



STATE ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT (SEPA) ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

The State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) requires the preparation of environmental documents for state actions on proposed projects that involve public funds or state lands and have a potential impact on the environment. The scope of the project and nature of the location determine which types of environmental documents are developed. In some instances, an agency may anticipate significant impacts and thus decide to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) from the outset. In other cases, an Environmental Assessment (EA) may be prepared first to determine if an EIS is required. The various types of documents are briefly described below.

A **Scoping Letter** is an optional document that initiates the environmental analysis and review process.

- Briefly describes the project and its locale and solicits input on any issues and alternatives that should be addressed in a subsequent environmental analysis

An **Environmental Assessment** (EA) serves as a tool to help decision-makers determine if potential significant environmental impacts exist, which would make an EIS necessary.

- Provides maps and information on the existing characteristics of the site, the need for the proposed project, and reasonable alternatives
- Identifies potential environmental impacts and discusses mitigation measures planned

A **Finding of No Significant Impact** (FONSI) is issued when the responsible state agency has concluded, based on information in a EA that an EIS is not required.

- Briefly summarizes the information contained in the EA
- Indicates that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse affect on the environment and gives reasons for that conclusion
- States that an EIS will not be prepared

An **Environmental Impact Statement** (EIS) is required for the proposed projects that would have a potential significant effect on the quality of the environment of the State.

- Serves as a decision making tool to ensure state environmental policies are given full consideration in actions of state government
- Provides detailed information on the affected environment, fully discusses significant environmental impacts, compares reasonable alternatives, and includes appropriate mitigation measures to avoid or minimize impacts
- Is issued as a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) first, then revised based on comments received, and reissued as a Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

A **Record of Decision** (ROD) is issued when the responsible state agency makes a decision on a proposed activity for which an EIS was prepared.

- Concisely describes all alternatives considered and specifies which are environmentally preferable, and identifies the chosen alternative and why it is most appropriate
- Certifies that all mitigation measures included in the EIS will be incorporated into the project, or if not, why they will not be included