

information useful in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of the environment will be made available to other Federal agencies, State, local, and Indian tribal governments, institutions, and individuals as appropriate.

(2) Information regarding existing or potential environmental problems and control methods developed as a part of research, development, demonstration, test, or evaluation activities will be made available to other Federal agencies, State, local, and Indian tribal governments, institutions and other entities as appropriate.

(c) Plans and programs of other agencies and organizations. (1) Officials responsible for protecting, conserving, developing, or managing resources under the Commission's jurisdiction shall coordinate and cooperate with State, local and Indian tribal governments, other Federal agencies, and public and private organizations and individuals, and provide them with timely information concerning the environmental effects of these entities' plans and programs.

(2) The Commission will participate early in applicable planning processes of other agencies and organizations in order to ensure full cooperation with and understanding of the Commission's programs and interests in natural, cultural, and human resources.

(3) The Commission will utilize to the fullest extent possible, existing review mechanisms to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and to avoid confusion by other organizations.

#### **§ 10010.6 Public involvement.**

The Commission will develop and utilize procedures to ensure the fullest practicable provision of timely public information and understanding of its plans and programs including information on the environmental impacts of alternative courses of action. These procedures will include, wherever appropriate, provision for public meetings or hearings in order to obtain the views of interested parties. The Commission will also encourage State and local agencies and Indian tribal governments to adopt similar procedures for informing the public concerning their activities affecting the quality of the environment.

#### **§ 10010.7 Mandate.**

(a) This part provides instructions for complying with NEPA and Executive Order 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality, as amended by Executive Order 11991.

(b) The Commission hereby adopts the regulations of the CEQ, implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (sec. 102(2)(C)) except where compliance would be inconsistent with other statutory requirements. In the case of any apparent discrepancies between these procedures and the mandatory provisions of the CEQ regulations the regulations shall govern.

(c) Instructions supplementing the CEQ regulations are provided in subparts B through G of this part. Citations in brackets refer to the CEQ regulations. In addition, the Commission may prepare a handbook or other technical guidance, or adopt an appropriate handbook or guidance prepared by another agency, for its personnel on how to apply this part to principal programs.

### **Subpart B—Initiating the NEPA Process**

#### **§ 10010.8 Purpose.**

This subpart provides supplemental instructions for implementing those portions of the CEQ regulations pertaining to initiating the NEPA process (40 CFR Parts 1501 through 1506).

#### **§ 10010.9 Apply NEPA early.**

(a) The Commission will initiate early consultation and coordination with other Federal agencies having jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved, and with appropriate Federal, State, local and Indian tribal agencies authorized to develop and enforce environmental standards.

(b) The Commission will also consult early with interested private parties and organizations, including when the Commission's own involvement is reasonably foreseeable in a private or non-Federal application.

(c) The Commission will insure that applicants are informed of any environmental information required, to be included in their applications and of any

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consultation with other Federal agencies, and State, local or Indian tribal governments required prior to making the application.

### § 10010.10 Whether to prepare an EIS.

(a) Categorical exclusions (CX) (40 CFR 1508.4).

(1) The following criteria will be used to determine categories of actions to be excluded from preparation of an EA or EIS:

(i) Analysis or experience shows that the action or group of actions would have no significant effect on the quality of the human environment; and

(ii) The action or group of actions would not involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.

(2) Based on the criteria in paragraph (a)(1) of this section, the categories of actions listed in subpart G of this part are excluded from the preparation of an EA or EIS.

(3) The exceptions listed in subpart G of this part apply to individual actions subject to CX. Appropriate environmental documents must be prepared for any actions involving these exceptions.

(4) Notwithstanding the criteria, exclusions, and exceptions in paragraphs (a)(1) through (3), extraordinary circumstances may dictate or a responsible Commission official may decide to prepare an environmental document to assist with decision-making.

(b) Environmental Assessment (EA) (40 CFR 1508.9). Procedures regarding preparation of an EA are addressed in subpart C of this part.

(c) Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) (40 CFR 1508.13). A FONSI will be prepared as a separate document based upon analysis of an EA and a determination that the proposed action will have no significant environmental impact.

(d) Notice of Intent (NOI) (40 CFR 1508.22). A NOI will be prepared as soon as practicable after a decision to prepare an environmental impact statement and shall be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER and made available to the affected public in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.6. Publication of a NOI may be delayed if there is proposed to be more than three (3) months between

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the decision to prepare an environmental impact statement and the time preparation is actually initiated. The Commission will periodically publish a consolidated list of these notices in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(e) Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) (40 CFR 1508.11). Decisions/actions which would normally require the preparation of an EIS are identified in subpart G of this part. Procedures regarding preparation of an EIS are addressed in subpart D of this part.

### § 10010.11 Lead agencies.

(a) The Commission will serve as lead, or, as appropriate, joint-lead agency for any NEPA procedure that is sponsored by or otherwise significantly involves the Commission.

(b) The Commission will inform the Office of the Solicitor of any agreements to assume lead or joint-lead agency status.

(c) A non-Federal agency may be designated as a joint lead agency if it has a duty to comply with a local or State environmental review requirement. Any non-Federal agency may be a cooperating agency by agreement. The Commission will consult with the Office of the Solicitor in cases where such non-Federal agencies are also applicants before the Commission to determine joint-lead agency responsibilities.

### § 10010.12 Cooperating agencies.

(a) The Commission will adhere to CEQ directives both in the designation of cooperating agencies for Commission sponsored NEPA procedures and in seeking designation as a cooperating agency for procedures sponsored by others. Any non-Federal agency may be a cooperating agency in Commission NEPA proceedings by agreement. The Commission will consult with the Office of the Solicitor in cases where such non-Federal agencies are also applicants before the Commission to determine cooperating agency responsibilities.

(b) The Commission will inform the Office of the Solicitor of any agreements to assume cooperating agency status or any declinations pursuant to 40 CFR 1501.6 (c).