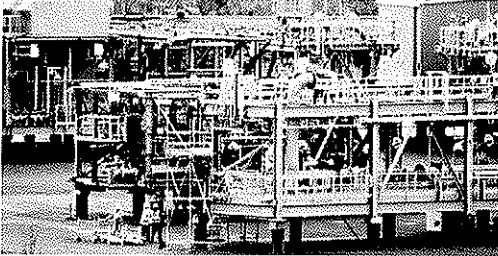


# Megaload sits waiting at Kooskia

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**By Elaine Williams of the Tribune**

**Weather forecast will likely add to delay of shipment headed to Montana, and could affect test load bound for refinery in Canada**



The next megaload to travel east from the Port of Lewiston on U.S. Highway 12, weather permitting, w... Tribune/Barry Kough

The second megaload of ConocoPhillips hasn't moved since overcoming challenges on what had been one of the most problematic legs of the trip from Lewiston to the Montana border.

The half-drum bound for a Billings, Mont., refinery is parked in Kooskia, where it's been since Saturday. It didn't begin another section of the trip on Saturday to provide time to conduct routine maintenance and give the crew a rest. Then weather stalled it starting Sunday, and the forecast for the rest of the week only worsens.

On Friday and Saturday, the oversized shipment went from just outside Orofino to Kooskia in a single evening, arriving at 4:05 a.m. without causing any traffic delays of more than 15 minutes or touching anything it wasn't supposed to.

That portion of the journey had been expected to occur in two segments, after the first megaload to move on that section of U.S. Highway 12 scraped a rock face, without doing damage to the transport, and created a 59-minute traffic delay.

The changes made by ConocoPhillips's hauler, Emmert International, resulted in a smoother trip. "Emmert put workers on the trailer and steered it independently of the trucks, enabling it to navigate the curves without complications or delays," according to a news release from the Idaho Transportation Department.

Weather, however, appears to be causing as much trouble for this convoy as it did for the first. The chance of snow in Kooskia was 80 percent for tonight and even higher, 90 percent, in the Lowell area, the endpoint of the next segment.

What effect this has on a test module of ExxonMobil/Imperial Oil scheduled to leave the Port of Lewiston at 10 p.m. today is not clear.

ITD has previously indicated it would allow two oversize loads on U.S. 12 at once, in part because it expected the ConocoPhillips shipment to be within 38 miles, not 100 miles, of the Montana border by today. The larger separation would have made it less likely a single motorist would have encountered both loads.

Weather could also come into play. The chance of snow in Lewiston is 70 percent tonight. If the test module moves, it will cover a number of miles not yet announced by ITD or the oil company.

The test module is 24 feet wide, 30 feet high and 208 feet long. It weighs 508,000 pounds. That's close to what ExxonMobil/Imperial Oil previously reported as being the dimensions of the largest of its 114 loads the company wants to move from the Port of Lewiston to the Montana border on U.S. 12.

The oversize loads would carry processing modules for a plant in the Kearl Oil Sands in Alberta, Canada. Like the ConocoPhillips shipments, they take up two lanes of traffic, have to pull over at least every 15 minutes to allow cars to pass and can only travel between 10 p.m. and 5:30 a.m.

ITD won't allow any other ExxonMobil/Imperial Oil oversize loads to take U.S. 12 until opponents present testimony, at a proceeding not yet scheduled, before a hearing officer who will provide ITD a recommendation on the matter.

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