

## § 1505.1

SOURCE: 85 FR 43369, July 16, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

### § 1505.1 [Reserved]

### § 1505.2 Record of decision in cases requiring environmental impact statements.

(a) At the time of its decision (§1506.11 of this chapter) or, if appropriate, its recommendation to Congress, each agency shall prepare and timely publish a concise public record of decision or joint record of decision. The record, which each agency may integrate into any other record it prepares, shall:

(1) State the decision.

(2) Identify alternatives considered by the agency in reaching its decision, specifying the alternative or alternatives considered environmentally preferable. An agency may discuss preferences among alternatives based on relevant factors including economic and technical considerations and agency statutory missions. An agency shall identify and discuss all such factors, including any essential considerations of national policy, that the agency balanced in making its decision and state how those considerations entered into its decision.

(3) State whether the agency has adopted all practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the alternative selected, and if not, why the agency did not. The agency shall adopt and summarize, where applicable, a monitoring and enforcement program for any enforceable mitigation requirements or commitments.

(b) Informed by the summary of the submitted alternatives, information, and analyses in the final environmental impact statement (§1502.17(b) of this chapter), together with any other material in the record that he or she determines to be relevant, the decision maker shall certify in the record of decision that the agency has considered all of the alternatives, information, analyses, and objections submitted by State, Tribal, and local governments and public commenters for consideration by the lead and cooperating agencies in developing the environmental impact statement. Agency environmental impact statements certified in accordance with this section are enti-

## 40 CFR Ch. V (7–1–23 Edition)

tled to a presumption that the agency has considered the submitted alternatives, information, and analyses, including the summary thereof, in the final environmental impact statement (§1502.17(b)).

### § 1505.3 Implementing the decision.

Agencies may provide for monitoring to assure that their decisions are carried out and should do so in important cases. Mitigation (§1505.2(a)(3)) and other conditions established in the environmental impact statement or during its review and committed as part of the decision shall be implemented by the lead agency or other appropriate consenting agency. The lead agency shall:

(a) Include appropriate conditions in grants, permits, or other approvals.

(b) Condition funding of actions on mitigation.

(c) Upon request, inform cooperating or participating agencies on progress in carrying out mitigation measures that they have proposed and were adopted by the agency making the decision.

(d) Upon request, publish the results of relevant monitoring.

## PART 1506—OTHER REQUIREMENTS OF NEPA

Sec.

1506.1 Limitations on actions during NEPA process.

1506.2 Elimination of duplication with State, Tribal, and local procedures.

1506.3 Adoption.

1506.4 Combining documents.

1506.5 Agency responsibility for environmental documents.

1506.6 Public involvement.

1506.7 Further guidance.

1506.8 Proposals for legislation.

1506.9 Proposals for regulations.

1506.10 Filing requirements.

1506.11 Timing of agency action.

1506.12 Emergencies.

1506.13 Effective date.

AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 4321–4347; 42 U.S.C. 4371–4375; 42 U.S.C. 7609; E.O. 11514, 35 FR 4247, 3 CFR, 1966–1970, Comp., p. 902, as amended by E.O. 11991, 42 FR 26967, 3 CFR, 1977 Comp., p. 123; and E.O. 13807, 82 FR 40463, 3 CFR, 2017, Comp., p. 369.

SOURCE: 85 FR 43370, July 16, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

## Council on Environmental Quality

## § 1506.2

### § 1506.1 Limitations on actions during NEPA process.

(a) Except as provided in paragraphs (b) and (c) of this section, until an agency issues a finding of no significant impact, as provided in §1501.6 of this chapter, or record of decision, as provided in §1505.2 of this chapter, no action concerning the proposal may be taken that would:

(1) Have an adverse environmental impact; or

(2) Limit the choice of reasonable alternatives.

(b) If any agency is considering an application from a non-Federal entity and is aware that the applicant is about to take an action within the agency's jurisdiction that would meet either of the criteria in paragraph (a) of this section, then the agency shall promptly notify the applicant that the agency will take appropriate action to ensure that the objectives and procedures of NEPA are achieved. This section does not preclude development by applicants of plans or designs or performance of other activities necessary to support an application for Federal, State, Tribal, or local permits or assistance. An agency considering a proposed action for Federal funding may authorize such activities, including, but not limited to, acquisition of interests in land (*e.g.*, fee simple, rights-of-way, and conservation easements), purchase of long lead-time equipment, and purchase options made by applicants.

