



THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR
WASHINGTON

JUL 15 2020

The Honorable Larry Kudlow
Assistant to the President for Economic Policy
Director, National Economic Council
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear Mr. Kudlow:

I am responding on behalf of the Department of the Interior (Department) to the initial reporting requirement in Executive Order (E.O.) 13927 "On Accelerating the Nation's Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Emergency by Expediting Infrastructure Investments and Other Activities." I am pleased to report that the Department has developed multiple mechanisms for reducing the time required for environmental reviews on all projects where we are either the lead or a cooperating agency, including activities that will promote economic recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Department's efforts to streamline environmental reviews have been underway since the start of the Trump Administration. Executive Order 13807 "On Establishing Discipline and Accountability in the Environmental Review and Permitting Process for Infrastructure Projects," dated August 15, 2017, provided our initial blueprint. On August 31, 2017, the Department issued Secretary's Order (S.O.) 3355, which sets page and time limits and provides additional guidelines to reduce needless paperwork, focuses on important environmental consequences, ensures that reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) meet their original goal of providing relevant information to decision makers to inform Federal decisions, and promotes internal accountability. Since the implementation of these policies, the average time and page length required to complete an environmental impact statement (EIS) has been reduced from more than 5 years and 850 pages to 1.5 years and 145 pages. This reduction has ensured that projects stay on track, decision makers have a more useful product, and taxpayers pay less to complete NEPA reviews.

The Department is also working with the Council on Environmental Quality to develop new categorical exclusions (CE) from further NEPA review for multiple activities that historically have been analyzed under an environmental assessment (EA). Such EAs typically take months to prepare. By our examination of the NEPA record, these activities have always resulted in a "Finding of No Significant Impact." We are examining these actions to determine if they may be eligible for CE. Those CEs will allow our field-based staff to focus on economically productive project activity rather than constant reanalysis of the same land and the same uses.

In response to section 5 of E.O. 13927, we are enclosing a list of infrastructure, energy, environmental, and natural resource projects that are within the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to perform or advance. As a result of Department initiatives, including S.O. 3355, that set a new baseline for completing project reviews expeditiously, many of these project reviews are already on shorter schedules. The Department will further examine these and other qualifying projects for additional expedited review. All of these projects will assist in the Nation's economic recovery.

The Department continues to adopt existing NEPA analysis and use existing CEs, where appropriate, to eliminate the need for additional environmental reviews. For example, since the start of the COVID-19 response, the Bureau of Safety and Environmental Enforcement and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) have used CEs for conventional energy development and maintenance; reviews of exploration and development plans; and reviews of certain pipeline applications. Also, these Bureaus are following NEPA guidelines to adopt previous NEPA analysis to conduct oil and gas lease sales and to permit new energy development. In addition, the Bureau of Indian Affairs has existing authority that allows for the waiver of regulations for leasing and rights-of-way that has been used recently for infrastructure and energy projects on Indian lands.

In 2018, the Department published clarifying guidance on adhering to NEPA during emergencies where immediate response is required. In response to sections 2 and 6, this guidance was disseminated again to all subunits of the Department to facilitate response to the COVID-19 emergency. These emergency procedures have been used in the past in response to weather-related emergencies and wildland fire management. The Department's Bureaus have been advised that they could be used again for things such as requisitioning space for a deployment by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or assisting an American Indian Tribe experiencing a COVID-19 outbreak.

Further, the Department has used virtual meetings and other tools to engage with stakeholders, State governments, partner agencies, and the public to continue public scoping for EISs and maintain project schedules for activities proposed by the National Park Service (NPS), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), BOEM, and Bureau of Reclamation.

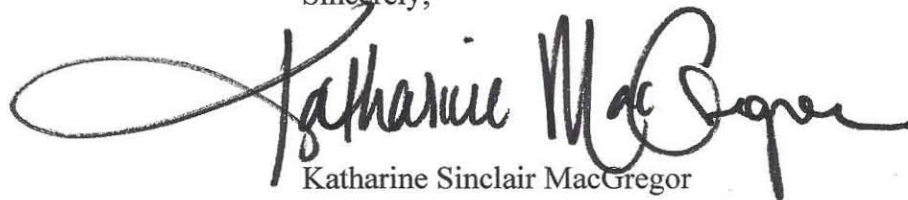
Finally, the Department will continue to make our resources and facilities available to our partners in response to the emergency. For example, BLM's Jupiter Inlet Lighthouse in Florida is using bunkrooms to house local emergency response professionals, and NPS permitted the New York City Transit Authority to use Floyd Bennet Field for activities supporting COVID-19 response. The Department will continue to share our facilities with emergency responders and support response efforts without delay for issuance of authorizations or permits.

