

VDH Drinking Water Funding Program Guidance Package #7

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

One of the most important planning level requirements of the project funding agencies is that every project must undergo an Environmental Review (ER) before loan or grant closing can occur. The ER requirement is intended to ensure that water projects funded through the various funding programs are environmentally sound.

This procedure should satisfy the environmental review requirements of the following funding agencies:

- Financial & Construction Assistance Programs administered by the Virginia Department of Health – Office of Drinking Water
- United States Department of Agriculture-Rural Development
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy.

Each of these agencies may have varying public notice requirements that are specific to their particular program.

There are three levels of Environmental Review in the program and the required level will depend on the project's potential for significant environmental impact. The most frequently utilized are the relatively simple Categorical Exclusion (CE) and the more detailed Environmental Assessment (EA). Rarely will a project have such significant environmental impact that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) would be required.

Categorical Exclusions from Environmental Assessment Requirement

Recipients may request an exclusion from the environmental assessment requirement if the project meets any of the following conditions as applicable to that project:

1. An upgrade in level of treatment or facility improvements of an existing treatment works on the existing site of the works. The proposed action will result in a modest change in size, use, capacity, or purpose of the original location and is being designed predominately to serve residential users.
2. An expansion of an existing treatment works on the existing site of the works which would result in no more than a 20% increase to the existing service population.
3. Water line replacement/rehabilitation to correct exfiltration water loss problems or problems associated with inadequate water pressure. Rehabilitation of drinking water facilities such as reservoirs and storage facilities.
4. Replacement of existing equipment or structures at their present location. These activities also include reconstruction of curbs and sidewalks, street repaving, and building modifications, renovations, and improvements.
5. Installation of on-site treatment technologies (e.g., filters, ion exchange, iron removal).

6. Minor extensions of water lines, which will be located within road right-of-ways or otherwise previously, disturbed areas.

The exclusion request is to be transmitted to the appropriate funding agency representative and should include a description of the project, a discussion of how the project meets one or more of the exclusion conditions and support documentation. The funding agency will review the request and issue a Categorical Exclusion, if appropriate. The Recipient must then public notice the CE in a local newspaper for a minimum of 30 days. The public notice must be published by the Recipient at least once per week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general weekly circulation or published three consecutive days in a paper of general daily circulation in the service area involved in the project. For localities anticipating request of a categorical exclusion, contact with the funding agency staff is recommended early in the planning process to receive preliminary indication of acceptability. This may reduce project delays resulting from non-concurrence with funding agency requirements.

Environmental Assessment

Projects not falling into one or more of the categories for potential exclusion must undergo an Environmental Assessment. Also, projects that will use explosives during construction and projects over 100 acres in size will undergo an Environmental Assessment. The Environmental Assessment must identify the purpose and need for the project as well as providing a brief description and site location maps.

The Environmental Assessment must summarize and compare reasonable project alternatives. The comparison of project alternatives will include a cost analysis of each alternative showing capital and operation and maintenance costs.

The assessment must address and consider both the direct and indirect environmental impacts of the selected alternative. Accordingly, both adverse and beneficial impacts need to be identified and considered. Direct impacts are caused by the construction of the treatment works, and indirect impacts are caused by the development made possible by the project. The assessment must also evaluate and discuss the impacts that would result without the project (a take-no-action alternative).

The following is a list of environmental concerns and effects, which must be addressed through the environmental assessment. Any adverse effect should be identified as short term or long term (short term means while under construction), and any protective measures to reduce or eliminate their impact should also be identified.

1. Effects, destruction and/or displacement of wildlife and marine life, including endangered species, and their habitats, or food chain.
2. Destruction or disturbance of marshland or wetlands.
 - If appropriate, state the amount of wetlands to be physically affected by construction of the proposed project, status of any wetland permits, and show the location of the wetlands in relation to the project;
 - If appropriate, justify why there is no alternative to construction in wetlands;
 - Describe proposed mitigation measures to avoid or minimize impacts to wetlands.
3. Displacement of households, businesses, or services.

