



Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIIP)
Environmental Review Process for Applicants

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Incentive Program (HBIIP)
Environmental Review Process
for Applicants



Agenda

1. Program Timeline
2. Preliminary Environmental Information Survey Submission
3. Simplified approach to meeting Environmental Review requirements
 - a) Applicant/application requirements
 - b) Environmental Review Staff activities
 - c) National Office responsibilities
4. Environmental Reviews

Program Timeline

First Day of Federal Fiscal Year Quarters (July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024)

- HBIIIP Application Window Opens; HBIIIP Online Application System Live; HBIIIP Online Access Requests accepted

First Day of Federal Fiscal Year Quarters (July 1, 2023 to September 30, 2024)

- HBIIIP Application Window Closes at 4:30pm Eastern; HBIIIP applications no longer accepted thereafter.

90-180 Days after Application Window Closes

- Agency Reviews for Eligibility and Completeness
- Evaluation Panel and Competition

After Reviews are Completed

- Selection, Written Communication to All Participants
- Public Announcement of Obligations
- Grant Agreements/Contracts Execution
- Project Executions

Applicant Actions

While waiting for Unique Entity Identifier (UEI):

1. Send email with prepared/signed *Preliminary Environmental Information Survey* (with required supporting information) to HBIIIP@usda.gov;
2. Receive email acknowledgement from HBIIIP inbox;

While in the HBIIIP online application system:

3. Upload copy of HBIIIP acknowledgement in, “Attachments -- Environmental Review Documents”

To apply for the Higher Blends Grant program, please review the online application checklist below to determine the important documents you will need. You must also submit your completed [HBIIP Online Access Request](#) to HigherBlendsGrants-access@usda.gov to gain access to the online application system.

Important Documents



Accessing Forms

If you are using Google Chrome, your browser settings may require you to first download the form and then open the form.

- [Checklist for Online Application System](#)
- [USDA eAuthentication](#)
- [HBIIP Online Access Request](#)
- [HBIIP Online Grant Application Instruction Guide](#)
 - [Single Point of Contact List for Executive Order 12372 requirements](#) (sec: 7.3.1.)
 - [Dispensers and Fueling Equipment Reference Guide](#) (sec: 7.5.6. and 7.5.7.)
 - [HBIIP Project Technical Report Guide](#) (sec: 7.8)
 - [Sample HBIIP Project Technical Report](#)
 - [Environmental Review Documents Guide](#) (sec: 7.8)
 - [Preliminary Environmental Information Survey](#) (sec: 7.8.)
 - [Matching Funds Verification/Certification Guide](#) (sec: 7.7.2 and 7.8)
 - [SF 424D Assurances - Construction Programs](#) (sec: 7.8)
 - [SF 424D - Assurances - Construction Programs Instructions](#) (sec: 7.8.)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

PRELIMINARY ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION SURVEY

The purpose of this document is to assist RD staff in collecting adequate information to determine what level of environmental review is necessary. Depending on the information provided, the Agency may request additional information. All answers need to be supported by appropriate documentation, check marks are not sufficient support. Potentially helpful links are provided in blue, these are not an exhaustive or comprehensive list of resources.

Yes

No

1. APPLICANT NAME:

2 . ADDRESS: Physical location of the property (include legal description if farmland):

3. MAP. Please provide an aerial map showing the building /lot/exact location for all project types, please indicate on map any potential trenching or other ground disturbance. Is map attached?

4. DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION (Describe how proposed funds will be used. If project involves construction, whether interior or exterior or renovations, please describe in detail. For renewable energy systems such as solar panels be specific on type of system (fixed tilt, tracking, mounting & structure, i.e. ballasted, 3" pile driven, concrete, screws, etc.):

5. SIZE OF THE PROJECT & SITE: Please indicate the size (acres) of your project and how the project will impact the site including roads, right of ways, utilities, or other impacts. Example: Renewable energy solar project should include sq. ft, linear ft, number of installed units/panels/buildings, and details regarding any trenching or ground disturbance to be completed.

6. Will the project involve construction without any ground disturbance? (i.e. roof mounted solar)

6a. If no ground disturbance, please provide land use, land ownership, & description (i.e. industrial, residential, wooded, grasslands, etc.).

6b. If ground disturbance is expected, provide descriptive info, including if the project site was previously disturbed (i.e. previous structure, excavation, cultivation).