In response to section 7 of E.O. 13927, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) has coordinated closely with FEMA to respond expeditiously to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 13, 2020, FEMA contacted FWS regarding options for complying with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as they considered how to respond to the pandemic. The FWS and FEMA agreed that emergency consultation, pursuant to 50 C.F.R Part 402.05, was appropriate, and developed an agreed-upon approach to minimizing potential effects to ESA-listed species and critical habitat. The FWS documented the agreement in a March 23, 2020, letter to FEMA. On May 27, 2020, FEMA reported to FWS that none of the more than 250 projects they had approved as part of the COVID-19 response (consisting of FEMA providing of more than \$1.5 billion in grant funding) thus far would affect ESA-listed species or critical habitat. Considering this, FEMA and FWS agreed to continue implementing the previously agreed-upon approach and reassess benefits and outcomes after another 60 days.

The Department continues to look for and implement efficiencies that will help strengthen the economy and return Americans to work, while providing appropriate protections for public health and safety, natural resources, and the environment. The enclosed table will be updated and shared with you monthly throughout the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Katharine Sinclair MacGregor". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long, sweeping tail.

Katharine Sinclair MacGregor

Enclosure

cc:

The Honorable Russell Vought
Acting Director, Office of Management and Budget
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
725 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable Mary Neumayr
Chairman, Council on Environmental Quality
730 Jackson Place NW
Washington, DC 20506

**Department of the Interior Report for Executive Order 13927:
Infrastructure, Energy, and Natural Resources Projects that Support Economic Recovery
Environmental Impact Statements Being Expedited During the COVID-19 Emergency
(March 13, 2020 to January 31, 2021)**

Project Title	Lead Agency (Cooperating DOI Agency)	Document Status	State/Location	Project Focus
Coeur Rochester Silver and Gold Mine Plan	BLM	Completed	NV	Mining
Three Bars Ecosystem and Landscape Restoration Project	BLM	Completed	NV	Habitat Restoration, Invasive Species Removal
Programmatic EIS for Fuel Breaks in the Great Basin	BLM	Completed	ID	Wildland Fire Management
Campo Wind Energy Project	BIA	Completed	CA	Renewable Energy
Dairy Syncline Phosphate Mine Project EIS	BLM	Completed	ID	Mining
Long-Term Water Transfers	BOR	Completed	CA	Water Delivery
Haiwee Geothermal Leasing Area Supplemental EIS and Land Use Plan Amendment	BLM	Completed	CA	Renewable Energy
Tucker Hill Perlite Mine Expansion	BLM	Completed	OR	Mining
Tri-State Fuel Breaks Project	BLM	Completed	ID	Wildland Fire Management
Gemini Solar Project-F41	BLM	Completed	NV	Renewable Energy
Upper Santa Ana River Wash Habitat Conservation Plan	FWS	In Progress	CA	Water Conservation, Aggregate Mining, Recreation, Flood Control, Other Public Services
Converse County Oil and Gas Project	BLM	In Progress	WY	Oil and Gas Development
Moneta Divide Natural Gas and Oil Development Project	BLM	In Progress	WY	Oil and Gas Development
Gunnison Field Office Domestic Sheep Grazing Permit Renewals EIS	BLM	In Progress	CO	Livestock Grazing, Wildlife
Point Reyes National Seashore General Management Plan Amendment	NPS	In Progress	CA	Livestock Grazing, Wildlife
Blackrock Land Exchange	BLM	In Progress	ID	Mining
Parkdale Competitive Mineral Materials Sale Environmental Impact Statement	BLM	In Progress	CO	Mining
Proposed East Smoky Panel Phosphate Mine Project	BLM	In Progress	ID	Mining
National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska Integrated Activity Plan	BLM	In Progress	AK	Oil and Gas Development
Placer Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Community Conservation Plan/County Aquatic Resources Plan	FWS	In Progress	CA	Development Certainty, Water Resources
Borderlands Wind Project	BLM	In Progress	NM	Renewable Energy
Osage County Oil and Gas Development	BIA	In Progress	OK	Oil and Gas Development
Willow Master Development Plan Environmental Impact Statement	BLM	In Progress	AK	Oil and Gas Development
Columbia River System Operations EIS	BOR	In Progress		Water Delivery
Crimson Solar Project	BLM	In Progress	CA	Renewable Energy
Paradox Valley Unit EIS	BOR	In Progress	CO	Water Quality, Desalination
Yellow Pine Solar-F41	BLM	In Progress	NV	Renewable Energy
Programmatic EIS for Fuels Reduction and Rangeland Restoration in the Great Basin	BLM	In Progress	ID	Wildland Fire Management
Friant-Kern Canal Middle Reach Capacity Correction Project	BOR	In Progress	CA	Water Delivery
Truckee Canal Extraordinary Maintenance	BOR	In Progress	NV	Water Delivery
Eastern North Dakota Alternate Water Supply (ENDAWS)	BOR	In Progress	ND	Water Delivery
Wyoming Pipeline Corridor Initiative	BLM	In Progress	WY	Oil and Gas Development
Tejon Indian Tribe's Proposed Trust Acquisition and Casino Project	BIA	In Progress	CA	Gaming
Louse Canyon Geographic Management Area Rangeland Health Management Actions Environmental Impact Statement	BLM	In Progress	OR	Livestock Grazing, Wildlife
East Collier Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan	FWS	In Progress	FL	Development Certainty
Farmington Mancos-Gallup RMP Amendment	BLM	In Progress	NM	Oil and Gas Development
New Mexico Unit	BOR	In Progress	NM	Water Delivery
Vineyard Wind, LLC's Proposed Wind Energy Facility Offshore Massachusetts	BOEM	In Progress	OCS Offshore Massachusetts	Renewable Energy
Thacker Pass Lithium Mine project	BLM	In Progress	NV	Mining
Lakeview Resource Management Plan Amendment	BLM	In Progress	OR	Livestock Grazing, Wildland Fire Management
Whitewater River Groundwater Replenishment Facility	BLM	In Progress	CA	Water Resources
Lake Powell Pipeline	BOR	In Progress	UT	Water Delivery
Northern Corridor Highway Right-of-Way, Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit, and Resource Management Plan Amendments, Washington County, Utah	BLM	In Progress	UT	Transportation
Arrow Canyon Solar Project	BIA	In Progress	NV	Renewable Energy
Coastal Plain Oil and Gas Leasing and Development Plan (ANWR)	BLM	In Progress	AK	Oil and Gas Development
Road to Ambler/Ambler Mining District Industrial Road Access	BLM	In Progress	AK	Mining
Alaska Liquefied Natural Gas Project	FERC (FWS, NPS, BLM)	In Progress	AK	Natural Gas
Cardinal-Hickory Creek 345 kV Transmission Line Project	USDA (FWS)	In Progress	IA	Energy Transmission
Gulf Liquefied Natural Gas Liquefaction Project	FERC (FWS)	In Progress	MS	Natural Gas
Jordan Cove Liquefied Natural Gas Terminal and Pacific Connector Gas Pipeline	FERC (FWS, BLM)	In Progress	OR	Natural Gas

Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	LA	Waterway Construction and Maintenance
Mid-Breton Sediment Diversion	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	LA	Waterway Construction and Maintenance
Port of Corpus Christi Authority Channel Deepening Project	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	FL	Waterway Construction and Maintenance
Swan Lake North Pumped Storage	FERC (FWS, BLM, BOR)	In Progress	OR	Energy Storage
Venture Global Calcasieu Pass Terminal and TransCameron Pipeline Project	FERC (FWS)	In Progress	LA	Natural Gas
Amite River and Tributaries-East of the Mississippi River, Louisiana, Flood Risk Management Feasibility Study	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	LA	Storm Management
Collier County Coastal Storm Risk Management Project	DOD-USACE (BOEM, FWS)	In Progress	FL	Storm Management
Coos Bay, Oregon Section 408/204(f) Channel Modification	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	OR	Waterway Construction and Maintenance
Florida Keys Coastal Storm Risk Management Project	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	FL	Storm Management
I-285 Top End Express Lanes	DOT-FHWA (FWS)	In Progress	GA	Transportation
I-495/I-270 Managed Lanes Study	DOT-FHWA (NPS, FWS)	In Progress	MD	Transportation
I-526 Lowcountry Corridor West Improvements	DOT-FHWA (FWS, NPS)	In Progress	SC	Transportation
Lake Pontchartrain and Vicinity, Louisiana General Re-evaluation Report	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	LA	Waterway Construction and Maintenance
Mountain Valley Pipeline Southgate CP19-14	FERC (FWS)	In Progress	VA	Natural Gas
McClellanville 115 kV Transmission Line Project	USDA-RUS (FWS)	In Progress	SC	Energy Transmission
Miami-Dade County Back-Bay Coastal Storm Risk Management Project	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	FL	Storm Management
Mineville Energy Storage Project	FERC (FWS)	In Progress	NY	Energy Storage
New Jersey Back Bays Coastal Storm Risk Management Feasibility Study	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	NJ	Storm Management
Pier B On-Dock Rail Support Facility	DOT (FWS)	In Progress	NY	Transportation
Surry-Skiffes Creek-Wheaton Aerial Transmission Line	DOD-USACE (NPS)	In Progress	VA	Energy Transmission
U.S. Route 58/220 Bypass to North Carolina State Line Limited-Access Study	DOT-FHWA (FWS)	In Progress	NC	Transportation
US 275 West Point to Scribner	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	NE	Transportation
Upper Barataria Basin Feasibility Study	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	LA	Waterway Construction and Maintenance
West Bank and Vicinity, Louisiana General Re-evaluation Report	DOD-USACE (FWS)	In Progress	LA	Waterway Construction and Maintenance