

# What Is An Environmental Impact Statement?



When a federal agency (in this case NASA) is proposing to undertake an action that has the potential for environmental impacts, a study is conducted that evaluates the environmental impacts that might occur as a result of implementing the proposed action. This study and the resulting document prepared is referred to as an Environment Impact Statement (EIS).

An EIS is a National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document. Under NEPA, “environment” includes the natural and physical environment (such as air, water, geography, geology) as well as the effect on people’s relationship with the environment (such as health, safety, jobs, schools, housing, and aesthetics). An EIS looks at both short-term and long-term effects and considers possible measures to reduce or mitigate those effects. An EIS informs the public and NASA decision makers about the environmental impacts of the proposed action and action alternatives.

An EIS is prepared in a series of steps: gathering government and public comments to define the issues that should be analyzed in the EIS (referred to as “scoping”); preparing the draft EIS; receiving and responding to public comments on the draft EIS; and preparing the final EIS. Results of the EIS are one of several factors used to decide if the action should be taken and, if so, what measures need to be implemented. The decision is announced in the Record of Decision (ROD) after the final EIS has been published.

