



The NEPA Process

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared in a series of steps: gathering government and public comments to define the issues that should be analyzed in the EIS (known as “scoping”); preparing the Draft EIS; receiving and responding to public comments on the Draft EIS; and preparing the Final EIS. Decisions are not made in an EIS; rather, the EIS analysis is one of several factors decisionmakers consider. The decisions are announced in the Record of Decision (ROD) after the Final EIS has been published.



Scoping (Public Input)

A federal agency begins the scoping period for an EIS by publishing a Notice of Intent (NOI) in the *Federal Register* to let the public know that it is considering an action and will prepare an EIS. The NOI describes the proposed action and alternatives the agency is considering; provides information on issues and potential impacts; and invites comments, questions and suggestions (both written and oral) on the scope of the EIS. Scoping may involve public meetings and other means to obtain public comments on the EIS.

Draft EIS (Public Input)

A Draft EIS was prepared and mailed to interested parties in October 2009. This EIS presents background information, analyzes and compares the potential environmental impacts which could result from the alternatives, and provides additional information and the methodologies used in the analysis. The Draft EIS also addresses issues raised by members of the public at the scoping meetings and through the formal scoping process.

Final EIS

Following the public comment period on the Draft EIS a Final EIS will be prepared and distributed. The Final EIS will reflect consideration of all comments received on the Draft EIS, will contain the Department's responses to those comments, and will reflect revised analyses of potential environmental impacts.

Record of Decision (ROD)

After the Final EIS is published, a minimum 30-day waiting period is required before a ROD can be issued. The ROD notifies the public of the decisions made on the proposed action and the reasons for those decisions. The decisionmaking process may include consideration of factors such as cost, technical feasibility, agency statutory missions, and national objectives, as well as the potential environmental impacts of an action. No action can be taken until the ROD has been issued.

Providing Effective Public Comments

Get Involved

- Your comments are important
- Public comments on the Draft EIS improve the Final EIS
- Public comments can improve the accuracy of the document

Helpful Comments

- Make specific, rather than general comments
- Provide alternate data
- State what topics or issues are significant to you and why
- Provide additional sources of relevant data or information that should be considered

For further information or to submit comments, contact:

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Comments must be received or postmarked by the end of the comment period, January 29, 2010.