From ▾

jeff.carpenter@usda.gov

To

[SM.RD.DCWA2.HigherBlendsGrants](#);

Cc

Subject

Environmental Review Documents for Extra Fancy Fuels, LLC



Preliminary Environmental Information Survey 9 29 2022 (508) (F)_jc.pdf ▾
411 KB

Attached is the preliminary environmental review survey for my location applying for the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIP).

Please let me know if there are any questions or if you need additional information.

Jeff Carpenter

RE: Environmental Review Documents for Extra Fancy Fuels, LLC

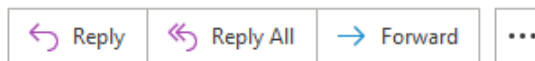


SM.RD.DCWA2.HigherBlendsGrants

To Carpenter, Jeffrey M. - RD, State Office

Retention Policy [USDA 7 Year Permanently Delete \(7 years\)](#)

Expires 9/1/2029



Sat 9/3/2022 2:45 PM

I acknowledge receipt of your environmental review information. Please upload this email into the HBIIIP Online Application System as evidence of submission.

Jeff Carpenter
Business Loan and Grant Analyst
Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIIP) Manager
Rural Development
United States Department of Agriculture
Phone: (402) 318-8195
www.rd.usda.gov

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USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender

HOME

Company Information Application Information Project Information Stations Financial Information **Attachments** Application Overview

- > Signed SF 424 D Certification
- > Signed Matching Funds Certification
- > Loan Delinquency
- > Technical Report
- > Fuel Distribution Facility Feasibility/Business Plan

▼ [Environmental Review Documents](#)

Attach only PDF(no more than 5 MB).

Attachment

 Upload Files Or drop files



TITLE	FILE TYPE	CREATED BY	SIZE(BYTES)	ATTACHMENT TYPE
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- > Supporting Documents

- > Signed SF 424 D Certification
- > Signed Matching Funds Certification
- > Loan Delinquency
- > Technical Report
- > Fuel Distribution Facility Feasibility/Business Plan

Environmental Review Documents



Attach only PDF(no more than 5 MB).

Attachment:

Upload Files Or drop files

TITLE	FILE TYPE	CREATED	ATTACHMENT TYPE
> Supporting Documents			

UPLOAD FILES

 Environmental_Review_Docum...	<div style="width: 100%;"><div style="width: 100%;"></div></div>	
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1 of 1 file uploaded

Done

RD HBIIP Activities

1. HBIIP Manager **receives** *Preliminary Environmental Information Survey* (with required supporting information) from HBIIP Applicant; HBIIP Manager **acknowledges** receipt of *Preliminary Environmental Information Survey* with email response to applicant.
2. HBIIP Manager sends *Preliminary Environmental Information Survey (with required supporting information)* to the *Environmental Review Staff (ERS)* to determine the likely level of review.
3. If additional information is needed or if an Environmental Report/Assessment is required, the ERS will communicate with the applicant and keep the HBIIP Manager apprised.

RD HBIIP Activities (continues)

4. The ERS will prepare the USDA Rural Development Environmental Checklist (1970 B Exhibit C or 1970-1) with supporting documents, and sign when applicable.
5. ERS provides the completed 1970-1 and supporting documentation to HBIIP Manager.
6. The RBCS Administrator's Office signs as the approval official, which completes the environmental review requirements. A digital copy of the fully executed Environmental Checklist and supporting documents will be stored in the applicant's permanent file.
7. HBIIP Manager provides email notification of the completion of the environmental review to the applicant.

Categorical Exclusion (Cat Ex) without Environmental Report

1. Applicant actions remain the same;
2. ERS coordinate until any required consultations (SHPO, THPO, etc.) are completed;
3. National Office signs 1970-1;
4. Applicant is notified that environmental review requirements are complete.
5. If Selected, Letter of Conditions is issued, and funding is obligated once required documents are returned.

Categorical Exclusion (Cat Ex) with Environmental Report

1. Applicant actions remain the same;
2. Applicant/ERS coordinate until report with necessary consultation (SHPO, THPO, etc.) is completed;
3. National Office signs 1970-1;
4. Applicant is notified that environmental review requirements are complete.
5. If Selected, Letter of Conditions is issued, and funding is obligated once required documents are returned.

Environmental Assessments

1. Applicant actions remain the same;
2. Applicant/ERS continue in coordination until required consultations are completed, EA is accepted, and public comment phase is completed;
3. National Office signs Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and FONSI is published;
4. Applicant is notified that environmental review requirements are complete.
5. If Selected, Letter of Conditions is issued, and funding is obligated once required documents are returned.



Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIIP) Environmental Report/Assessment Overview

Presented To: HBIIIP Applicants

Presented By: Nakupuna Consulting
Environmental Review Support Services Team





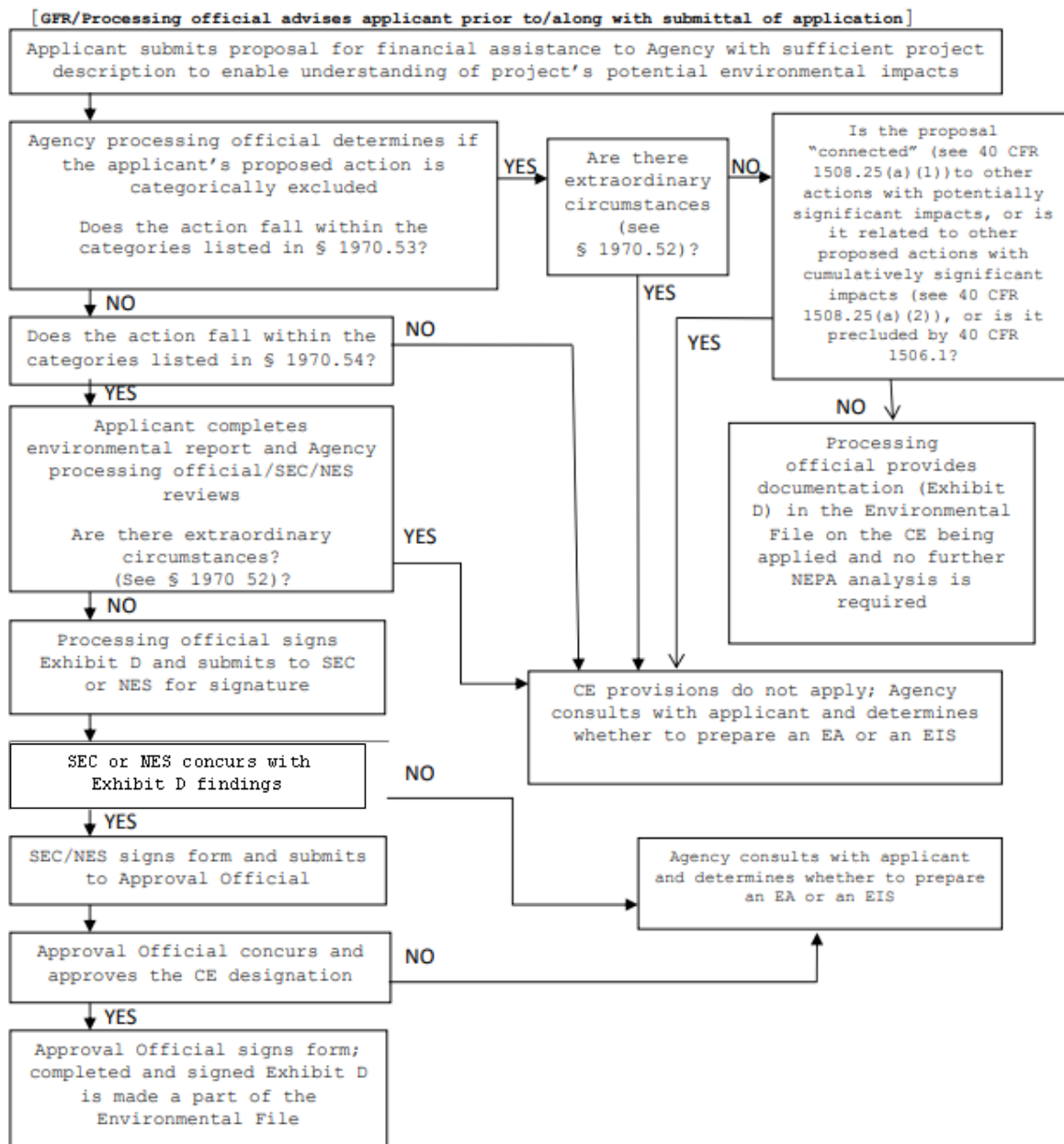
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1. Introduction
2. HBIIP Overview
3. Environmental Review Process Overview
4. Report Structure
5. Required Sections and Documentation
6. Additional EA Requirements
7. Questions