4. Land Use Issues
 - a. General Land Use
 - Describe existing zoning ordinances and land use plans of project area;
 - Describe current land classification of proposed project area i.e. residential, commercial, agricultural, rangeland, forest land, etc.;
 - b. Important Farmland, Prime Forest Land, and Prime Rangeland Information
 - Must comply with the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA);
 - Show the areas of important farmland and prime rangeland and forest land affected by the project and the amount of area to be disturbed;
 - Contact local Natural Resources Conservation Service office for soil survey maps and consultation to determine if the project area is classified as Prime Rangeland or Important Farmland and if the proposed project area is farmland subject to FPPA;
 - Contact United States Forest Service office for consultation to determine if the project area is classified as Prime Forest Land.
 - c. Formally Classified Lands
 - Formally classified lands are properties that are either administered by Federal, State, or local agencies or have been given special protection through formal legislative designation;
 - Describe the amount of each type of formally classified land that will be affected by the proposed project and alternatives considered;
 - Visual impacts to formally classified lands needs to be considered and described;
 - Formally classified lands include but are not necessarily limited to:
 - National parks and monuments;
 - National natural landmarks;
 - National battlefield park sites;
 - National historic sites and parks;
 - Wilderness areas;
 - Wild and scenic and recreational rivers;
 - Wildlife refuges;
 - National seashores, lake shores, and trails;
 - State parks;
 - Bureau of Land Management (BLM) administered lands;
 - National forests and grasslands;
 - Native American owned lands and lease administered by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)
5. Effects on land having archeological significance.
6. Destruction or disturbance of areas of historical significance.
 - Comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA)
7. Use of irretrievable resources.
8. Noise.
9. Traffic circulation and traffic pattern disruption.
10. Odor/air quality.

11. Damage and/or pollution of surface water resulting from erosion, discharge(s), or other sources.
12. Aesthetic concerns and visual impacts.
13. Effects on designated wild, scenic, and/or recreational rivers
14. Socio-economic changes and environmental justice issues.
 - Include an analysis of the potential impact of a proposed project that may cause a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effect to minority and low-income residents within the project area. If the project will have no disproportionate effects, that should be stated. If the project will have or may be perceived to have disproportionate effects to minority or low-income residents, the analysis should describe efforts to get these residents in the public review and comment process;
 - If there is no alternative to locating a project in a minority or low-income community and if there will be disproportionately high human health or environmental effects, the discussion must include a discussion of the mitigation measures evaluated that would off-set or minimize the effects.
15. Floodplain impacts
 - Include copies of the applicable Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Floodplain Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) with the project facilities identified;
 - Determine if the proposed project or any portion is located in a 100-year or 500-year floodplain;
 - Identify and define the area of the floodplain to be affected by the proposed project and evaluate the impacts to the floodplain;
 - Identify and evaluate practical alternatives to locating facilities in a 100-year floodplain;
 - Identify critical facilities of the proposed project that would be located in a 500-year floodplain. Critical facilities are facilities whose loss would disrupt utility service for an extended time or would disrupt utility service to critical structures such as hospitals. Critical facilities would include water treatment plants, large pump stations, and centralized operations or communication facilities.
 - If there is no practical alternative to locating a facility or portion of a facility in the floodplain, document the justification and identify and develop measures to minimize the impacts and restore /preserve floodplain values
16. Availability of raw water during periods of drought.
17. Water Quality Information – The types of information that must be provided include:
 - Identification and location of waterways that may be receiving streams for effluent discharges or used for water appropriations for potable water;
 - Handling of wastewater disposal for facilities;
 - Identification of all aquifers utilized as a supply for potable or that may be impacted from runoff, infiltration by or any operational activities from wastewater and solid waste facilities;
 - Groundwater protection programs for sole source aquifers or recharge areas should be noted
 - If the watershed that the proposed project is located in is under a management plan, the plans and the proposed project's compliance with the plan should be noted; and
 - Potential water quality degradation caused by temporary construction activities and any mitigation measures that are proposed to avoid or minimize any adverse environmental effects

18. Impact on fisheries from surface water intakes.
19. Impacts to coastal zones and coastal barrier resource systems (CBRS).
 - Identify portions of the proposed project which will be located in the coastal zone or CBRS units or which will affect these areas;
 - If appropriate, include correspondence with the State coastal management program office concerning the projects consistency determination;
 - Describe mitigation measures necessary to achieve consistency with the State's coastal management program, if necessary.

