

Friday, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, excluding Federal holidays.

Please see the direct final rule which is located in the Rules section of this **Federal Register** for detailed instructions on how to submit comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Kathleen D'Agostino, Environmental Engineer, Attainment Planning and Maintenance Section, Air Programs Branch (AR-18J), Environmental Protection Agency, Region 5, 77 West Jackson Boulevard, Chicago, Illinois 60604, (312) 886-1767, dagostino.kathleen@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In the Final Rules section of this **Federal Register**, EPA is approving the attainment determinations as a direct final rule without prior proposal because the Agency views this as a noncontroversial action and anticipates no adverse comments. A detailed rationale for the approval is set forth in the direct final rule. If no adverse comments are received in response to this rule, no further activity is contemplated. If EPA receives adverse comments, with respect to either the Milwaukee-Racine or the Sheboygan area, the direct final rule will be withdrawn with regard to that area and all public comments received will be addressed in a subsequent final rule based on this proposed rule. EPA will not institute a second comment period. Any parties interested in commenting on this action should do so at this time. Please note that if EPA receives adverse comment on an amendment, paragraph, or section of this rule and if that provision may be severed from the remainder of the rule, EPA may adopt as final those provisions of the rule that are not the subject of an adverse comment. For additional information, see the direct final rule which is located in the Rules section of this **Federal Register**.

Dated: November 24, 2010.

Susan Hedman,

Regional Administrator, Region 5.

[FR Doc. 2010-31341 Filed 12-14-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

40 CFR Chapter I

[EPA-HQ-OA-2010-0992 FRL-9239-4]

Proposed Final Policy on Consultation and Coordination With Indian Tribes

AGENCY: Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

ACTION: Notice of document for public comment.

SUMMARY: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is announcing a 60-day public comment period for the proposed Final EPA Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes (Policy). The Policy complies with the Presidential Memorandum on Tribal Consultation issued November 5, 2009, directing agencies to develop a plan to implement fully Executive Order 13175 (Executive Order). The Executive Order specifies that each Agency must have a process that is accountable to establish regular and meaningful consultation and coordination with tribal officials in the development of policies that have tribal implications.

The goals of the Policy are to: Establish clear EPA standards for the consultation process, including defining the what, when, and how of consultation; designate specific EPA personnel responsible for serving as consultation points of contact in order to promote consistency in, and coordination of, the consultation process; and establish a management oversight and reporting structure that will ensure accountability and transparency. The proposed final Policy sets a broad standard for when EPA should consider consulting with federally-recognized tribal governments. Notably, the scope of EPA's proposed consultation policy is intended to be broader than that found in Executive Order 13175.

The Policy reflects the principles expressed in the 1984 EPA Policy for the Administration of Environmental Programs on Indian Reservations (1984 Policy) for interacting with tribes. The 1984 Policy remains the cornerstone for EPA's Indian program and assure[s] that tribal concerns and interests are considered whenever EPA's actions and/or decisions may affect tribes.

EPA is requesting comment on the policy described in this document.

DATES: Comments must be received on or before February 16, 2011.

ADDRESSES: Submit your comments, identified by Docket ID No. [EPA-HQ-OA-2010-0992], by one of the following methods:

- <http://www.regulations.gov>: Follow the on-line instructions for submitting comments.
- *Mail:* EPA's Proposed Final Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes, Environmental Protection Agency, Mailcode: 2822-1T, 1200 Pennsylvania Ave., NW., Washington, DC 20460.
- *Hand Delivery:* EPA Docket Center, EPA West, Room 3334, 1301

Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC. Such deliveries are only accepted during the Docket's normal hours of operation, and special arrangements should be made for deliveries of boxed information.

Instructions: Direct your comments to Docket ID No. EPA-HQ-OA-2010-0992. EPA's policy is that all comments received will be included in the public docket without change and may be made available online at <http://www.regulations.gov>, including any personal information provided, unless the comment includes information claimed to be Confidential Business Information (CBI) or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Do not submit information that you consider to be CBI or otherwise protected through <http://www.regulations.gov> (or e-mail). The <http://www.regulations.gov> website is an "anonymous access" system, which means EPA will not know your identity or contact information unless you provide it in the body of your comment. If you send an e-mail comment directly to EPA without going through <http://www.regulations.gov> your e-mail address will be automatically captured and included as part of the comment that is placed in the public docket and made available on the Internet. If you submit an electronic comment, EPA recommends that you include your name and other contact information in the body of your comment and with any disk or CD-ROM you submit. If EPA cannot read your comment due to technical difficulties and cannot contact you for clarification, EPA may not be able to consider your comment. Electronic files should avoid the use of special characters, any form of encryption, and be free of any defects or viruses. For additional information about EPA's public docket visit the EPA Docket Center homepage at <http://www.epa.gov/epahome/dockets.htm>.