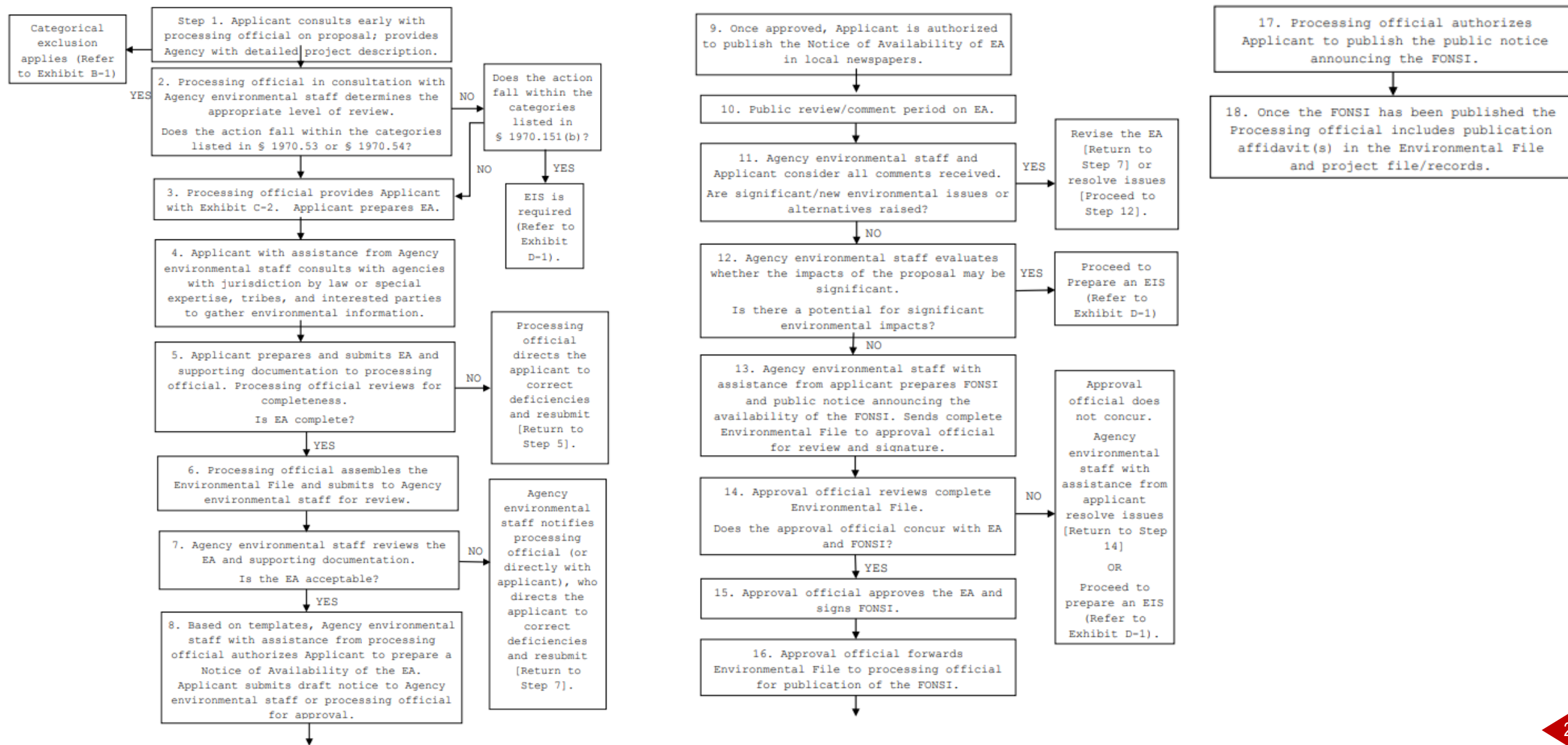
Environmental Review Process Overview

Categorical Exclusions





Environmental Assessments





Environmental Documentation Report Structure

- Environmental Report (ER) Guidance is located in RD Instruction 1970-B Exhibit C.
- Environmental Assessment (EA) Guidance is located in RD Instruction 1970-C Exhibit B.
- Because many of the issues related to the evaluation of potential environmental effects of applicant proposals require specific educational and professional knowledge, it is highly recommended (and expected) that applicants hire environmental professionals or consultants to prepare an EA and we recommend the same for an ER.
- The documentation prepared by the applicant must be sufficient for Nakupuna to evaluate the environmental effects of the proposal.
 - Understand the purpose and need for the applicant's proposal;
 - Determine if all reasonable alternatives have been considered;
 - Evaluate the environmental effects of the proposal and any reasonable alternatives;
 - Assess the significance of those effects;
 - Specify mitigation measures, if necessary; and
 - Conclude that interested agencies, tribes, and the public were given adequate opportunity to participate in, review, and comment on the proposal.
- Order of material is not important as long as the required information is provided.



