



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT
WASHINGTON, DC 20410-7000

OFFICE OF PUBLIC AND INDIAN HOUSING

DEC 14 2016

RE: COORDINATED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW INITIATIVE

Dear Tribal Leader:

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is inviting you to review and comment on the enclosed draft Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and its companion draft Statement of Intent, which are intended to encourage the use of tools that can streamline the federal environmental review process. The final documents will be used by entities, including tribes, that are responsible for conducting federal environmental reviews. These documents were prepared by the federal work group that is addressing and implementing the recommendations published in the Coordinated Environmental Review Process Final Report of December 2015.

To assist with your review, HUD will present a webinar to discuss the two draft documents on Thursday, January 12, 2017 at 1 p.m. (Eastern Time). HUD will provide a briefing on the documents, and discussion will follow.

The enclosed draft documents encourage the use of NEPA efficiency tools: incorporation by reference, cooperating agency agreements, and adoption.

- CEQ NEPA regulations allow an agency to **incorporate by reference** a NEPA document prepared by it or by another agency, as well as any other publicly available studies or material, in their environmental reviews.
- CEQ NEPA regulations also allow **cooperating agency agreements**, which can facilitate the preparation of a single environmental review for a project involving multiple federal agencies.
- Another tool available under CEQ NEPA regulations is **adoption**, whereby one agency can adopt the completed environmental review of another agency if the original review satisfies the adopting agency's environmental review requirements.

These three tools are referred to as NEPA efficiency tools because they are used to avoid duplication of analyses and promote efficient environmental review processes.

With the enclosed documents, HUD is also interested in creating other resources, such as model documents and checklists, to facilitate the use of NEPA efficiency tools.

In accordance with HUD's Government-to-Government Tribal Consultation Policy, the Department, with this letter, is seeking your input on this approach. HUD would greatly appreciate if you would consider the following issues as you form your response:

1. The goal of the MOU and the Statement of Intent is to raise awareness of and encourage the use of NEPA efficiency tools by federal agencies and by tribes. Would these documents encourage the use of NEPA efficiency tools for environmental reviews within your tribe and the federal agencies that you work with on housing and housing-related infrastructure projects involving funding from multiple federal agencies?
2. Have you used NEPA efficiency tools to prepare environmental reviews? Which NEPA efficiency tools did you use? Please describe your experience.
3. What are other options, if any, for encouraging the use of NEPA efficiency tools?
4. What other resources, such as model documents or checklists, would facilitate the use of the NEPA efficiency tools?
5. Have you developed any best practices for environmental reviews that you can share?
6. Please describe any challenges or opportunities you identify with encouraging the use of NEPA efficiency tools.

Please submit your comments within 60 days from the date of this letter to Hilary Atkin at hilary.c.atkin@hud.gov, or by postal mail to:

Ms. Hilary Atkin
HUD – Office of Native American Programs
451 Seventh Street, SW, Room 5156
Washington, DC 20410

HUD is the lead agency in the federal effort to develop a coordinated environmental review process for housing and housing-related infrastructure in Indian Country. HUD will consider all comments with the inter-agency coordinated environmental review process work group.

Thank you for your continued partnership and collaboration in the effective delivery of HUD's programs.

Sincerely,



Heidi J. Frechette
Deputy Assistant Secretary
for Native American Programs

Enclosures