

Administration of Donald J. Trump, 2020

Message on the 50th Anniversary of the National Environmental Policy Act
January 1, 2020

Signed into law on January 1, 1970, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires Federal agencies to consider and inform the public of the environmental effects of proposed major Federal actions. NEPA's enactment was the culmination of legislative efforts to establish a national environmental policy and incorporate the consideration of environmental issues into the Federal Government's decision-making processes. Today, on the 50th anniversary of this milestone legislation, we take the opportunity to reflect upon NEPA's goals of protecting our Nation's natural resources and recommit to ensuring a safe, healthy, and productive environment for all Americans.

From commuting to work or school and turning on lights at home to having access to clean, reliable drinking water, the daily activities of all of our citizenry are affected by NEPA's requirements. Many projects involving the construction of roads, bridges, highways, airports, transmission lines, conventional and renewable energy projects, broadband deployment, and water infrastructure, as well as management activities on public lands, such as grazing, forest management, wildfire protection, and environmental restoration projects, must undergo Federal environmental review before they can proceed. While the goals of NEPA remain the same as they did 50 years ago, the environmental review process designed to improve decision-making has become increasingly complex and difficult to navigate. Project sponsors and ordinary Americans seeking decisions on permits from the Federal Government can face significant uncertainty and delays that can increase costs, derail important projects, and threaten jobs for American workers and labor union members.

To improve Federal agency coordination and make environmental reviews and permitting processes far less time-consuming, I directed Federal agencies to implement a "One Federal Decision" policy for major infrastructure projects. Under this policy, agencies are working to complete environmental reviews within 2 years. Additionally, I directed the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) to modernize the Federal environmental review and decision-making process. As a result, CEQ has conducted a thorough review of its NEPA implementing regulations and will soon issue a proposal to update those regulations to address the many concerns my administration has heard from hard-working Americans, small businesses, and State and local officials. Moreover, my administration is delivering on my promise to continue cutting burdensome regulations and has issued almost eight deregulatory actions for every one new regulation imposed over the past 3 years, helping unleash the full potential of America's economy.

My administration remains committed to improving the environmental review and permitting process while ensuring environmental protection. This will benefit our economy and environment while also enhancing the quality of life for current and future generations of Americans. Today we celebrate NEPA's 50th anniversary and its role in protecting our environment as we look forward to improving its implementation for the 21st century.

Categories: Letters and Messages : National Environmental Policy Act, 50th anniversary, message.

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