



Understanding the National Environmental Policy Act



The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is the cornerstone of environmental law in the United States, and it applies to all major federal actions, including permit decisions. Its basic purpose is to ensure that environmental factors receive the same consideration as other factors when federal agencies are making decisions and to include the public in the decision process.

NEPA requires that before federal agencies take a major action, they must publicly disclose the environmental impacts of their proposed action and evaluate possible alternatives that would have fewer environmental costs. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the public document that provides a detailed evaluation of the proposed action and alternatives. Agencies, organizations, and the public may provide input into the preparation of the EIS and

comment on the Draft EIS and Final EIS when it is completed.

How can I get involved?

NEPA makes involvement by the public, other agencies, and Tribes an essential part of ensuring informed decision making at the federal level. Public involvement through commenting is requested three times during the EIS process:

1. Scoping – the stage of identifying the scope of issues and concerns related to the proposed action that the EIS should address, as well as alternative courses of action.
2. Draft EIS Review – the stage where the Draft EIS is available for review and comment. The public can provide feedback to the agency about gaps in the information provided or the quality of the analysis in the document, as well as

impacts the document may not have addressed or measures needed to mitigate any adverse impacts.

3. Final EIS Review – public comments on the final document related to the agency decision.

The public involvement regulations of NEPA also require agencies to notify the public of hearings, meetings, and the availability of environmental documents, and to hold public meetings when appropriate. Participating in the NEPA process is an important way to express concerns and raise issues before a decision is made.

Public Comments

The scoping period for the EIS was held in 2011. Comments received during that time are presented in the "Expansion Project Environmental Impact Statement Scoping Report" located on the project website (www.portofgulfporteis.com).

The next formal public comment period will occur in conjunction with issuing the draft Environmental Impact Statement. However, if you are interested in commenting you may still do so via the project website (listed above).



For more information or to comment online, visit: www.portofgulfporteis.com