



National Environmental Policy Act



The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 was enacted by Congress to ensure that federal agencies consider the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions and alternatives before deciding on a course of action. Under NEPA, the term “environment” encompasses both the physical environment (e.g., air, water, geography, geology) and the human environment (e.g., health and safety, jobs, housing, schools, transportation, cultural resources). The purpose of the NEPA process is to ensure that accurate environmental studies are performed; that there is public involvement; and that public officials, like those at NNSA, make decisions based on an understanding of environmental consequences.

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) established NEPA requirements for all federal agencies, including procedures for preparing EISs (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508). Individual agencies, including the Department of Energy (DOE), have established their own implementing regulations to meet or exceed these requirements (10 CFR Part 1021). These requirements and related information are available on the DOE NEPA website at <http://energy.gov/nepa/guidance-requirements>. The major steps in the NEPA process for preparing an EIS are: issuing a **Notice of Intent** to begin the EIS process; gathering input on the scope of the EIS from federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes, the public, and other stakeholders; preparing the **draft EIS**; receiving public comments on the draft EIS and considering those comments during the preparation of a **final EIS**; and issuing a **Record of Decision**. The Record of Decision explains the agency’s decision, which is based on the EIS and other related information (such as policy, technical factors, and costs).

NOTICE OF INTENT AND SCOPING PROCESS

The 300-acre Bannister Federal Complex (BFC) is owned by the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), an agency within the DOE, and the General Services Administration (GSA). NNSA owns the portion of the BFC known as the Kansas City Plant (KCP), consisting of approximately 122 acres and 38 buildings. GSA owns the remainder of the site, consisting of approximately 175 acres and 13 buildings.

Beginning in 2013, NNSA will relocate its operations from the KCP to a newly constructed industrial campus eight miles south of the BFC. Once the move is completed, NNSA’s real property at the BFC will be excess to the needs of its mission and will be available for disposition. GSA is currently analyzing its occupancy of the BFC and is performing a separate Environmental Assessment (EA) to evaluate a future relocation option. Because GSA could also decide to relocate its operations away from the BFC, it is a cooperating agency for the preparation of this EIS, which will analyze the potential environmental impacts for the disposition of GSA real property in addition to NNSA real property.

NNSA published a **Notice of Intent (NOI)** for the BFC EIS in the *Federal Register* on January 23, 2012, to inform the public that an EIS will be prepared and to formally announce the beginning of the scoping process. The NOI describes the proposed action and alternatives the agency is considering; provides information on issues and potential impacts that will be analyzed in the EIS; and invites comments, questions, and suggestions (both written and oral) on the scope of the EIS. These scoping comments aid NNSA in determining the alternatives, issues, and environmental impacts to be analyzed in the EIS.

DRAFT EIS

A **draft EIS** describes, analyzes, and compares the potential environmental impacts of reasonable alternatives that substantially meet the purpose and need to which the agency is responding, as well as baseline No Action Alternative. It also provides information on the methodologies and assumptions used for the analyses. If one or more preferred alternatives exists at this stage of the NEPA process, it will be identified in the draft EIS.

PUBLIC COMMENT ON A DRAFT EIS

Once the draft EIS is distributed, a period of no less than 45 days is provided for federal agencies, state and local governments, Native American tribes, the public, and other stakeholders to comment on the draft. The public comment period begins when the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes a Notice of Availability for the draft EIS in the *Federal Register*. At least one public hearing is held to solicit public comment on a draft EIS. Other methods to submit comments on the draft EIS will include U.S. mail, e-mail, and via the Internet. All comments received during the public comment period will be considered in the preparation of the final EIS.

FINAL EIS

Following the public comment period for the draft EIS, a **final EIS** is prepared and distributed. A final EIS reflects consideration of all comments received on the draft EIS and any necessary updated and revised analyses of potential environmental impacts. In addition, a final EIS will identify the agency's preferred alternative(s). EPA will publish a Notice of Availability in the *Federal Register* when a final EIS is issued.

RECORD OF DECISION

Once the final EIS is distributed, DOE waits a minimum of 30 days before issuing a **Record of Decision (ROD)**, which will be published in the *Federal Register*. The ROD notifies the public of the decision(s) made on the proposed action and the reasons for the decision(s). In addition to potential environmental impacts, the ROD may include consideration of other decision factors such as technical feasibility, agency statutory mission and national objectives, and cost.

For further information, please contact:

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