Docket: All documents in the docket are listed in the <http://www.regulations.gov> index. Although listed in the index, some information is not publicly available, e.g., CBI or other information whose disclosure is restricted by statute. Certain other material, such as copyrighted material, will be publicly available only in hard copy. Publicly available docket materials are available either electronically in <http://www.regulations.gov> or in hard copy at the HQ EPA Docket Center. EPA's Proposed Final Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes Docket, EPA/DC, EPA West, Room 3334, 1301 Constitution Ave., NW., Washington, DC. The Public Reading

Room is open from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays. The telephone number for the Public Reading Room is (202) 566-1744.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

David Guest, Office of International and Tribal Affairs (MC2690M), Environmental Protection Agency, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW., Washington, DC 20460; *telephone number:* (202) 566-2872; *fax number:* (202) 564-0298; *e-mail address:* guest.david@epa.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. General Information

A. Does this action apply to me?

This action is directed to the public in general, tribal governments, and tribal organizations. Since others also may be interested, the Agency has not attempted to describe all the specific entities that may be affected by this action. If you have any questions regarding the applicability of this action to a particular entity, consult the point of contact listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

What should I consider as I prepare my comments for EPA?

Tips for Preparing Your Comments. When submitting comments, remember to:

- Identify the rulemaking by docket number and other identifying information (subject heading, **Federal Register** date and page number).
- Follow directions—The agency may ask you to respond to specific questions or organize comments by referencing a Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) part or section number.
- Explain why you agree or disagree; suggest alternatives and substitute language for your requested changes.
- Describe any assumptions and provide any technical information and/or data that you used.
- If you estimate potential costs or burdens, explain how you arrived at your estimate in sufficient detail to allow for it to be reproduced.
- Provide specific examples to illustrate your concerns, and suggest alternatives.
- Explain your views as clearly as possible, avoiding the use of profanity or personal threats.
- Make sure to submit your comments by the comment period deadline identified.

Table of Contents

- I. Policy Statement
- II. Background
- III. Definitions

IV. Guiding Principles

V. Consultation

- A. The Consultation Process
- B. What Activities May Involve Consultation?
- C. When Consultation Occurs
- D. How Consultation Occurs

VI. Managing the Consultation Process

- A. Roles and Responsibilities
- B. National Consultation Meeting
- C. Reporting
- D. EPA Senior Management Review

I. Policy Statement

EPA's policy is to consult on a government-to-government basis with federally recognized tribal governments when EPA actions and decisions may affect tribal interests. Consultation is a process of meaningful communication and coordination between EPA and tribal officials prior to EPA taking actions or implementing decisions that may affect tribes. As a process, consultation includes several methods of interaction that may occur at different levels. The appropriate level of interaction is determined by past and current practices, adjustments made through this Policy, the continuing dialogue between EPA and tribal governments, and program and regional office consultation procedures and plans.

This Policy establishes national guidelines and institutional controls for consultation across EPA. EPA program and regional offices have the primary responsibility for consulting with tribes. All program and regional office consultation plans and practices must be in accord with this Policy. This Policy seeks to strike a balance between providing sufficient guidance for purposes of achieving consistency and predictability and allowing for, and encouraging, the tailoring of consultation approaches to reflect the circumstances of each consultation situation and to accommodate the preferences of tribal governments. The consultation process is further detailed in Section V of this document.

II. Background

To put into effect the policy statement above, EPA has developed this proposed EPA Policy on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribes (Policy). The Policy complies with the Presidential Memorandum (Memorandum) issued November 5, 2009, directing agencies to develop a plan to implement fully Executive Order 13175 (Executive Order). The Executive Order specifies that each Agency must have an accountable process to ensure meaningful and timely input by tribal officials in the development of

regulatory policies that have tribal implications.