(c) While work on a required programmatic environmental review is in progress and the action is not covered by an existing programmatic review, agencies shall not undertake in the interim any major Federal action covered by the program that may significantly affect the quality of the human environment unless such action:

(1) Is justified independently of the program;

(2) Is itself accompanied by an adequate environmental review; and

(3) Will not prejudice the ultimate decision on the program. Interim action prejudices the ultimate decision on the program when it tends to determine subsequent development or limit alternatives.

### § 1506.2 Elimination of duplication with State, Tribal, and local procedures.

(a) Federal agencies are authorized to cooperate with State, Tribal, and local agencies that are responsible for preparing environmental documents, including those prepared pursuant to section 102(2)(D) of NEPA.

(b) To the fullest extent practicable unless specifically prohibited by law, agencies shall cooperate with State, Tribal, and local agencies to reduce duplication between NEPA and State, Tribal, and local requirements, including through use of studies, analysis, and decisions developed by State, Tribal, or local agencies. Except for cases covered by paragraph (a) of this section, such cooperation shall include, to the fullest extent practicable:

(1) Joint planning processes.

(2) Joint environmental research and studies.

(3) Joint public hearings (except where otherwise provided by statute).

(4) Joint environmental assessments.

(c) To the fullest extent practicable unless specifically prohibited by law, agencies shall cooperate with State, Tribal, and local agencies to reduce duplication between NEPA and comparable State, Tribal, and local requirements. Such cooperation shall include, to the fullest extent practicable, joint environmental impact statements. In such cases, one or more Federal agencies and one or more State, Tribal, or local agencies shall be joint lead agencies. Where State or Tribal laws or local ordinances have environmental impact statement or similar requirements in addition to but not in conflict with those in NEPA, Federal agencies may cooperate in fulfilling these requirements, as well as those of Federal laws, so that one document will comply with all applicable laws.

(d) To better integrate environmental impact statements into State, Tribal, or local planning processes, environmental impact statements shall discuss any inconsistency of a proposed action with any approved State, Tribal, or local plan or law (whether or not federally sanctioned). Where an inconsistency exists, the statement should describe the extent to which the agency would reconcile its proposed action

### § 1506.3

with the plan or law. While the statement should discuss any inconsistencies, NEPA does not require reconciliation.

#### § 1506.3 Adoption.

(a) *Generally.* An agency may adopt a Federal draft or final environmental impact statement, environmental assessment, or portion thereof, or categorical exclusion determination provided that the statement, assessment, portion thereof, or determination meets the standards for an adequate statement, assessment, or determination under the regulations in this subchapter.

(b) *Environmental impact statements.*

(1) If the actions covered by the original environmental impact statement and the proposed action are substantially the same, the adopting agency shall republish it as a final statement consistent with §1506.10. If the actions are not substantially the same, the adopting agency shall treat the statement as a draft and republish it, consistent with §1506.10.

(2) Notwithstanding paragraph (b)(1) of this section, a cooperating agency may adopt in its record of decision without republishing the environmental impact statement of a lead agency when, after an independent review of the statement, the cooperating agency concludes that its comments and suggestions have been satisfied.

(c) *Environmental assessments.* If the actions covered by the original environmental assessment and the proposed action are substantially the same, the adopting agency may adopt the environmental assessment in its finding of no significant impact and provide notice consistent with §1501.6 of this chapter.

(d) *Categorical exclusions.* An agency may adopt another agency's determination that a categorical exclusion applies to a proposed action if the action covered by the original categorical exclusion determination and the adopting agency's proposed action are substantially the same. The agency shall document the adoption.

(e) *Identification of certain circumstances.* The adopting agency shall specify if one of the following circumstances is present:

### 40 CFR Ch. V (7–1–23 Edition)

(1) The agency is adopting an assessment or statement that is not final within the agency that prepared it.

(2) The action assessed in the assessment or statement is the subject of a referral under part 1504 of this chapter.

(3) The assessment or statement's adequacy is the subject of a judicial action that is not final.

#### § 1506.4 Combining documents.

Agencies should combine, to the fullest extent practicable, any environmental document with any other agency document to reduce duplication and paperwork.

