



THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON

ORDER NO. 3449

Subject: Reinstating and Updating Public Notice of the Costs Associated with Developing Department of the Interior Publications and Similar Documents

Sec. 1. **Purpose.** The Department of the Interior (Department) is committed to transparency regarding the taxpayer-funded resources required to prepare, review, and issue certain publicly released Department work products. This Order reinstates Secretary's Order (SO) 3380, titled "Public Notice of the Costs Associated with Developing Department of the Interior Publications and Similar Documents," issued on March 10, 2020, and updates Departmental procedures to reflect current best practices and policy priorities. This Order is intended to inform the public and decision makers about resource use; it is not intended to discourage the preparation or release of documents required by law, regulation, or policy.

Sec. 2. **Authorities.** This Order is issued under the authority of section 2 of Reorganization Plan No. 3 of 1950 (64 Stat 1262), as amended, and other applicable authorities.

Sec. 3. **Background.** The Department's Bureaus/Offices produce a wide range of publications, reports, studies, analyses, and similar documents for external audiences, including documents prepared to satisfy statutory and regulatory requirements and to support public understanding and oversight.

In carrying out its mission, the Department often develops documents for use by external parties, including members of the general public. Such documents include analyses under the National Environmental Policy Act, audits, investigations, scientific and other reports, and responses to legislative branch requests. The cost of these activities, however, is not sufficiently tracked, calculated, or available to the public, resulting in the overall fiscal impact of these activities not being apparent and the public's ability to understand the resource demands of Department work products being limited.

In response, SO 3380 required the costs of developing certain documents to be calculated and made available to the public, providing necessary transparency and accountability for the use of taxpayer resources.

In April 2021, SO 3380 was revoked by the previous administration. Given the Department's statutory obligations, fiduciary responsibility to taxpayers, and commitment to sound governance, the Department is now restoring this essential tool for transparency. Reinstating and updating the requirements of SO 3380 will ensure that documents developed by, on behalf of, or in coordination with the Department are subject to appropriate public oversight and fiscal accountability.

Sec. 4. Directives.

- a. **Reinstating and Updating SO 3380.** The full provisions of SO 3380 are reinstated and incorporated by reference in this Order, with the following summary:
1. Directing all Bureaus/Offices to identify and quantify the cost of preparing, reviewing, and issuing documents by, on behalf of, or in coordination with the Department.
 2. Requiring the display of such costs on the associated document.
 3. Tasking the Assistant Secretary – Policy, Management and Budget (AS-PMB) with issuing necessary guidance.
 4. Assigning responsibility to the heads of Bureaus/Offices to execute their responsibilities and to ensure the cost of each covered document developed is accurately calculated in accordance with guidance issued by the AS-PMB.

These requirements form the foundation of this Order and are reaffirmed and updated in the sections that follow.

- b. **Definitions.** For purposes of this Order, the following terms have the meanings set forth below. The scope of covered and excluded documents is addressed in section 4(c).
1. **“Covered document”** means a final Department publication, report, study, analysis, or similar written work product that is (i) produced by, on behalf of, or in coordination with the Department or any Bureau/Office, including documents produced in conjunction with other Federal agencies, State and local governments, members of the public, and/or any other entities; and (ii) affirmatively published or released to the public (including by posting to a public website), as further limited by section 4(c) and implementing guidance.
 2. **“Cost”** means the reasonable estimated total cost to Federal entities of preparing, reviewing, and issuing a covered document, calculated using the Departmentwide standard established under section 4(d) and implementing guidance.
- c. **Applicability.** This subsection establishes threshold limits, exclusions, and other applicability rules for covered documents.
1. **Threshold:** This Order does not apply to covered documents with an estimated total cost to Federal entities of less than \$10,000, as calculated under the Departmentwide standard.

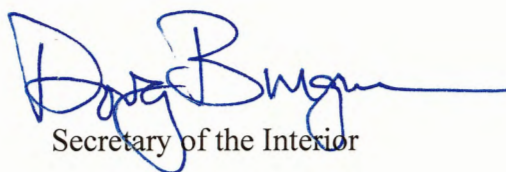
2. **Scope limitations and exclusions:** Nothing in this Order requires disclosure of privileged information. Unless an Assistant Secretary determines otherwise in writing, this Order does not apply to the following categories of materials, even if publicly released:
 - i. Press releases, speeches, talking points, and routine correspondence.
 - ii. Social media posts and routine web updates that do not constitute a report, study, or analysis.
 - iii. Procurement-sensitive materials, source-selection information, and routine acquisition/grants-administration documents.
 - iv. Purely internal/predecisional drafts that are not affirmatively released to the public.
 - v. Records released solely in response to a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.
 - vi. Time-sensitive materials prepared at the request of Department leadership that are not reasonably susceptible to the standardized cost-estimation process.
 3. **Additional guidance.** Bureaus/Offices shall refer to the guidance to be issued by the AS-PMB for additional applicability parameters and a consolidated list of covered and excluded categories. This updated guidance shall supersede any guidance on SO 3380 previously issued by the AS-PMB.
 4. **Scholarly publication accommodation.** Covered documents published in scholarly journals or similar external media may omit the cost of preparation as long as such costs are displayed on another publicly available copy of the same document.
- d. **Implementation.** In addition to the original requirements listed in SO 3380, the Department will implement a consistent Departmentwide standard for estimating costs.
1. The **AS-PMB** is responsible for the following:
 - i. Within 60 days of the date of this Order, issuing additional implementing guidance. Such guidance shall (A) establish or designate a Departmentwide cost-estimation standard developed by

the Deputy Assistant Secretary – Policy and Environmental Management, including standardized elements required for labor and other cost estimates; and (B) prescribe a consistent format and placement for publicly displaying estimated costs on covered documents.

- ii. Determining any required reporting and any separate requirements for specific documents.
2. **Heads of Bureaus/Offices.** Each Bureau/Office head is responsible for identifying a point of contact who will represent the Bureau/Office and be responsible for compiling and reporting the cost of covered documents to the AS-PMB.
 3. **Assistant Secretaries.** Each Assistant Secretary will retain final discretion over which documents are considered covered for Bureaus/Offices under their purview.
 4. **No-delay rule.** Bureaus/Offices shall not delay issuance of a covered document solely to finalize a cost estimate. Where necessary, an initial estimate may be publicly displayed and an updated final estimate reported to the AS-PMB, as provided in implementing guidance.

Sec. 5. Effect of the Order. This Order is intended to improve the internal management of the Department. This Order and any resulting reports or recommendations are not intended to, and do not create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person. To the extent there is any inconsistency between the provisions of this Order and any Federal laws or regulations, the laws or regulations will control.

Sec. 6. Effective Date. This Order is effective immediately and applies to all covered documents initiated after the date of this Order. It will remain in effect until its provisions are implemented and completed, or until it is amended, superseded, or revoked.



Secretary of the Interior

3/11/26

Date: