

Memorandum

Making Conservation a California Way of Life

To: ENVIRONMENTAL DISTRICT DEPUTY DIRECTORS
DIVISION ENVIRONMENTAL BRANCH/OFFICE CHIEFS

Date: April 24, 2018

File: NEPA Assignment

From: PHILIP J. STOLARSKI
Division Chief
Division of Environmental Analysis



Subject: **CLARIFIED REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS
UNDER THE NEPA ASSIGNMENT PROGRAM**

Background

Since July 2007, Caltrans has assumed the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), pursuant to 23 USC 327. The most current [23 USC 327 MOU](#) makes no substantive changes to Caltrans' authority under the NEPA Assignment Program.

In October 2012, the Chief of the Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA) issued a policy memo that described updates made to Caltrans' environmental document review procedures under the NEPA Assignment Program. Since October 2012, the environmental document review procedures have been further clarified in Chapter 38 of Volume 1 of the Standard Environmental Reference (SER). The SER must be followed as Caltrans' operational policy for environmental document quality control reviews.

Summary

A five-step review process is required for all Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) and Complex Environmental Assessments (EAs) prepared under NEPA Assignment. The submittal requirements for Individual Section 4(f) Evaluations are the same as those for EISs. Each step of the five-step process is described [here](#), as are protocols for documentation submittals, prescribed review times, and signature authorities.

The District/Region will complete an environmental document quality control review for each environmental document, as required in the [Environmental Document Quality Control Program under NEPA Assignment policy memorandum](#), dated April 24, 2018. The District/Region will also complete the [Environmental Document Review Checklist](#).

A Headquarters interdisciplinary team led by the DEA Environmental Coordinator will review all EISs, Complex EAs, and Individual Section 4(f) Evaluations prior to District/Region approval of the environmental document. All EISs and Individual Section 4(f) Evaluations will be reviewed by the appropriate Legal Office, which will complete a legal review for the Draft EIS and determine legal sufficiency for the Final EIS before the EIS may be signed. Legal sufficiency is also needed before a Final Individual Section 4(f) Evaluation may be signed. The Legal Office will review EAs at the request of the District/Region. Routine EAs may be signed in the District/Region at the completion of the District quality control review.

Applicability

Effective immediately, for all State Highway System and Local Assistance projects under the NEPA Assignment Program, this memorandum supersedes the following DEA memorandum for environmental document review procedures:

Date

October 1, 2012

Subject

Review Procedures for Environmental Documents
under the NEPA Assignment Program

If you have any questions regarding this policy memorandum, please call Tammy Massengale, GNEIS Office Chief, at (916) 653-5157.

cc: Ray Zhang, Chief, Division of Local Assistance
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