- Descriptions and discussions should be clear, **concise**, and complete so that a person with little previous knowledge of the proposal can understand and easily verify the accuracy of the information and conclusions drawn from such information.
- Maps depicting the location of proposal components and environmental resources can increase understanding and expedite review, but they must be clear, legible, and have meaningful content.
- Sufficient data or evidence and documentation **must** be presented to substantiate impact analyses and conclusions.
- Concerns raised by federal, state, and local agencies, tribes, or the public must be addressed as completely as possible. Documentation must be included that demonstrates or provides evidence that consultation with appropriate environmental regulatory or natural resource agencies has occurred.
- Relevant environmental documents prepared by other federal, state, or local agencies or tribes should be incorporated by reference in the documentation if they augment its overall clarity. A document prepared for or by another federal agency may serve as the environmental documentation or a part thereof, as long as it contains the required information and is properly formatted to enable review.

The following slides contain information that must be included in an ER. This information is also required in an EA, however there are additional steps that must be completed for an EA that will be discussed in a subsequent section.



1970-B, Exhibit C: (a) Project Description and Location

An Environmental Report (ER) should contain a concise, complete project description that includes ALL project-related activities for each project site and provide supporting documentation

- Describe the proposed project (what are you planning to do?).
- Describe ground-disturbing activities (for example, clearing, grading, excavation, paving, installing new UST, replacing existing UST, utility installations, fencing, construction equipment storage/staging areas, etc.).
- Attach engineering schematics or site plans.

ER should contain maps that depict each project site affected by project-related activities

- Include U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle and aerial imagery maps showing the location of your project site(s) and clearly demarcate/label ALL project elements on all maps provided in the ER.



1970-B, Exhibit C: (b) Land Ownership and Land Use

ER should describe the amount of property to be affected or disturbed at each project site(s) including current land use and zoning information

(1) Document the land ownership (federal, state, or private?) of each project site or easements/rights-of-way, including the **presence or absence** of any formally classified lands at or adjacent to each project site

- Guidance is located in RD Instruction **1970-L – Land Use and Formally Classified Lands**.
- Clarify land purchase, procurement of any easements/rights-of-way, including acreage/area, APNs, zoning info, etc.
- Examples of formally classified lands include state or national forests, parks, BLM land, TVA land, NRCS land, tribal land, wilderness areas, etc.
- Nakupuna Consulting can provide helpful web resources after we have started the environmental review for your application.



(2) Environmental Justice (EJ) requirements: The ER must demonstrate consideration of whether or not the proposed project would cause disproportionately high or adverse effects on low-income and minority (people of color) populations at and within a buffer (usually 1-mile) of the project site(s)

- Executive Order (EO) 12898 – Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, The Civil Rights Act of 1964 – Title VI, and USDA Departmental Regulations
- Guidance is located in RD Instruction **1970-E – Environmental Justice** (Exhibit A Step-by-Step Flowchart).
- In the ER, applicants should briefly summarize consideration of their project’s effects on minority (people of color) and low-income populations and provide supporting evidence (Printable Standard Report) from EJScreen (<https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>) – be sure to add buffer to map before getting the report.
- Nakupuna Consulting can assist applicants with determining a suitable buffer after we have started the environmental review for your application.
- Nakupuna Consulting will complete USDA RD Form 2006-38 (Civil Rights Impact Analysis) for applicants.



(3) Intergovernmental Review (IGR) requirements: IGR is required for the Higher Blends Infrastructure Incentive Program (HBIIIP) **60-day response window**

- Intergovernmental Cooperation Act (1968), Executive Order (EO) 12372 – Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs and EO 13352 – Facilitation of Cooperative Conservation, and others
- Applicants are responsible for completing IGR consultation with state and/or local governments to afford them the opportunity to review proposed projects (some exceptions).
- Guidance is located in RD Instruction **1970-I – Intergovernmental Review**.
- Refer to the **Single Point of Contact (SPOC) list** – each U.S. state/territory is allowed to designate an entity to perform this function.
- U.S. states/territories that are **not** listed on the SPOC list have either chosen not to participate in the IGR process or have designated an alternative method for completing the IGR process (for example, Iowa requires that the municipality or local government be contacted directly, some variation by state).
- Applicants should coordinate with the state clearinghouse or HBIIIP program manager early-on to get this process started as soon as possible.
- Per 2 CFR 415.10, USDA RD/applicants must wait **60 days** for comments to be received back.



