

## DEQ plans appeal

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HELENA, Mont. (AP) The [Montana](#) Department of Environmental Quality plans an appeal to the Montana [Supreme Court](#).

The agency is disturbed by District Court rulings that require state permits go to operators of three Gallatin Valley gravel pits.

DEQ did not conduct environmental studies for those operations, and a District Court judge says the agency is short of staff to do its work.

DEQ Director Richard Opper says the appeal will question case law used in making the District Court decisions.

The Montana Environmental Information Center says those decisions could have sweeping effects on the process by which Montana issues environmental permits not just for gravel work, but for operations such as feedlots and hard-rock mines.

Two district judges in Helena recently ordered that the Montana Department of Environmental Quality issue the permits.

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