



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

February 1, 2010

Barbara Boxer, Chairman
Environment and Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

James Inhofe, Ranking Member
Environment and Public Works Committee
U.S. Senate
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe:

I respectfully submit the fourth progress report on Federal department and agency compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pursuant to the President's assignment of his reporting function under Subsection 1609(c) of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). The full report is available online at www.nepa.gov.

This is the fourth report and covers all NEPA activity for ARRA funded projects and activities through December 31, 2009. The report shows the agencies are continuing to meet their NEPA obligations in a timely manner. Once again, the progress reported to CEQ indicates that NEPA analyses are informing decisions for expenditure of ARRA funds in a timely and environmentally sound manner. This report includes specific examples of the benefits brought about by the NEPA process. The 15 reporting departments and 9 reporting agencies continue to demonstrate that we can contribute to our nation's economic health while respecting the health of our environment. No departments or agencies have reported instances of substantial delays related to NEPA reviews. Once again, over 90 percent of NEPA actions have been completed and the rest are underway. Agencies will continue to identify the need for additional NEPA actions as ARRA funding applications are reviewed and projects are developed; these will be reflected in future reports.

The report shows over 161,000 NEPA reviews were completed. Over 158,000 Categorical Exclusions (CEs) were completed. The CE's were used when the departments and agencies found the project or activity did not have significant individual or cumulative effects on the human environment. The departments and agencies reported completing over 6,300 Environmental Assessments (EAs) with a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Also completed were over 715 projects or activities analyzed in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) where the NEPA review was completed with a Record of Decision (ROD).

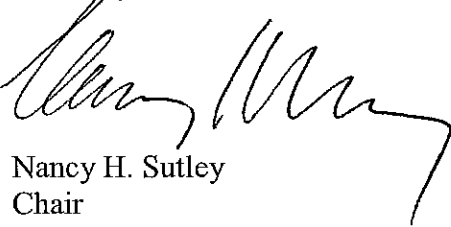
In addition to the completed NEPA reviews, more than 5,600 NEPA reviews (over 85 EISs, over 1,250 EAs, and over 4,250 CEs) are reported underway. Several agencies are using programmatic NEPA reviews to address similar projects or activities. This facilitates subsequent implementation of individual projects or activities by addressing common environmental issues, programmatically eliminating the need to replicate review of those issues in subsequent or site-specific analyses. CEQ is continuing to work with those departments and agencies that have large numbers of NEPA actions that have been pending for more than one reporting period to ensure that the NEPA processes remain focused and are conducted as expeditiously as appropriate.

This report also highlights instances where the environmental review process assisted federal agencies in improving the quality of their decisions, thereby saving money, protecting vital resources, and increasing public participation.

The NEPA reviews supported making over \$187.4 billion in ARRA funds available, an increase of more than \$17 billion since September 30. For up-to-date information regarding the status of agency obligations and payments under ARRA, please see the ARRA website at www.recovery.gov.

The next quarterly report will be submitted in May 2010.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nancy H. Sutley', written in a cursive style.

Nancy H. Sutley
Chair