



Executive Office of the President
Council on Environmental Quality



Advisory Council on
Historic Preservation

March 1, 2013

Dear Heads of Federal Departments and Agencies:

The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) are pleased to announce the release of a new handbook, "NEPA and NHPA: Handbook for Integrating NEPA and Section 106 Reviews." The preparation of this handbook has been a joint effort between CEQ and the ACHP. It provides advice to Federal agencies, applicants, project sponsors, and consultants on how to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 review processes. The handbook benefitted from receiving a broad range of views and comments from Federal agency NEPA and NHPA Section 106 practitioners.

The CEQ regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) encourage integration of the NEPA process with other planning and environmental reviews, such as the NHPA Section 106 process. The ACHP regulations that implement Section 106 (36 CFR Part 800) encourage agencies to plan Section 106 consultations coordinated with other requirements of other statutes such as NEPA. Both the CEQ and NHPA Section 106 regulations promote coordination, improve public understanding, and lead to more informed decisions.

NEPA integration is explicitly addressed through the coordination and substitution provisions in the Section 106 regulations. The handbook provides detailed guidance on the standards that agencies must meet, and addresses important timing and documentation considerations. It explains in a straightforward way how to employ either coordination or substitution to help align the two processes to avoid inconsistencies and duplication of effort.

We encourage your agencies to use the handbook's roadmaps for coordination and substitution whenever appropriate to ensure timely and well informed decisions, in addition to the focused use of your agency's resources to meet your environmental stewardship goals and compliance requirements. It is our hope that your agencies will apply concepts in this handbook as they meet the increasingly complex challenges of project planning in the 21st century.

Sincerely,

Nancy H. Sutley
Chair
Council on Environmental Quality

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Chairman
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