



## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - NEPA and NHPA**

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### **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (NEPA)**

#### **What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?**

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) was enacted to ensure that information on the environmental impacts of any Federal or federally funded action is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken. The General Services Administration (GSA), in coordination with the Department of State (DOS), will be preparing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in order to comply with the requirements of NEPA.

#### **What is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?**

An EIS is a detailed report describing the potential impacts of a project on the natural, social, and cultural environment and serves to assist the federal government in recognizing environmental impacts of a federal agency's proposed action. An "impact" is a change or consequence that results from an activity. Impacts can be positive or negative, or both. An EIS describes impacts, as well as ways to mitigate impacts.

#### **What resources are studied in an EIS?**

NEPA is often referred to as an "umbrella law" providing a comprehensive framework for complying with other Federal, State, and local environmental statutory requirements. An EIS will contain relevant information necessary for the agency to make a determination on the significance of an impact the proposed action may have upon the environment. Resources considered in an EIS include land, water, air, structures, living organisms, environmental values at the site, and social, cultural, and economic factors.

#### **How is public input considered in the NEPA process?**

As part of the NEPA process, agencies are required to identify and invite the participation of interested persons. Public input will be used in the project evaluation process and throughout EIS development, including the scoping period (identifies what issues the EIS should cover), draft EIS comment period, and Final EIS review period.

GSA and DOS will solicit advice and input from the public, the Virginia Department of Military Affairs, the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, Nottoway County, the Town of Blackstone, and other interested parties.

#### **Where can I find more information about the NEPA process?**

Additional information regarding the NEPA process can be found on the Council of Environmental Quality (CEQ) website (<http://ceq.hss.doe.gov>) or at [www.gsa.gov/nepadeskguide/](http://www.gsa.gov/nepadeskguide/) for GSA specific instructions for implementing NEPA.

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## **SECTION 106 OF THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ACT (NHPA)**

### **What is the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)?**

The NHPA is the core legislation regarding the preservation of historic and cultural properties in the United States. The NHPA created many familiar components of preservation in the United States, such as the National Register of Historic Places, State Historic Preservation Officers/Offices (SHPOs), and Federal stewardship programs regarding Federally owned or managed historic properties.

### **What is Section 106?**

Section 106 of the NHPA requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic properties. The goal of Section 106 Consultation is to identify historic properties that may be affected by the undertaking, assess the effects of the undertaking on these historic properties, and seek ways to avoid, minimize, or mitigate any adverse effects.

### **What is an undertaking?**

An undertaking is a federal project, activity, or program, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; or those requiring a Federal permit, license, or approval.

### **What is consultation?**

Consultation is the process of seeking, discussing, and considering the views of other participants, and, where feasible, seeking agreement with them regarding matters arising in the Section 106 process.

### **How is public input considered in the NHPA process?**

Section 106 provides for public participation throughout the review process. The public is provided with timely and complete documentation to facilitate their participation, and appropriate steps are taken to ensure that pertinent information is shared with consulting parties and considered during consultation.

### **Where can I find more information about the NHPA process?**

Additional information regarding the NHPA process can be found at the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation website ([www.achp.gov](http://www.achp.gov)).