(3) IGR required – Single Point of Contact (SPOC) List (as of 04/20/2020)

Arizona	Louisiana	West Virginia
Arkansas	Nevada	American Samoa
California	Maryland	Puerto Rico
Delaware	Nevada	Virgin Islands
District of Columbia	Missouri	
Florida	New Hampshire	
Iowa**	South Carolina	
Kentucky	Utah	

These are U.S. states/territories where the IGR process is required. Applicants should coordinate with the state clearinghouse or HBIP program manager early-on to ensure your IGR process is started early.

The ER must document all steps taken to identify “historic properties” as required under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) (36 CFR 800, Subpart B)

- **Historic property** means a cultural property that is *included* in, or *eligible for inclusion* in, the **National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)**, can be tangible cultural material remains or properties of traditional religious and cultural importance (for example, to a Tribe or Native Hawaiian organization).
- USDA delegates authority to applicants to complete Section 106 process (“Delegation of Authority”).
- With the exception of a few states, applicants are responsible for completing Section 106 coordination with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and all Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs)/a designated tribal representatives (for example, if no THPO send to the cultural resources specialist).
- Guidance is located in RD Instruction **1970-H – Historic and Cultural Resources**.
- Applicants should use **RD Applicant letter templates** (1970-H, Exhibit H, also available online in MS Word format with instructions at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/water-environmental-programs/section-106-review-basics>).
- Nakupuna Consulting can communicate requirements after we have started the environmental review of your application.

State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) **30-day response window**

- The process generally involves identifying any subsurface (archaeological) sites, all above-ground buildings/structures (architectural) that are 50+ years in age, National Register listed properties, previously recorded sites, etc., that are on your project site(s) and in vicinity.
- Note – previous agricultural cultivation does not constitute a “previously disturbed” context for archaeological sites (site will be present below the plow zone).
- How? A qualified specialist can perform a background literature review/desktop review, sometimes a Phase I intensive cultural resources investigation will be required.
- Tangible cultural resources identified within your project site(s) are not necessarily “historic properties” – a cultural resources professional should make that assessment for you.
- When investigations conclude either a **Finding of No Effect** or **No Adverse Effect to Historic Properties**, USDA RD proceeds with the undertaking pursuant to any agreed upon SHPO conditions/commitments.
- When investigations conclude a **Finding of Adverse Effect to Historic Properties**, the NEPA level of review will elevate from a Categorical Exclusion (CE) 54 to an Environmental Assessment (EA).
- Per 36 CFR 800, Subpart B, 800.3(c)(4), USDA RD/applicants must wait **30 days** for the SHPO response letter to come back.



Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) **30-day response window**

- Coordination should be sent to ALL federally-registered tribes with an interest in the County in which your project site(s) is/are located.
- **IMPORTANT NOTE – Mass-emailed letters to Tribes are *not* acceptable! Please follow the instructions in the applicant template letters (1970-H, Exhibit H, also available online at <https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/all-programs/water-environmental-programs/section-106-review-basics>).**
- Each letter should be customized to **each Tribe** and addressed to the THPO or cultural resource specialist (letters should never be sent to the Tribal Chairperson or Principal Chief, etc.).
- An USDA RD staff/contractor **contact** must be listed in each letter (is not sufficient to state that the Tribes may consult with RD directly without giving them a contact to do so).
- Similar to SHPO coordination, USDA RD/applicants must wait **30 days** for comments to be received back.
- If a Tribe “accepts” your invitation to be a consulting party, you must provide a copy of the final Section 106 findings and any related cultural resources reports.
- There are 6 Federal tribes that only accept **government-to-government** consultation directly from USDA RD itself (The Osage Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma, Cherokee Nation, Delaware Tribe of Indians, and Nez Perce Tribe).



The ER must document all steps taken to identify federally-listed animal and plant species and whether any project sites and activities will directly or indirectly affect any threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species, or would adversely affect designated “critical habitat” under the Endangered Species Act (16 USC 1531-1544)

- **Critical Habitat** means a specific area within a species’ geographic range that contains physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of that species; critical habitat is officially designated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS).
- USDA delegates authority to applicants to complete Section 7 process (“Delegation of Authority”).
- For terrestrial/freshwater species, applicants must obtain and provide an **official** species list from the USFWS’ website **Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC)** (<https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/>), IPaCs expire every 90 days.
- “No critical habitat present” does not mean no effect to any of the species on the IPaC list.
- For marine species, applicants should coordinate their project with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries.



