@theguardian.com);

[jessica.glenza@theguardian.com](mailto:jessica.glenza@theguardian.com)

**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Formal Statement of Health Concerns, Environmental Exposure, Violent Crime, and Request for Accountability – Billings, MT Superfund Plume & Refinery Wastewater

Dear Public Service Officials, Counsel, and Press,

This executive brief is submitted as a summary reference only and should not be treated as a substitute for the full written statement provided. I strongly encourage counsel, commissioners, and decision-makers to read the full statement in its entirety and, where applicable, to enter the full statement into record during upcoming hearings, as it contains critical lived experience, contextual detail, and evidentiary framing that cannot be adequately captured in a brief summary.

I am including all recipients on this email intentionally, in the interest of transparency and accountability. I respectfully request that responses be made to the group collectively so I can confirm this statement has been received, reviewed, and entered into consideration.

I want to be transparent that I am copying contacts at both local and national news outlets on this outreach, in order to ensure that this story—and the stories of the people and families in the Billings community—is heard and taken seriously.

### **Overview of Concerns**

This submission outlines serious concerns regarding prolonged exposure to

1. contaminated water from local refineries, 2. vapor intrusion risks associated with the Billings Superfund plume (including PCE), and the cumulative impacts of environmental pollution on public health and community safety in Billings, Montana.

*This is a two part story that runs parallel to the other.*

### **Key Points for Consideration**

#### **• Exposure & Notification Failures:**

From December 2022 through December 2024, I lived and worked within the boundaries of the Billings Superfund plume without awareness of the designation. There was insufficient public-facing notice, community outreach, or accessible online communication to reasonably inform residents and workers of exposure risks.

#### **• Health Impacts:**

I experienced persistent fatigue, nausea, eye irritation, and systemic symptoms during this period. In October 2025, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. Genetic testing confirmed my cancer is not genetic.

It is well established that only 5–10% of cancers are hereditary, while 90–95% are influenced by environmental and lifestyle factors, including chemical exposures.

#### **• Intergenerational Context:**

My mother was diagnosed with the same type of breast cancer 13 years ago and has lived and worked in downtown Billings for decades, also within plume-affected areas. In recent months, I have spoken with at least 20 women from Billings who have experienced breast cancer, raising concern for multi-generational environmental exposure patterns.

#### **• Broader Disease Trends:**

These concerns extend beyond breast cancer to include rising rates of other cancers and autoimmune conditions observed nationally and locally over the past 10–20 years, which research increasingly links to long-term environmental toxin exposure.

**• Public Safety & Violent Crime:**

Billings continues to experience violent crime rates more than double the national average. Emerging peer-reviewed research indicates correlations between environmental pollution—particularly air and industrial contaminants—and increased aggression, impaired neurological regulation, and higher rates of violent incidents. Environmental stressors should be evaluated as contributing factors to public safety outcomes.

**• Equity Considerations:**

The communities most affected by plume exposure are disproportionately low-income and racially marginalized. These patterns reflect environmental injustice and warrant corrective action beyond minimum regulatory compliance.

**Requests for Action**

1. Immediate remediation of contaminated sites and vapor intrusion risks.
2. Compensation for residents, workers, and businesses for health impacts, lost income, and economic harm. (This extends beyond just the area of the Superfund Plume) as all residents are affected by contaminants in Billings' water supply
3. Stronger EPA enforcement and increased fines for refinery violations, past and ongoing.
4. Wastewater and cleanup standards aligned with actual health safety thresholds, not minimum federal compliance.
5. Recognition that delays since the 1990s represent systemic failure requiring urgent correction.

Again, this brief is intended to guide review, not replace the full statement. The full submission provides necessary narrative, professional context, and lived experience that should be considered by all officials and counsel evaluating these issues.

With gratitude and deep encouragement for response,

Erin Anderson  
Currently Residing in Missoula, Montana  
Hometown: Billings, Montana

**From:** [Friday, Wyeth](#)  
**To:** [MayorAndCouncil](#)  
**Cc:** [sburabilings@gmail.com](mailto:sburabilings@gmail.com)  
**Subject:** SBBURD Advisory Committee  
**Date:** Tuesday, February 3, 2026 4:25:29 PM  
**Attachments:** [image002.png](#)  
**Importance:** High

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Mayor and Council,

FYI ...

There was an error in noticing the SBBURD Advisory Committee Meeting Tonight for the Yellowstone County News and getting the agenda information to the public. The meeting is going to have to be cancelled for tonight and rescheduled and re-noticed for a future time. I have been in contact with the SBURA Board and some of the Advisory Committee members this afternoon.

Just wanted to make sure you are aware in case you planned to attend.

Thank you.



**Wyeth Friday, AICP**  
Planning & Community Services Director  
[fridayw@billingsmt.gov](mailto:fridayw@billingsmt.gov)

[billingsmt.gov](http://billingsmt.gov)

316 N. 26<sup>th</sup> St.  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Billings, MT 59101  
P 406.657.8249

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