#### § 1506.5 Agency responsibility for environmental documents.

(a) *Responsibility.* The agency is responsible for the accuracy, scope (§1501.9(e) of this chapter), and content of environmental documents prepared by the agency or by an applicant or contractor under the supervision of the agency.

(b) *Information.* An agency may require an applicant to submit environmental information for possible use by the agency in preparing an environmental document. An agency also may direct an applicant or authorize a contractor to prepare an environmental document under the supervision of the agency.

(1) The agency should assist the applicant by outlining the types of information required or, for the preparation of environmental documents, shall provide guidance to the applicant or contractor and participate in their preparation.

(2) The agency shall independently evaluate the information submitted or the environmental document and shall be responsible for its accuracy, scope, and contents.

(3) The agency shall include in the environmental document the names and qualifications of the persons preparing environmental documents, and conducting the independent evaluation of any information submitted or environmental documents prepared by an applicant or contractor, such as in the list of preparers for environmental impact statements (§1502.18 of this chapter). It is the intent of this paragraph (b)(3) that acceptable work not be

## Council on Environmental Quality

## § 1506.7

redone, but that it be verified by the agency.

(4) Contractors or applicants preparing environmental assessments or environmental impact statements shall submit a disclosure statement to the lead agency that specifies any financial or other interest in the outcome of the action. Such statement need not include privileged or confidential trade secrets or other confidential business information.

(5) Nothing in this section is intended to prohibit any agency from requesting any person, including the applicant, to submit information to it or to prohibit any person from submitting information to any agency for use in preparing environmental documents.

### § 1506.6 Public involvement.

Agencies shall:

(a) Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures (§1507.3 of this chapter).

(b) Provide public notice of NEPA-related hearings, public meetings, and other opportunities for public involvement, and the availability of environmental documents so as to inform those persons and agencies who may be interested or affected by their proposed actions. When selecting appropriate methods for providing public notice, agencies shall consider the ability of affected persons and agencies to access electronic media.

(1) In all cases, the agency shall notify those who have requested notice on an individual action.

(2) In the case of an action with effects of national concern, notice shall include publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER. An agency may notify organizations that have requested regular notice.

(3) In the case of an action with effects primarily of local concern, the notice may include:

(i) Notice to State, Tribal, and local agencies that may be interested or affected by the proposed action.

(ii) Notice to interested or affected State, Tribal, and local governments.

(iii) Following the affected State or Tribe's public notice procedures for comparable actions.

(iv) Publication in local newspapers (in papers of general circulation rather than legal papers).

(v) Notice through other local media.

(vi) Notice to potentially interested community organizations including small business associations.

(vii) Publication in newsletters that may be expected to reach potentially interested persons.

(viii) Direct mailing to owners and occupants of nearby or affected property.

(ix) Posting of notice on and off site in the area where the action is to be located.

(x) Notice through electronic media (*e.g.*, a project or agency website, email, or social media).

(c) Hold or sponsor public hearings, public meetings, or other opportunities for public involvement whenever appropriate or in accordance with statutory requirements applicable to the agency. Agencies may conduct public hearings and public meetings by means of electronic communication except where another format is required by law. When selecting appropriate methods for public involvement, agencies shall consider the ability of affected entities to access electronic media.

(d) Solicit appropriate information from the public.

(e) Explain in its procedures where interested persons can get information or status reports on environmental impact statements and other elements of the NEPA process.

(f) Make environmental impact statements, the comments received, and any underlying documents available to the public pursuant to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. 552).

### § 1506.7 Further guidance.

(a) The Council may provide further guidance concerning NEPA and its procedures consistent with Executive Order 13807, Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects (August 5, 2017), Executive Order 13891, Promoting the Rule of Law Through Improved Agency Guidance Documents (October 9, 2019), and any other applicable Executive orders.

## § 1506.8

## 40 CFR Ch. V (7–1–23 Edition)

(b) To the extent that Council guidance issued prior to September 14, 2020 is in conflict with this subchapter, the provisions of this subchapter apply.

### § 1506.8 Proposals for legislation.

(a) When developing legislation, agencies shall integrate the NEPA process for proposals for legislation significantly affecting the quality of the human environment with the legislative process of the Congress. Technical drafting assistance does not by itself constitute a legislative proposal. Only the agency that has primary responsibility for the subject matter involved will prepare a legislative environmental impact statement.