Endangered Species Act Requirements and USFWS Consultation

- Guidance is located in RD Instruction **1970-N – Biological Resources**.
- In your ER, applicants must provide appropriate species substantiation (for example, is requisite/suitable habitat for each species present on-site or not? Why? Etc.) and must also provide an “effects” determination for each species in the official IPaC list.
- When investigations conclude a **Finding of Not Present; No Effect;** or, **May Effect, Not Likely to Adversely Affect (NLAA)**, USDA RD proceeds with the action pursuant to any agreed upon USFWS conditions of approval/environmental commitments.
- When investigations conclude a **Finding of May Effect, Likely to Adversely Affect**, then the USFWS Formal Consultation process is needed (Biological Assessment is submitted and Biological Opinion is then issued by USFWS). Note – there is no timeframe limit (as with other federal processes).
- Additionally, a **Finding of May Effect, Likely to Adversely Affect** will elevate the NEPA level of review from a CE 54 to an EA.

The ER must document whether wetlands are present on or near project sites. Without having a wetland professional visit the site, mapped hydric soils are the best indicator of the presence of wetlands on a site.

- A map of **hydric soils** may be obtained from the Natural Resources Conservation Service website **NRCS Web Soil Survey**. Wetland maps are also available from the Fish and Wildlife Service's **National Wetland Inventory**.
- If the presence of wetlands is suspected and they are potentially impacted, applicants may be asked to provide a wetland delineation to establish locations, proximity, and diagnostic environmental characteristics (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (December 1987), Wetland Delineation Manual.) with respect to proposed project sites and obtain Section 404 of the Clean Water Act authorization through the issuance of a permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- Agency implementation guidelines for wetland protection are located at **1970 Subpart G – Wetland Protection**.

The ER must document whether any project activities or facilities are located within a floodplain.

- This does not apply to buried and/or aerial utilities lines.
- If any project-related construction activities are within floodplains, a **copy of a Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that shows the location of construction activities must be included.**
- Information related to floodplains and National Flood Insurance Maps may be obtained from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) website.
- Applicants or guaranteed lenders must complete and submit with their applications a **copy of the FEMA Standard Flood Hazard Determination Form (Form 086-0-32).**
- When disturbing a 100-year floodplain (Zone A or AE), additional steps such as an alternatives analysis and public notice are required.
- Agency implementation guidelines for floodplain protection are located at **1970 Subpart F – Floodplain Management.**

The ER must document whether any project sites are within the boundaries of a coastal zone management area (CZMA) and/or Coastal Barrier Resource Area (CBRA).

- For information related to CZMA, see National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's website.
- Development on Coastal Barrier Resources is prohibited except for a few narrow exceptions.
- Agency implementation guidelines for coastal area protection are located at **1970 Subpart O – Coastal Zones and Coastal Barriers**.



1970-B, Exhibit C: (h) Important Farmland

The ER must document whether any project sites (except utility line construction) will convert agriculture lands defined as important farmland by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to non-agricultural uses.

- Use **NRCS Web Soil Survey** or similar resource to determine if the project falls within potential farmland.
- The assessment is completed on a NRCS form, AD-1006, Farmland Conversion Impact Rating. The portions on the form that are indicated to be completed by a federal agency can be inputted by applicants in coordination with Nakupuna. The **applicant must coordinate the submittal of Form AD-1006 to the NRCS** for processing.
- **Certain Exemptions Apply:**
 - Construction limited to on-farm structures needed for farm operations
 - Construction limited to new minor secondary (accessory) structures such as a garage or storage shed
 - Project on land used for water storage
 - **Project on land already in or committed to urban development (7 CFR 658.2(a))**
 - Farmland subject to FPPA requirements does not have to be currently used for cropland. USDA/NRCS regulations contained at 7 CFR Part 658.2 define “committed to urban development” as land with a density of 30 structures per 40-acre area; lands identified as “urbanized area” (UA) on the Census Bureau Map or as urban area mapped with a “tint overprint” on USGS topographical maps; or as “urban-built-up” on the USDA Important Farmland Maps. Note that land “zoned” for development, i.e. non-agricultural use, does not exempt a project from compliance with the FPPA.
- Implementation guidelines are located at **1970 Subpart L – Land Use and Formally Classified Lands.**



1970-B Exhibit C(i) Environmental Risk Management

NEPA requires project evaluation for Human Health and Safety

- The ER must document the presence of hazardous materials, substances or wastes that may be released at, generated by, or required for the operation of the proposed project.
- The environmental condition of a property and any management and operation activities that use or create these materials or wastes, need to be evaluated to determine and manage risks to the environment and people.
- Phase I ESAs are encouraged to be included as an attachment to the ER but may not be required.

