

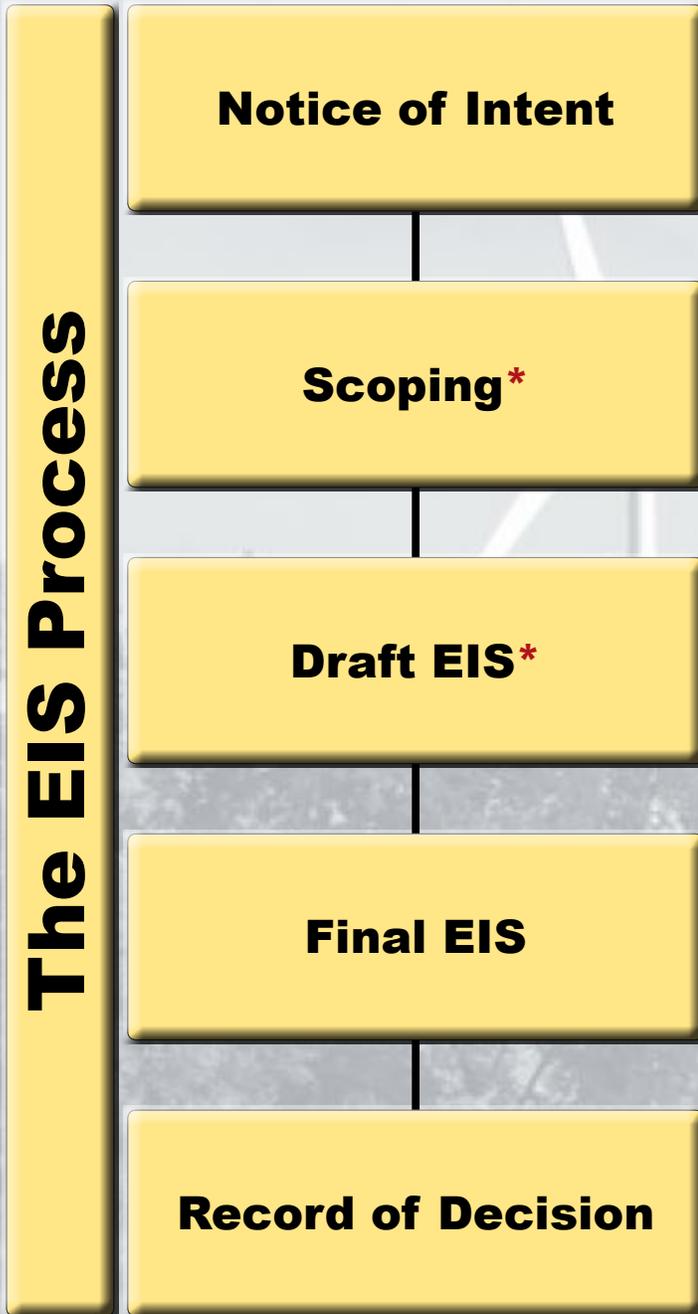
Public Involvement and the NEPA Process



The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) was enacted by Congress in 1969 to ensure that federal agencies consider the potential environmental impacts of their proposed actions and alternatives to be considered before deciding on a course of action. NEPA requires the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for major federal actions that may significantly affect the quality of the environment. Under NEPA, the term “environment” encompasses the natural and physical environment, such as air, water, geography, and geology, as well as the effect on people’s relationship with the environment, such as health, safety, jobs, housing, schools, transportation, noise, and aesthetics. An EIS looks at both short-term and long-term effects and considers possible measures to reduce or mitigate those effects.

The Council on Environmental Quality established NEPA requirements for all federal agencies, including procedures for preparing an EIS. Individual agencies including NASA have established their own implementing regulations to meet or exceed these requirements. The major steps in the NEPA process for preparing an EIS are as follows:

- Issue a Notice of Intent to begin the EIS process.
- Conduct the scoping process (gather input) on the types of issues to be addressed and identify significant issues related to a proposed action.
- Conduct the analysis.
- Issue a Notice of Availability (NOA) that announces the draft EIS is available for comment.
- Respond to public comments on the draft EIS.
- Prepare the final EIS.
- Issue a Record of Decision (ROD).



***Opportunities for Public Participation**

Public Involvement

The first step in getting public involvement as part of the EIS process is for a federal agency (in this case NASA) to issue a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register to inform the public that an EIS will be prepared and to formally announce the beginning of the scoping process. For the NASA Wind Farm EIS, to increase the opportunity for public input, NASA also issued a newspaper advertisement in local newspapers about the scoping meeting.

The scoping process allows for public input and comment on the types of issues to be addressed and alternatives to be considered. A minimum of 30 days is typically required for the scoping period; however in order to maximize the opportunity for input to be received, NASA decided to extend the scoping period for the NASA Wind Farm EIS to 60 days from August 25, 2010, the date the Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register. As part of scoping, a public meeting was held September 14, 2010, in Sandusky, Ohio. Comments were taken at the scoping meeting and, in addition, NASA received comments in a number of ways, to include telephone, fax, electronic mail and U.S. Mail. Comments received by NASA during the scoping process are being considered during preparation of the EIS.

Once a draft EIS is issued, a minimum of 45 days is provided for public comment. The public comment period for the Draft NASA Wind Farm EIS will begin with the publication of a Notice of Availability (NOA) in the Federal Register. At least one public hearing is typically held to solicit public input on the draft EIS.

Comments from the public will be considered as NASA prepares a final EIS for publication and distribution. The final EIS will include responses to comments received during the public comment process and revised EIS text based on those comments. The final NASA Wind Farm EIS will also identify the agency's preferred alternative.

Once the final EIS is published, a minimum 30-day waiting period is required before a Record of Decision (ROD) can be issued in the Federal Register. The ROD notifies the public of the decision made on the proposed action and the reasons for that decision. It also includes a discussion of any other factors considered in making the decision.

The purpose of the NEPA process is to ensure that accurate environmental analyses are performed; that the public is involved; and that public officials make decisions based on an understanding of environmental consequences.

How Can You Learn More About the NASA Wind Farm EIS?

NASA is committed to keeping the public involved throughout the EIS process.

For further information regarding the NASA Wind Farm EIS, please contact:

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