

E-Mail Received Nov 6, 2006

Gregory B. Mohl
PO 2171
Red Lodge, MT, 59068

November 3, 2006

NEPA Modernization (CE)
Attn: Associate Director for NEPA Oversight
722 Jackson Place N.W.
Washington DC 20503

Re: Comments on Proposed Guidance
Council on Environmental Quality
The National Environmental Policy Act
Establishing, Revising, and Using Categorical Exclusions under the National
Environmental Policy Act

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing to express my strong opposition to your proposed guidance: Establishing, Revising, and Using Categorical Exclusions under the National Environmental Policy Act. I am a life long Montanan who has benefited both as a sportsman and as a member of industry from the abundance of federal lands in my state. I am as interested as anyone in preserving and protecting our wild spaces but the preponderance of out of state and special interest groups dedicated to locking up federal lands for multiple use has got to stop.

In the September 19, 2006 Federal Register Notice of your proposal you state that the proposed guidance was developed in part to "...eliminate the need for unnecessary paperwork and effort under NEPA for categories of actions that normally do not warrant preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS) or environmental assessment (EA)." The quoted portion, as well as the entire stated purpose for guidance, is commendable, and I fully support guidance consistent with the stated purpose.

Unfortunately, most of your proposed guidance will do the opposite. The obstructionists that populate the supposed environmental groups will use any and all of any categorical exclusion (CE) now and in the future to slow down and delay actions for no other reason than their self-interest. The effect on hard working Montanans will be devastating.

I urge you to withdraw your proposed guidance and either reconsider and entirely rewrite it to be consistent with your stated purpose and with other relevant US laws and Executive Orders, or withdraw it permanently. Our country and citizens should not be burdened by the intrusive and burdensome approach that will be subverted by a small but vocal minority. Implementing the national environmental policy as directed by Congress in the National Environmental Policy Act is harmful to the interests of the state, truly protecting the environment through responsible development and the economic wellbeing of the people of Montana. Your assistance in making this injustice right would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Gregory B. Mohl

Cc: The Honorable Dennis Rehberg
The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable Conrad Burns