The ER should Identify:

- use, storage, release and/or disposal of toxic materials
- whether applicant or the facility is under any corrective action or regulatory remedial action plan
- status of any violations and cleanup
- presence of above-ground or underground storage tanks
- whether the operation of the facility could result in accidental spills of hazardous or toxic substances or result in hazardous air or water emissions
- any mitigation measures, if necessary



1970-C Exhibit B and 1970-O Air Quality

The ER should identify: IAW Clean Air Act (CAA), Section 176(c)(1) - project must not contribute to new violations of standards for ambient air quality, increase the frequency or severity of existing violations, or delay timely attainment of standards in the area.

- if project will interfere with attainment or maintenance of the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) and the applicable state's implementation plan (SIP).
- if proposal is located within non-attainment or maintenance areas, it may require a conformity evaluation IAW the applicable implementation plan.
- potential permits including, CAA Title V operating permit for all major source, and some minor source generators.
- any mitigation measures, if necessary.

Terms:

Nonattainment – area of where monitored air quality data indicate that the concentration of one or more of six criteria pollutants is higher than the limits set by the NAAQS.

Maintenance area – have previously been designated as non-attainment and will remain in maintenance for 20 years.

RESOURCE: www3.epa.gov/airquality/greenbook

* Only counties with Nonattainment designation are included in the greenbook.



1970-O Sole Source Aquifers

EPA defines a sole or principal source aquifer as an aquifer that supplies at least 50 percent of the drinking water consumed in the project area overlying the aquifer.

All applicant proposals that have the potential to contaminate a designated SSA or adversely affect an SAA recharge area are subject to EPA review.

RESOURCE: [Sole Source Aquifers for Drinking Water | US EPA](#)



1970-C Exhibit B and 1970-O Noise

During the course of the RDs NEPA environmental review process, the applicant must consider any potential noise issues that may result from the location of the project.

For proposed Commercial or industrial projects:

- must be evaluated to determine the level of noise the construction and operation of the proposed project will contribute to any noise-sensitive areas, such as residences, schools, and parks.
- Noise sources during construction and operation and the projected levels (intensity, duration, periodization) of noise generated.

When criteria, below, are satisfied, the need to undertake a noise impact analysis at any level, is eliminated.

- The site is contained within an area in which local zoning provides for the intended use, and
- The applicant's operation plan incorporates appropriate best management practices for noise control for both construction and operation.

If not satisfied, a noise impact analysis will need to be performed.

When conducting a noise impact analysis using the Noise Assessment Guidelines, all military/civilian airports within 15 miles of the project, all significant roads within 1000 feet, and all railroads within 3000 feet, must be considered.

- How much noise is a site exposed to?
- What types of activities are being affected and how severely?
- Is it reasonable to redesign the site to relocate noise sensitive areas?
- If not, how much protection can be provided through attenuation measures?

Resources:

Local zoning ordinances

www.nonoise.org/index.htm



1970-C Exhibit B and 1970-O Transportation

All activities proposed, must be evaluated for their interactions with all relevant transportation sectors.

While the majority of projects will have no minimal transportation concerns, some projects have the potential to cause a significant changes to the traffic patterns, or other transportation activities in the surrounding area.

ER should identify:

- existing routes of travel that may be affected (road, rail, air).
- Any hazardous materials involved
- need for coordination with state or federal transportation agencies.
- how movement of products, raw materials or waste may affect congestion, noise, odor or dust
- mitigation measures, if necessary

Resource: local zoning ordinances and criteria



Required Sections and Documentation

In addition to the documentation that is required for an ER, an EA also requires several other components.

- Aesthetics
- Electromagnetic Fields and Interference
- Corridor Analysis
- Cumulative Effects
- Mitigation
- **Public Notice**
- We will not be going into detail on the additional requirements for an EA due to the infrequency of this documentation level for the HBIIP program, but more information is located in the EA Guidance document, **RD Instruction 1970-C Exhibit B**.
- To reiterate; many of the issues related to the evaluation of potential environmental effects of applicant proposals require specific educational and professional knowledge, it is **highly recommended (and expected) that applicants hire environmental professionals or consultants to prepare an EA.**
- The HBIIP Program Manager can provide an ER Template that provides a basis for starting your ER, but is not all inclusive for every circumstance, so please follow the applicable guidance.

