

ET-3009
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Dunham, John

From: Loretta_Sutton@ios.doi.gov
Sent: Tuesday, June 12, 2007 2:09 PM
To: Dunham, John
Cc: Ethel_Smith@ios.doi.gov
Subject: Interior's Review Process

Attachments: Environmental_Review_Process.pdf



Environmental_Review_Process.p...

John,

Sorry for the delay in getting you this information. As I understand it, you are in the early stages of scoping for a proposed STB (lead agency) EA related to a rail line in MN. I am attaching a copy of the Department of the Interior's environmental review process. This document along with a listing of our bureau NEPA contacts is available on the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliances' web site (Natural Resources Management Team). The Regional Environmental Officer (REO) can provide you with bureau contacts, at the field level, if needed. You are encouraged to communicate directly with them.

We do appreciate you sending us a copy of your scoping letter. Because we can not locate it at this time, could you please send use another copy (Attn: Ethel Smith). We will retain this copy on file. If you have any other questions, please feel free to call.

(See attached file: Environmental_Review_Process.pdf)

<http://www.doi.gov/oepec/nepacontacts.html>

Thank you,

Loretta B. Sutton
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ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW DISTRIBUTION REQUIREMENTS

May 2005

In order to expedite requests to the Department of the Interior for the review of environmental documents under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act; project planning, design, and application documents under various Federal authorities; and requests for coordination and consultation early in project planning; please note the following.

Appendix III to the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations (49 FR 49778; December 21, 1984) lists the Director, Office of Environmental Project Review (now the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance), as the individual responsible for receiving and commenting on other agencies' environmental documents. If properly followed, this process results in your agency receiving one set of comments on behalf of the Department. Therefore, please send all officially approved documents requesting environmental and other project review to the following address for review and comment by the Department of the Interior:

Director, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Department of the Interior
Main Interior Building, MS 2342
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

It is unnecessary to send copies of environmental and other project review requests to any other bureau or office within Interior. However, a sufficient number of copies must be sent to the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) to allow distribution of the document to those Interior bureaus being requested to participate in the review. The requested numbers of copies allow for simultaneous review throughout each bureau thus producing the Department's consolidated review in the shortest possible time. A review can be initiated with less than the stated number, but this may lead to a longer review time. The following numbers of copies should be provided:

Twelve (12) copies of a draft and six (6) copies of a final document for projects in the Eastern United States including MN, IA, MO, AR, and LA. The same numbers of copies should be provided for projects in AS, GU, HI, PR, VI, and the Trust Territories.

Eighteen (18) copies of a draft and nine (9) copies of a final document for projects in the Western United States westward of the western boundaries of MN, IA, MO, AR, and LA.

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Eighteen (18) copies of a draft and nine (9) copies of a final document for review requests which are national in scope (e.g. agency regulations, scientific reports, special reports, program plans, and other interagency documents).

Sixteen (16) copies of a draft and eight (8) copies of a final document for projects in AK.

When a review document does not have draft and final versions, the larger number of copies is requested.

Copies of environmental and project review documents that are available in CD-ROM, on the Internet, or by any other widely used electronic method may be furnished in lieu of paper copies. When this is the case, we would still appreciate receiving one paper copy for our official file. Please provide the CDs or the Internet address to this office.

Appendix II to the CEQ regulations (49 FR 49754; December 21, 1984) lists Interior bureaus and offices with jurisdiction by law or special expertise on environmental quality issues. Appendix II should be used to determine appropriate Interior contacts for coordination during early planning, NEPA scoping, and other preliminary activities. Since this document is out of date, it is recommended that one consult the following Internet address for the latest bureau contacts. <http://ceq.eh.doe.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm> or <http://www.doi.gov/oepc/nepacontacts.html>.

All early coordination and scoping requests, environmental assessments or reports not accompanied by project planning or design documents, findings of no significant impact, preliminary or working draft or final environmental impact statements, and similar material of a regional nature should be sent directly to Interior bureaus at the field level. It is not necessary to send copies of these documents to the OEPC in Washington, DC. Please note that our Regional Environmental Officers (REO) serve as representatives of OEPC and should be contacted if there are any questions about these procedures at the field level. An REO list is attached.

Representatives of your organization should establish direct working relationships with Interior's field level offices, which welcome such contact. This type of relationship is important not only during early project coordination, but also to expedite the early resolution of environmental issues that would otherwise surface during the formal review of a project document. In many cases, Interior's comments on an environmental review will designate an office at the field level for follow-up activities.

We recommend that you make a wide distribution of this information within your organization. Such a distribution will greatly assist our agencies in better meeting our obligations under existing laws and in planning projects that will be mutually beneficial.

Attachment (REO List)

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OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY and COMPLIANCE
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