

October 11, 2021

White House takes on 2020 NEPA revisions

October 11, 2021 at 5:00 AM

Last week, the White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) announced (<https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2021-10-07/pdf/2021-21867.pdf>) its intention to undo the Trump administration's 2020 revisions (<https://www.amwa.net/article/white-house-finalizes-nepa-rule-update>) to the environmental impact assessment process under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). This announcement is part of a CEQ review of Trump administration actions required under Executive Order 13990 (<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/25/2021-01765/protecting-public-health-and-the-environment-and-restoring-science-to-tackle-the-climate-crisis>), Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis.

CEQ asserts that the 2020 revisions may constrain the NEPA assessment process, resulting in “negative repercussions for environmental protection and environmental quality.” The notice further states that these revisions “may not support science-based decision making or be compatible with the Administration’s policies to improve public health, protect the environment, prioritize environmental justice, provide access to clean air and water, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change.”

The changes proposed by CEQ include returning to the historical definition of “effects,” which had a broader scope than the definition adopted in 2020, and explicitly stating “direct” and “indirect” effects can be considered in analyses. CEQ asserts that this second change will “help agencies and the public evaluate and understand the full scope of reasonably foreseeable effects.” The new provisions will also permit agencies to develop their own NEPA procedures. The White House will extend the deadline for federal agencies to develop plans to comply with the 2020 revisions while recognizing that agencies will likely not implement these plans.

Additional information will be published in AMWA’s October Sustainability and Security Report (<https://www.amwa.net/ssr>). AMWA staff will collaborate with the Sustainability Committee to develop comments on the proposal by CEQ’s November 22 deadline.

Back to *October 11, 2021* (<https://www.amwa.net/monday-morning-briefing/october-11->

2021)

Source URL: <https://www.amwa.net/article/white-house-takes-2020-nepa-revisions>