

Memorandum

To: DISTRICT DEPUTY DIRECTORS FOR
ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND
LOCAL ASSISTANCE

Date: October 22, 2021

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Subject: **NEPA PROCESS IMPROVEMENT TEAM – CHANGES TO ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT
QUALITY CONTROL REVIEW PROCEDURES AND FORMS**

The NEPA Process Improvement Team (Team) Steering Committee has approved a proposal by the Team to modify Caltrans' environmental document quality control review procedures and certification forms. The purposes of the new "Integrated Quality Control/Quality Review Procedures" are to:

- Increase efficiency of the environmental documentation review and approval process;
- Integrate into the process early coordination and review during the "Project Initiation Document" and "Begin Environmental" phases to inform the environmental documentation process;
- Set achievable required review timeframes; and
- Facilitate a quality control review process that builds upon Caltrans' 14 years of experience in the NEPA Assignment Program.

Chapter 38 of Volume 1 of Caltrans' Standard Environmental Reference (SER) has been revised to reflect the modified procedures. Major changes to the existing quality control review procedures are summarized in Table 1 below. For projects that have not yet circulated a draft environmental document (DED), this new process is to be used effective immediately. Even if technical studies for those projects have already been approved, it is highly recommended that those technical studies be sent to the Headquarters Environmental Coordinator ahead of the submission of the administrative DED. For projects that have already circulated a DED, it is intended that this new review process be used as the document moves forward to administrative final environmental document; however, if the timing of the administrative final environmental document is such that the new review process causes undue hardship please contact your Headquarters Environmental Coordinator regarding the option to use our prior review process for the final environmental document.

DISTRICT DEPUTY DIRECTORS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND LOCAL ASSISTANCE

October 22, 2021

Page 2

Thank you for your continuing professionalism and diligence in delivering projects for Caltrans and our project delivery partners. If you have any questions regarding this memorandum, please contact Scott Williams, Office Chief responsible for NEPA Assignment, at (916) 216-2741, or Kelly Hobbs, Office Chief responsible for Local Assistance environmental compliance, at (916) 838-9085.

c: Jeremy Ketchum, Assistant Chief, Division of Environmental Analysis, Caltrans
Scott Williams, Office Chief, Division of Environmental Analysis, Caltrans
Kelly Hobbs, Office Chief, Division of Local Assistance, Caltrans
Kelly Dunlap, NEPA Process Improvement Team Lead, Division of Environmental Analysis

Table 1: Major Changes to Existing Quality Control Review Procedures for Environmental Documents		
Review Element	Existing Procedure	New Procedures
Review of Project Initiation Documents and "Begin Environmental" information	No formal review procedures	Reviews are integrated into environmental document review procedures
Review of technical studies	Conducted by District/Region	Concurrent HQ Environmental Coordinator and District/Region review required if HQ DEA review of associated environmental document is required
District/Region and HQ Environmental Coordinator reviews	Reviews are sequential	Reviews are concurrent
Review timeframes	District/Region determine timeframes	Timeframes are set
Peer review of environmental document	Required	No longer required
Submittal of external and internal certification forms	Required with each submittal of environmental document	One submittal per environmental document at end of review process of DED and FED
Environmental Document Review Checklist Form	Required	Optional tool