




Department of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

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MEMORANDUM TO: Secretarial Officers
Heads of Field Organizations

FROM: John Spitaleri Shaw
Assistant Secretary for
Environment, Safety and Health 

SUBJECT: Using the National Environmental Policy Act Process
to Further the Department's Mission and Goals

The Year 2005 marks the 35th anniversary of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – landmark legislation for the protection of our environment. On this occasion, I would like to share with you my vision for using the NEPA process to help us accomplish the Department of Energy's (DOE) mission, consistent with our environmental goals. I would also like to meet with each Secretarial Officer to discuss how you integrate the NEPA process with planning and decisionmaking and to review the status of your NEPA compliance activities. Together we can explore ways of improving the Department's NEPA implementation.

NEPA analysis – considering the environmental impacts of a proposed action and its alternatives before making a decision – is an essential platform for providing useful information to decisionmakers and the public. I want to ensure that senior managers continue to be engaged in planning and executing an effective NEPA compliance program, one that supports timely implementation of the Department's programs and projects as well as sound environmental policies and practices.

In this regard, early and continued involvement of senior management is key to success in NEPA implementation and is an area in which the Department can improve. An annual NEPA planning summary – which DOE O 451.1B, *NEPA Compliance Program*, requires of each Secretarial Officer and Head of Field Organization with NEPA responsibilities – is intended to foster your early planning, resource allocation, and stakeholder involvement. However, for a significant number of the 2005 annual planning summaries (due January 31, 2005), the involvement of a senior manager is not as evident as in past years, and some summaries have not yet been completed. This is an important planning tool for senior Headquarters and Field management, and I ask for your continued involvement in the preparation of these documents.



The Office of Environment, Safety and Health is committed to assisting Program and Field Offices in meeting their environmental responsibilities. As you know, my staff works extensively with your NEPA Compliance Officers and NEPA Document Managers, providing technical assistance to help them meet their responsibilities, and we appreciate their contributions to the NEPA Program. We maintain an award-winning Lessons Learned Program based in large part on their input.

We also provide many tools to facilitate NEPA compliance. We maintain a Web site (www.eh.doe.gov/nepa) that provides a comprehensive collection of NEPA guidance; DOE NEPA documents issued since 1994; milestone, status, and public involvement information for DOE NEPA reviews in progress; and annual NEPA planning summaries. We have recently issued an expanded update of DOE's cornerstone NEPA guidance, *Recommendations for the Preparation of Environmental Assessments and Environmental Impact Statements* (Second Edition, December 2004), and continue to prepare NEPA guidance in response to the needs identified by your staffs.

We would like your ideas on how we can improve understanding and implementation of NEPA's goals in your Offices. My vision is for a strengthened environmental component in the Department's programs where the best NEPA practice allows DOE to meet its overall mission and improve its standing in affected communities. I welcome the opportunity for our continued collaboration on the environmental aspects of these matters and look forward to meeting with you.

cc: NEPA Compliance Officers

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