This Policy reflects the principles expressed in the 1984 EPA Policy for the Administration of Environmental Programs on Indian Reservations (1984 Policy) for interacting with tribes. The 1984 Policy remains the cornerstone for EPA's Indian program and "assure[s] that tribal concerns and interests are considered whenever EPA's actions and/or decisions may affect" tribes (1984 Policy, p. 3, principle no. 5).

One of the primary goals of this Policy is to fully implement both the Executive Order and the 1984 Indian Policy, with the ultimate goal of strengthening the consultation, coordination, and partnership between tribal governments and EPA.

The most basic result of this full implementation is that EPA takes an expansive view of the need for consultation in line with the 1984 Policy's directive to consider tribal interests whenever EPA takes an action that may affect tribal interests.

The Policy is intended to be implemented using existing EPA structures to the extent possible. The use of current EPA business processes, such as the Action Development Process, National and Regional Tribal Operations Committees, and tribal partnership groups is purposeful so that consultation with tribal governments becomes a standard EPA practice and not an additional requirement.

The issuance of this Policy supports and guides the development and use of program and regional office consultation plans and practices consistent with this Policy.

III. Definitions

A. Indian tribe or tribe means an Indian or Alaska Native tribe, band, nation, pueblo, village, or community that the Secretary of the Interior acknowledges to exist as an Indian tribe pursuant to the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act of 1944, 25 U.S.C. 479a.

B. Tribal official means an elected, appointed, or designated official or employee of a tribe.

C. Indian country means:

1. All land within limits of any Indian reservation¹ under the jurisdiction of the United States government, notwithstanding the issuance of any

¹ EPA's definition of reservation encompasses both formal reservations and informal reservations, i.e., trust lands set aside for Indian tribes. See for example *Oklahoma Tax Comm'n v. Sac and Fox Nation*, 508 U.S. 114, 123 (1993); 56 FR 64876, Dec. 12, 1991; or 63 FR 7254, Feb. 12, 1998.

patent, and, including rights-of-way running through the reservation;

2. All dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of a state; and

3. All Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.

IV. Guiding Principles

To understand both the purpose and scope of the Policy as well as the integration of the Policy, Memorandum, and Executive Order, it is helpful to list principles found in EPA's January 2010 Plan to Develop a Tribal Consultation and Coordination Policy Implementing Executive Order 13175:

EPA's fundamental objective in carrying out its responsibilities in Indian country is to protect human health and the environment.

EPA recognizes and works directly with federally recognized tribes as sovereign entities with primary authority and responsibility for each tribe's land and membership, and not as political subdivisions of states or other governmental units.

EPA recognizes the federal government's trust responsibility, which derives from the historical relationship between the federal government and Indian tribes as expressed in certain treaties and federal Indian law.

EPA ensures the close involvement of tribal governments and gives special consideration to their interests whenever EPA's actions may affect Indian country or other tribal interests.

When EPA issues involve other federal agencies, EPA carries out its consultation responsibilities jointly with those other agencies, where appropriate.

In addition, it is helpful to note the distinction between this Policy, federal environmental laws pertaining to public involvement, and Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations. Under this Policy, EPA consults with federally recognized tribal governments when Agency actions and decisions may affect tribal interests. EPA also recognizes its obligations to involve the public as required by federal environmental laws. Finally, EPA recognizes the need to be responsive to the environmental justice concerns of non-federally recognized tribes, individual tribal members, tribal community-based/grassroots

organizations and other indigenous stakeholders.

V. Consultation

A. The Consultation Process

To the fullest extent possible, EPA plans to use existing EPA business operations to put this Policy into effect.

Tribal officials may request consultation in addition to EPA's ability to determine what requires consultation. EPA attempts to honor the tribal government's request with consideration of the nature of the activity, past consultation efforts, available resources, timing considerations, and all other relevant factors.

Consultation at EPA consists of four phases: Identification, Notification, Input, and Follow-up:

1. *Identification Phase*: EPA identifies activities that may be appropriate for consultation, using the mechanisms described in section B.2, below. The identification phase should include a determination of the complexity of the activity, its potential implications for tribes, and any time and/or resource constraints relevant to the consultation process. This phase should also include an initial identification of the potentially affected tribe(s).

