

ATTACHMENT 4



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JAN 20 1995

OFFICE OF
ENFORCEMENT AND
COMPLIANCE ASSURANCE

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: NEPA Guidance for Special Wastewater Treatment Projects
in the FY95 Appropriation Bill

FROM: Richard E. Sanderson *Rich Sanderson*
Director
Office of Federal Activities (2252)

TO: NEPA Coordinators

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide guidance on the requirements for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for special projects authorized for EPA grant funding by the FY95 Appropriations Act (Act). The Act appropriated "no-year" money to fund special wastewater treatment projects identified by Congress. Each region has projects on this list. The list is included in the attached copy of the guidance memorandum prepared by the Office of Water Management (OWM).

The OWM memorandum indicates that NEPA applies to all of these projects except the three to be funded as Clean Water Act (CWA) section 104(b)(3) demonstration projects. These three are exempted from NEPA under the CWA section 511(c). The Office of General Counsel (OGC) has prepared an "Analysis of NEPA applicability to special grants authorized by FY 1995 Appropriations Act." This analysis is also attached.

OFA Guidance to Regional NEPA Coordinators

An independent EPA NEPA analysis for the non-demonstration projects is required. In addition, other cross-cutting federal statutes, such as the Endangered Species Act and the National Historic Preservation Act, also apply to these projects. The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) NEPA regulations do not allow EPA to adopt a state analysis. However, the NEPA regulations do require agencies to "cooperate with State and local agencies to the fullest extent possible to reduce



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duplication between NEPA and State and local requirements ..." (40 CFR 1506.2). There are several ways the regions can use the existing information and assessments for these projects as summarized below and as discussed in greater detail in the attached OGC analysis. In all cases, EPA must independently evaluate the state documentation and review process and is responsible for the accuracy of the NEPA documentation and the adequacy of the process (40 CFR 1506.5).

- Where states have performed environmental reviews under NEPA-like statutes or pursuant to State Revolving Fund regulations, EPA can incorporate, but not simply adopt, the state analysis into the Agency's NEPA analysis.
- Where state reviews have found no significant impacts and EPA approves of that finding and the state process, EPA may issue an environmental assessment (EA) summarizing and referencing the state analysis and an accompanying Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
- Where state reviews have found significant impacts or EPA independently determines that there are significant impacts, EPA must issue a notice of intent and proceed with an environmental impact statement (EIS) and record of decision (ROD) in accordance with the Agency's regulations at 40 CFR Part 6.
- Where construction of projects is complete or nearly completed, a NEPA analysis will not have to be done.
- Where construction has started and the project is not nearly completed, a NEPA analysis is required and a notification of intent to pursue an independent analysis must be sent to the grantee.
- Where projects to be funded have been ongoing for several years, additional assessment may not be required if prior federal NEPA documentation has addressed the portions of the project to be funded by the FY95 grant. The region will need to assure that since the previous assessment: 1) there are no substantial changes in the proposed action relevant to environmental concerns, or 2) there are no significant new circumstances or information relevant to environmental concerns and bearing on the proposed action or its impacts.

If the NEPA analysis was carried out under an earlier construction grant action and is no longer adequate or the project has not previously been assessed by EPA, it will be necessary to issue either an EA/FONSI or an EIS/ROD. The regulations applicable to these special project grants are the CEQ regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) and EPA's NEPA regulations (40 CFR Part 6, Subparts A-D). EPA's regulations at 40 CFR Part 6, Subpart E, while they do not apply to these special project grants, may provide additional guidance.

We anticipate that additional issues or sub-issues may arise which are not fully treated in this general guidance memorandum. These should be brought to our attention as soon as possible. In addition, we have scheduled a teleconference on Tuesday, January 24, 1995 from 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon eastern standard time to discuss this guidance and additional issues or concerns with the process. The call in number is (202) 260-4257. We look forward to your participation. Please inform John Gerba (202/260-5910) if you or your staff will not be on the call.

Attachments

cc: Jim Havard, OGC
Ed Gross, OWM