(b) A legislative environmental impact statement is the detailed statement required by law to be included in an agency's recommendation or report on a legislative proposal to Congress. A legislative environmental impact statement shall be considered part of the formal transmittal of a legislative proposal to Congress; however, it may be transmitted to Congress up to 30 days later in order to allow time for completion of an accurate statement that can serve as the basis for public and Congressional debate. The statement must be available in time for Congressional hearings and deliberations.

(c) Preparation of a legislative environmental impact statement shall conform to the requirements of the regulations in this subchapter, except as follows:

(1) There need not be a scoping process.

(2) Agencies shall prepare the legislative statement in the same manner as a draft environmental impact statement and need not prepare a final statement unless any of the following conditions exist. In such cases, the agency shall prepare and publish the statements consistent with §§ 1503.1 of this chapter and 1506.11:

(i) A Congressional committee with jurisdiction over the proposal has a rule requiring both draft and final environmental impact statements.

(ii) The proposal results from a study process required by statute (such as those required by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (16 U.S.C. 1271 *et seq.*)).

(iii) Legislative approval is sought for Federal or federally assisted construction or other projects that the agency recommends be located at specific geographic locations. For proposals requiring an environmental impact statement for the acquisition of space by the General Services Administration, a draft statement shall accompany the Prospectus or the 11(b) Report of Building Project Surveys to the Congress, and a final statement shall be completed before site acquisition.

(iv) The agency decides to prepare draft and final statements.

(d) Comments on the legislative statement shall be given to the lead agency, which shall forward them along with its own responses to the Congressional committees with jurisdiction.

### § 1506.9 Proposals for regulations.

Where the proposed action is the promulgation of a rule or regulation, procedures and documentation pursuant to other statutory or Executive order requirements may satisfy one or more requirements of this subchapter. When a procedure or document satisfies one or more requirements of this subchapter, the agency may substitute it for the corresponding requirements in this subchapter and need not carry out duplicative procedures or documentation. Agencies shall identify which corresponding requirements in this subchapter are satisfied and consult with the Council to confirm such determinations.

### § 1506.10 Filing requirements.

(a) Agencies shall file environmental impact statements together with comments and responses with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Office of Federal Activities, consistent with EPA's procedures.

(b) Agencies shall file statements with the EPA no earlier than they are also transmitted to participating agencies and made available to the public. EPA may issue guidelines to agencies to implement its responsibilities under this section and § 1506.11.

### § 1506.11 Timing of agency action.

(a) The Environmental Protection Agency shall publish a notice in the

## **Council on Environmental Quality**

## **§ 1506.13**

FEDERAL REGISTER each week of the environmental impact statements filed since its prior notice. The minimum time periods set forth in this section are calculated from the date of publication of this notice.

(b) Unless otherwise provided by law, including statutory provisions for combining a final environmental impact statement and record of decision, Federal agencies may not make or issue a record of decision under §1505.2 of this chapter for the proposed action until the later of the following dates:

(1) 90 days after publication of the notice described in paragraph (a) of this section for a draft environmental impact statement.

(2) 30 days after publication of the notice described in paragraph (a) of this section for a final environmental impact statement.

(c) An agency may make an exception to the rule on timing set forth in paragraph (b) of this section for a proposed action in the following circumstances:

(1) Some agencies have a formally established appeal process after publication of the final environmental impact statement that allows other agencies or the public to take appeals on a decision and make their views known. In such cases where a real opportunity exists to alter the decision, the agency may make and record the decision at the same time it publishes the environmental impact statement. This means that the period for appeal of the decision and the 30-day period set forth in paragraph (b)(2) of this section may run concurrently. In such cases, the environmental impact statement shall explain the timing and the public's right of appeal and provide notification consistent with §1506.10; or

(2) An agency engaged in rulemaking under the Administrative Procedure Act or other statute for the purpose of protecting the public health or safety may waive the time period in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, publish a decision on the final rule simultaneously with publication of the notice of the availability of the final environmental impact statement, and provide notification consistent with §1506.10, as described in paragraph (a) of this section.

(d) If an agency files the final environmental impact statement within 90 days of the filing of the draft environmental impact statement with the Environmental Protection Agency, the decision-making period and the 90-day period may run concurrently. However, subject to paragraph (e) of this section, agencies shall allow at least 45 days for comments on draft statements.