2. *Notification Phase*: EPA notifies the tribes of activities that may be appropriate for consultation.

Notification can occur in a number of ways depending on the nature of the activity and the number of tribes potentially affected. For example, EPA may send out a mass mailing to all tribes, may contact the tribal governments by telephone, or provide notice through other agreed upon means. EPA normally honors tribal preferences regarding the specific mode of contact.

Notification includes sufficient information for tribal officials to make an informed decision about the desire to continue with consultation and sufficient information to understand how to provide informed input.

Notification should occur sufficiently early in the process to allow for meaningful input by the tribe(s).

3. *Input Phase*: Tribes provide input to EPA on the consultation matter. This phase may include a range of interactions including written and oral communications including exchanges of information, phone calls, meetings, and other appropriate interactions depending upon the specific circumstances involved. EPA coordinates with tribal officials during this phase to be responsive to their needs for information and to provide

opportunities to provide, receive, and discuss input. During this phase, EPA considers the input regarding the activity in question. EPA may need to undertake subsequent rounds of consultation if there are significant changes in the originally-proposed activity or as new issues arise.

4. *Follow-up Phase*: EPA provides feedback to the tribes(s) involved in the consultation to explain how their input was considered in the final action. This feedback should be a formal, written communication from a senior EPA official involved to the most senior tribal official involved in the consultation.

B. What activities may involve consultation?

1. *General Categories of Activities Appropriate for Consultation*: The broad scope of consultation contemplated by this Policy creates a large number of actions that may be appropriate for consultation.

The following list of EPA activity categories provides a general framework from which to begin the determination of whether any particular action or decision is appropriate for consultation. The final decision on consultation is normally made after examining the complexity of the activity, its implications for tribes, time and/or resource constraints, an initial identification of the potentially affected tribe(s), application of the mechanisms for identifying matters for consultation, described below, and interaction with tribal partnership groups and tribal governments.

The following, non-exclusive list of EPA activity categories are normally appropriate for consultation if they may affect a tribe(s):

- a. Regulations or rules
- b. Policies, guidance documents, directives
- c. Budget and priority planning development
- d. Legislative comments²
- e. Permits
- f. Civil enforcement and compliance monitoring actions³

² Legislative comments are a special case where, due to short legislative timeframes, consultation in advance of comment submission may not always be possible. Nevertheless, EPA will strive to inform tribes when it submits legislative comments on activities that may affect Indian country or other tribal governmental interests.

³ Primary guidance on civil enforcement matters involving tribes can be found in "Guidance on the Enforcement Priorities Outlined in the 1984 Indian Policy," and "Questions and Answers on the Tribal Enforcement Process." This guidance is intended to work with the Tribal Consultation Policy in a complementary fashion to ensure appropriate consultation with tribes on civil enforcement

- g. Response actions and emergency preparedness⁴
- h. State or tribal authorizations or delegations
- i. International Treaties and Agreements

2. *EPA's Mechanisms for Identifying Matters for Consultation:* The mechanisms EPA uses for identifying matters appropriate for consultation are as follows:

a. **Tribal Government-Requested Consultation.** Tribal officials may request consultation in addition to EPA's ability to determine what requires consultation. EPA attempts to honor the tribal government's request with consideration of the nature of the activity, past consultation efforts, available resources, timing considerations, and all other relevant factors.

b. **Regulatory Steering Committee (RSC).** This committee oversees EPA's Action Development Process (ADP), which covers all EPA regulations and non-regulatory actions of national significance. The RSC identifies matters appropriate for consultation on the Comprehensive Regulatory Data Form. These forms are available to tribes in the semiannual Regulatory Agenda as well as in the subset of rules on the Regulatory Gateway accessed through the EPA website.

This Policy is not intended to subject additional Agency actions to the ADP process for the sole purpose of a consultation analysis. Non-ADP actions are subject to consultation analysis through other mechanisms identified within the Policy.

c. **National Program Offices and Regional Offices.** For those actions and decisions not in the ADP process, program and regional offices also determine if consultation is appropriate under this Policy. EPA's Tribal Consultation Advisors, described below, provide assistance with that determination. Such determination includes coordination with national and/or regional tribal partnership groups.

d. **National and Regional Tribal Partnership Groups.** EPA meets regularly with a number of national and regional tribal partnership groups. These groups assist in the identification of matters that may be appropriate for consultation.

matters. EPA generally does not consult on criminal investigations and enforcement actions.

⁴ The term response as defined under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) includes removals and remedial actions.

C. *When Consultation Occurs*

Consultation should occur early enough to allow tribes the opportunity to provide meaningful input that can be considered prior to EPA deciding whether, how, or when to act on the matter under consideration. As proposals and options are developed, consultation and coordination should be continued, to ensure that the overall range of options and decisions is shared and deliberated by all concerned parties, including additions or amendments that occur later in the process.

D. *How Consultation Occurs*

There is no single formula for what constitutes appropriate consultation, and the analysis, planning, and implementation of consultation should consider all aspects of the action under consideration. In the case of national rulemaking, a series of meetings in geographically diverse areas may be appropriate. For more routine operational matters, a less formal process may be sufficient.

VI. **Managing the Consultation Process**

A. *Roles and Responsibilities*

The following roles and responsibilities have been defined to allow EPA to effectively implement this Policy. These roles and responsibilities reflect the fact that, while oversight and coordination of consultation occurs at EPA headquarters, as a practical matter, much of the actual consultation activity occurs in EPA's program and regional offices. The responsibility for initially analyzing the need for consultation and then subsequently carrying it out, resides with these offices.

Designated Consultation Official—In addition to being the EPA's National Program Manager for the EPA Tribal Program, EPA's Assistant Administrator for the Office of International and Tribal Affairs (OITA) is the EPA-Designated Consultation Official under the Executive Order.

These responsibilities include coordination and implementation of tribal consultation in accordance with this Policy and Agency compliance with the 1984 Indian Policy.

The Designated Consultation Official has the authority for: Defining EPA actions appropriate for consultation, evaluating the adequacy of that consultation, and ensuring that EPA program and regional office consultation practices are consistent with this Policy.

Per the Memorandum, the Designated Consultation Official reports annually to OMB on the implementation of the

Executive Order.⁵ Further, the Designated Consultation Official certifies compliance with the Executive Order for applicable EPA activities. The American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) is located within OITA and coordinates the operational details of the Policy and compiles consultation-related information for the Designated Consultation Official.

2. **Assistant Administrators—**Assistant Administrators oversee the consultation process in their respective offices including analysis for potential consultation and the consultation process. Each program office is directed to prepare a semi-annual agenda of matters appropriate for consultation and a brief summary of consultation that has occurred. The program offices provide this information to AIEO for reporting to OMB. Each office is directed to designate a Tribal Consultation Advisor.

3. **Regional Administrators—**Regional Administrators oversee the consultation process in their respective offices including analysis for potential consultation and the consultation process. Each region is directed to prepare a semi-annual agenda of matters appropriate for consultation and a brief summary of consultation that has occurred. The regions provide this information to AIEO for reporting to OMB. Each region is directed to designate a Tribal Consultation Advisor.

4. **Tribal Consultation Advisors—**Tribal Consultation Advisors (TCAs) assist in identifying matters appropriate for consultation and prepare summary information on consultation activities and provide it to AIEO. TCAs receive and provide advice within their respective program offices and regions on what actions may be appropriate for consultation. TCAs also serve as a point-of-contact for EPA staff, tribal governments, and other parties interested in the consultation process. TCAs are the in-office subject matter experts to assist staff and management in the implementation of the Policy.

B. *National Consultation Meeting*

OITA/AIEO may convene a periodic National Consultation Meeting to be chaired by the Designated Consultation Official to review the consultation process across the Agency.

C. *Reporting*

Pursuant to the Memorandum, EPA submits annual progress reports to OMB on the status of the consultation process and actions and provides any updates to this Policy.

⁵ Report is filed by August 3rd.

D. EPA Senior Management Review

The Designated Consultation Official communicates regularly with the Assistant and Regional Administrators to review the consultation system, to consider any matters requiring senior

management attention, and to make adjustments necessary to improve the Policy or its implementation.

EPA plans to receive ongoing feedback on the Policy from all parties to assess its effectiveness and implement improvements.

Dated: December 8, 2010.

Michael Stahl,

*Acting Director American Indian
Environmental Office.*

[FR Doc. 2010-31332 Filed 12-14-10; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 6560-50-P