



# National Environmental Policy Act

## NAVAL AIR STATION CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS

Environmental Division 961-3776

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### THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OF 1969 (NEPA)

The Congress of the United States passed NEPA on December 23, 1969 and President Richard Nixon signed it into law on January 1, 1970.



#### Purposes:

- To declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment;
- To promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man;
- To enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation;
- To establish a Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

### "TWIN OBJECTIVES" OF NEPA

NEPA is a procedural environmental law. The law requires full disclosure of possible impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures to both agency decision makers and the public.

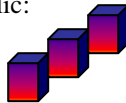
#### "Twin Objectives":

- Fully disclose and consider environmental information in Federal agency decision-making.
- Inform the public of potential impacts and alternatives and involve it in NEPA.

### LEGISLATION

- NEPA created the CEQ, which provides regulations to implement the procedural provisions of NEPA.
- CEQ regulations apply a three-tiered approach to ensure that pertinent environmental information for major Federal actions is available to decision makers and the public:

- Categorical Exclusions
- Environmental Assessments (EA's)
- Environmental Impact Statements (EIS's)



### CATEGORICAL EXCLUSIONS

A categorical exclusion is a published category of actions that do not individually or cumulatively have a significant impact on the human environment under normal circumstances, and, therefore, do not require either an EA or an EIS. A list of categorical exclusions can be found in SECNAVINST 5090.6A.

One common example of a categorical exclusion is (34): *New construction that is similar to existing land use and, when completed, the use or operation of which complies with existing regulatory requirements.*

### ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESMENT

- An EA is a concise public document that briefly provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining whether to prepare an EIS or a Finding Of No Significant Impact .
- Aids Navy compliance with NEPA when no EIS is necessary.
- Facilitates preparation of an EIS when one is necessary.

### ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

An EIS is a detailed written statement as required by section 102(2)(C) of NEPA:

- Include in every recommendation or report on proposals for legislation and other major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, a detailed statement by the responsible official on:



- The environmental impact of the proposed action,
- Any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented,
- Alternatives to the proposed action,
- The relationship between local short-term uses of man's environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity, and
- Any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources which would be involved in the proposed action should it be implemented.

### IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

- FONSI** → Finding Of No Significant Impact: a document in which the Navy briefly presents the reasons why an action not otherwise categorically excluded, will not have a significant effect on the human environment, and for which an EIS will not therefore be prepared.
- FEIS** → Final Environmental Impact Statement: statement that incorporates all pertinent comments and information resulting from review of the Draft EIS.
- ROD** → Record of Decision: a concise summary for publication in the Federal Register of the decision made by the Navy from the alternatives presented in an FEIS.
- Federal Register** → the official daily publication for rules, proposed rules, and notices of Federal agencies and organizations, as well as executive orders and other presidential documents.