(e) The lead agency may extend the minimum periods in paragraph (b) of this section and provide notification consistent with §1506.10. Upon a showing by the lead agency of compelling reasons of national policy, the Environmental Protection Agency may reduce the minimum periods and, upon a showing by any other Federal agency of compelling reasons of national policy, also may extend the minimum periods, but only after consultation with the lead agency. The lead agency may modify the minimum periods when necessary to comply with other specific statutory requirements. (§1507.3(f)(2) of this chapter) Failure to file timely comments shall not be a sufficient reason for extending a period. If the lead agency does not concur with the extension of time, EPA may not extend it for more than 30 days. When the Environmental Protection Agency reduces or extends any period of time it shall notify the Council.

### **§ 1506.12 Emergencies.**

Where emergency circumstances make it necessary to take an action with significant environmental impact without observing the provisions of the regulations in this subchapter, the Federal agency taking the action should consult with the Council about alternative arrangements for compliance with section 102(2)(C) of NEPA. Agencies and the Council will limit such arrangements to actions necessary to control the immediate impacts of the emergency. Other actions remain subject to NEPA review.

### **§ 1506.13 Effective date.**

The regulations in this subchapter apply to any NEPA process begun after September 14, 2020. An agency may

apply the regulations in this subchapter to ongoing activities and environmental documents begun before September 14, 2020.

## PART 1507—AGENCY COMPLIANCE

Sec.

1507.1 Compliance.

1507.2 Agency capability to comply.

1507.3 Agency NEPA procedures.

1507.4 Agency NEPA program information.

AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 4321–4347; 42 U.S.C. 4371–4375; 42 U.S.C. 7609; and E.O. 11514, 35 FR 4247, 3 CFR, 1966–1970, Comp., p. 902, as amended by E.O. 11991, 42 FR 26967, 3 CFR, 1977 Comp., p. 123.

SOURCE: 85 FR 43373, July 16, 2020, unless otherwise noted.

### § 1507.1 Compliance.

All agencies of the Federal Government shall comply with the regulations in this subchapter.

### § 1507.2 Agency capability to comply.

Each agency shall be capable (in terms of personnel and other resources) of complying with the requirements of NEPA and the regulations in this subchapter. Such compliance may include use of the resources of other agencies, applicants, and other participants in the NEPA process, but the agency using the resources shall itself have sufficient capability to evaluate what others do for it and account for the contributions of others. Agencies shall:

(a) Fulfill the requirements of section 102(2)(A) of NEPA to utilize a systematic, interdisciplinary approach that will ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and the environmental design arts in planning and in decision making that may have an impact on the human environment. Agencies shall designate a senior agency official to be responsible for overall review of agency NEPA compliance, including resolving implementation issues.

(b) Identify methods and procedures required by section 102(2)(B) of NEPA to ensure that presently unquantified environmental amenities and values may be given appropriate consideration.

(c) Prepare adequate environmental impact statements pursuant to section 102(2)(C) of NEPA and cooperate on the development of statements in the areas where the agency has jurisdiction by law or special expertise or is authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards.

(d) Study, develop, and describe alternatives to recommended courses of action in any proposal that involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources, consistent with section 102(2)(E) of NEPA.

(e) Comply with the requirements of section 102(2)(H) of NEPA that the agency initiate and utilize ecological information in the planning and development of resource-oriented projects.

(f) Fulfill the requirements of sections 102(2)(F), 102(2)(G), and 102(2)(I), of NEPA, Executive Order 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality, section 2, as amended by Executive Order 11991, Relating to Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality, and Executive Order 13807, Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting for Infrastructure Projects.

### § 1507.3 Agency NEPA procedures.

(a) The Council has determined that the categorical exclusions contained in agency NEPA procedures as of September 14, 2020, are consistent with this subchapter.

(b) No more than 36 months after September 14, 2020, or 9 months after the establishment of an agency, whichever comes later, each agency shall develop or revise, as necessary, proposed procedures to implement the regulations in this subchapter. When the agency is a department, it may be efficient for major subunits (with the consent of the department) to adopt their own procedures.

(1) Each agency shall consult with the Council while developing or revising its proposed procedures and before publishing them in the FEDERAL REGISTER for comment. Agencies with similar programs should consult with each other and the Council to coordinate their procedures, especially for programs requesting similar information from applicants.