



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (DOI)

REVIEW OF NON-INTERIOR ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

HOW TO SUBMIT DOCUMENTS FOR DOI REVIEW

January 2022

The DOI often reviews the following types of environmental documents from other Federal agencies:¹

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents;
- Section 4(f) evaluations under the Department of Transportation Act (49 USC 303);
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Chief of Engineers Reports;
- Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) licensing process documents;
- Project planning, design, and application documents under various Federal authorities; and
- Regulations and proposals affecting DOI's natural resources, environmental interests, and pollution control activities.

The Director of the Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance (OEPC) is identified as the individual responsible for receiving and commenting on other Federal agencies' environmental documents per Appendix III to the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations.² The staff of the OEPC is located at headquarters and in eight regional offices. Coordination of an environmental document review is either conducted by OEPC at the headquarters level or by DOI bureaus and offices³ at the field level depending on the type of document. The sections below outline who and how to contact DOI for review of an environmental document.

When to contact DOI bureaus directly:

The type of documents to send directly to DOI bureaus or offices at the field level include:

- early coordination and scoping information;
- environmental assessments;
- findings of no significant impact;
- preliminary or working drafts of environmental impact statements including administrative drafts of an environmental impact statement; and
- similar material of a regional nature.

Requests for Federal agency coordination and consultation in project planning should be directed to the affected DOI bureau(s). It is not necessary to send copies of early coordination documents to the OEPC. CEQ has a list of *Federal and Federal-State Agencies with Jurisdiction by Law or Special Expertise on Environmental Quality Issues*, formerly provided by Appendix II to the CEQ regulations,⁴ that provides the DOI bureaus having jurisdiction by law or special expertise on environmental quality issues. This CEQ document should be used to determine appropriate DOI contacts for coordination

¹ Includes all Federal agencies and non-DOI entities that are Federal lead agencies under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and legally responsible for conducting NEPA reviews on behalf of a Federal agency.

² 49 Fed.Reg. 49778, December 21, 1984 (Note: The OEPC was formerly called the Office of Environmental Project Review. The specific contact information is outdated and should not be used for consultation or outreach.)

³ DOI bureaus and offices that may review other Federal agencies' documents include: Bureau of Indian Affairs; Office of Insular Affairs; Bureau of Land Management; Bureau of Ocean Energy Management; Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement; Bureau of Reclamation; National Park Service; Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; and U.S. Geological Survey.

⁴ CEQ *Federal and Federal-State Agencies with Jurisdiction by Law or Special Expertise on Environmental Quality Issues*, June 15, 2018 (formerly Appendix II to the CEQ NEPA Implementing Regulations (49 Fed. Reg. 49754, December 21, 1984).

during early planning, NEPA scoping, and other preliminary activities. It is recommended that you consult bureau websites for the current bureau contacts for your state or region.

Please note that our Regional Environmental Officers (REO) serve as representatives of OEPC and should be contacted if there are questions about these procedures at the field level. An REO list is available and maintained on our website at www.doi.gov/oepc/regional-offices.

When to contact OEPC Headquarters:

OEPC headquarters office coordinates reviews across the DOI and ensures thoroughness and timeliness of DOI comments on the following types of documents:

- draft and final environmental impact statements;
- Section 4(f) evaluations;
- proposals of national interest affecting DOI's natural resources, environmental interests, and pollution control activities; and
- environmental review documents for applications, permits, licenses, etc., for proposed actions under various Federal authorities, such as for proposed hydroelectric project licensing under the Federal Power Act and Chief's Reports for feasibility studies by the Army Corps of Engineers under the Water Resources Development Acts.

The OEPC Headquarters staff is available to answer questions about DOI reviews. An OEPC staff list is available and maintained on our website at www.doi.gov/oepc/HQ-Teams/nrm-team/staff.

How to submit your environmental document for DOI review:

To initiate DOI review, the DOI either receives notification of the environmental document issuance through a *Federal Register* notice or a separate notification from the Federal agency legally responsible for the environmental document. For notification of environmental documents that are not accompanied by a *Federal Register* notice, the DOI requests that a review request be sent **via email** to the OEPC Headquarters or the bureau field point(s) of contact depending on the environmental document, as described above. The OEPC requests that the agency provides the DOI recipient with an email address for the Federal agency environmental document contact and any specific instructions on how to officially submit DOI comments. Email addresses help ensure timely responses.

When needing to submit an environmental document(s) to the OEPC Headquarters, Federal agencies should send all correspondence to environmental_review@ios.doi.gov. The OEPC requests that the document for review is either attached or linked to in the email. If possible, these documents should be accessible without needing usernames or passwords. If a password is required, we request that the password not expire prior to the end of the comment period.

When not possible to initiate DOI review of a document through email correspondence, please notify the OEPC via email and send a cover letter with one copy of the document in electronic format (either thumb drive or any widely used electronic storage media) to the following address:

Director, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW (MS 2629-MIB)
Washington, DC 20240

The OEPC requests that you make a wide distribution of this information throughout your organization. Such a distribution will assist us in better meeting our obligations under law and in planning projects that will be mutually beneficial. This document is available on our website at <https://www.doi.gov/nepa/requirements-guidance/guidance-noninterior>.