

Council on Environmental Quality

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site-specific action), the tiered document needs only to summarize and incorporate by reference the issues discussed in the broader document. The tiered document shall concentrate on the issues specific to the subsequent action. The tiered document shall state where the earlier document is available.

(c) Tiering is appropriate when the sequence from an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment is:

(1) From a programmatic, plan, or policy environmental impact statement or environmental assessment to a program, plan, or policy statement or assessment of lesser or narrower scope or to a site-specific statement or assessment.

(2) From an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment on a specific action at an early stage (such as need and site selection) to a supplement (which is preferred) or a subsequent statement or assessment at a later stage (such as environmental mitigation). Tiering in such cases is appropriate when it helps the lead agency to focus on the issues that are ripe for decision and exclude from consideration issues already decided or not yet ripe.

§ 1501.12 Incorporation by reference.

Agencies shall incorporate material, such as planning studies, analyses, or other relevant information, into environmental documents by reference when the effect will be to cut down on bulk without impeding agency and public review of the action. Agencies shall cite the incorporated material in the document and briefly describe its content. Agencies may not incorporate material by reference unless it is reasonably available for inspection by potentially interested persons within the time allowed for comment. Agencies shall not incorporate by reference material based on proprietary data that is not available for review and comment.

PART 1502—ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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§ 1502.1 Purpose of environmental impact statement.

The primary purpose of an environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of NEPA is to ensure agencies consider the environmental impacts of their actions in decision making. It shall provide full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and shall inform decision makers and the public of reasonable alternatives that would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment. Agencies shall focus on significant environmental issues and alternatives and shall reduce paperwork and the accumulation of extraneous background data. Statements shall be concise, clear, and to the point, and shall be supported by evidence that the agency has made the necessary environmental

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analyses. An environmental impact statement is a document that informs Federal agency decision making and the public.

§ 1502.2 Implementation.

(a) Environmental impact statements shall not be encyclopedic.

(b) Environmental impact statements shall discuss impacts in proportion to their significance. There shall be only brief discussion of other than significant issues. As in a finding of no significant impact, there should be only enough discussion to show why more study is not warranted.

(c) Environmental impact statements shall be analytic, concise, and no longer than necessary to comply with NEPA and with the regulations in this subchapter. Length should be proportional to potential environmental effects and project size.

(d) Environmental impact statements shall state how alternatives considered in it and decisions based on it will or will not achieve the requirements of sections 101 and 102(1) of NEPA as interpreted in the regulations in this subchapter and other environmental laws and policies.

(e) The range of alternatives discussed in environmental impact statements shall encompass those to be considered by the decision maker.

(f) Agencies shall not commit resources prejudicing selection of alternatives before making a final decision (*see also* §1506.1 of this chapter).

(g) Environmental impact statements shall serve as the means of assessing the environmental impact of proposed agency actions, rather than justifying decisions already made.

§ 1502.3 Statutory requirements for statements.

As required by section 102(2)(C) of NEPA, environmental impact statements are to be included in every Federal agency recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.

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§ 1502.4 Major Federal actions requiring the preparation of environmental impact statements.

(a) Agencies shall define the proposal that is the subject of an environmental impact statement based on the statutory authorities for the proposed action. Agencies shall use the criteria for scope (§1501.9(e) of this chapter) to determine which proposal(s) shall be the subject of a particular statement. Agencies shall evaluate in a single environmental impact statement proposals or parts of proposals that are related to each other closely enough to be, in effect, a single course of action.

(b) Environmental impact statements may be prepared for programmatic Federal actions, such as the adoption of new agency programs. When agencies prepare such statements, they should be relevant to the program decision and timed to coincide with meaningful points in agency planning and decision making.

(1) When preparing statements on programmatic actions (including proposals by more than one agency), agencies may find it useful to evaluate the proposal(s) in one of the following ways:

(i) Geographically, including actions occurring in the same general location, such as body of water, region, or metropolitan area.

(ii) Generically, including actions that have relevant similarities, such as common timing, impacts, alternatives, methods of implementation, media, or subject matter.

(iii) By stage of technological development including Federal or federally assisted research, development or demonstration programs for new technologies that, if applied, could significantly affect the quality of the human environment. Statements on such programs should be available before the program has reached a stage of investment or commitment to implementation likely to determine subsequent development or restrict later alternatives.

(2) Agencies shall as appropriate employ scoping (§1501.9 of this chapter), tiering (§1501.11 of this chapter), and other methods listed in §§1500.4 and 1500.5 of this chapter to relate programmatic and narrow actions and to