The impacts of the selected alternative should be summarized. Particular attention must be paid to unavoidable adverse impacts resulting from the project, and the relationship between short-term impacts on the environmental and long-term maintenance and enhancement of environmental quality or elimination of public health risks. This section must also include, as appropriate, the steps that will be taken to avoid or minimize the adverse impacts, as well as structural and nonstructural methods of mitigating unavoidable impacts and who will be responsible for these mitigation activities.

The Environmental Review procedures are discussed below:

1. If the Recipient feels they are eligible for a categorical exclusion from the environmental assessment, they should submit the request, with appropriate documentation, to the funding agency as discussed earlier. If the funding agency concurs with the request, then the concurrence will be transmitted to the Recipient for local public notification for a 30-day comment period. If there are no significant adverse public comments, the funding agency will issue an environmental clearance letter and the project may proceed to closing. If the funding agency does not concur with the request, or significant adverse public comment is received as a result of the notification, then the project must proceed through Steps #2-7.
2. A written request for an environmental review and comment must be forwarded to all review agencies. A list of these agencies is attached. Sample review agency transmittal letters are shown in Exhibit A. The written review request transmittal should include a description of the purpose and need of the proposed project, a written description of the proposed project location and boundaries, and the proposed project scope of work. The request should also include a USGS topographic map with 1:24000 scale (also referred to as a 7.5 minute series) to show the limits of the project and potential environmental effects. The agencies must be given a minimum of 30 days for review and comment. If no written response is received within the requested time period the recipient should re-contact the agency by telephone to again request a written response. Written documentation of follow-up telephone conversations must be provided in the environmental assessment. The Recipient must retain copies of the transmittal letters as well as all review comments received. The environmental assessment is prepared after review agency written responses are received.

The Department of Historic Resources (DHR) requires an archive search first. Their project review form must be filled out after the archive search results are received. This information should be forwarded to DHR along with the information described in the paragraph above. For more information on DHR's 106 review, refer to their website, <http://www.dhr.virginia.gov>.

3. The environmental assessment will address the previously mentioned environmental concerns and effects and resolve any issues to the commenting review agency's satisfaction.

4. The recipient must hold a public hearing for the purpose of discussing the project, alternatives considered, environmental impact, project costs, and associated user charge impact. The Public hearing must not be held until after the end of the 30-day agency review referenced in #2 above and after the environmental assessment is prepared. Public notice must be made at least 30 days prior to the hearing and must be published by the Recipient at least once per week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general weekly circulation or published three consecutive days in a paper of general daily circulation in the service area involved in the project. A Public Notice Verification Sheet must be completed by the newspaper, submitted to the recipient, with two copies to the funding agency representative. The Environmental Assessment must be made available for public review prior to the hearing. A record of the hearing proceedings shall be kept.
5. The Recipient must provide the funding agency representative with two copies of the environmental assessment, and two copies each of all review agency transmittal letters and all comments received from the appropriate agencies as well as two copies of the notices of the public hearing and the public hearing records. The comments provided must be addressed, with any project changes made as deemed appropriate, based on environmental effects, monetary and other resource costs, and overall feasibility and reliability. The recipient will provide USDA-Rural Development with two copies of all documents when USDA-Rural Development is a funding agency for the project.
6. The funding agency will review the submittal from the loan recipient and determine whether a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) should be issued. If the environmental assessment indicates that a significant environmental impact may occur and that the impact cannot be mitigated through changes in the project, then an Environmental Impact Statement must be prepared. Steps for preparing an Environmental Impact Statement will be provided to the Recipient once an EIS determination is made. Otherwise, the funding agency will prepare and issue the FONSI. On projects funded by the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (VDHCD), VDHCD will issue a written concurrence with the FONSI prepared by the recipient.
7. The FONSI will be forwarded to the Recipient for publishing locally and in an appropriate newspaper of general circulation in the area in which the project is to be built. The FONSI must be noticed for a minimum period of 30 days and must be published by the Recipient at least once per week for two consecutive weeks in a newspaper of general weekly circulation or published three consecutive days in a paper of general daily circulation in the service area involved in the project. A sample FONSI Notice is shown in Exhibit B. The funding agency representative must be provided with two copies of the Public Notice Verification Sheet signed by the newspaper in which the notice was published. If no significant adverse comments are received from the public, the funding agency will issue a clearance letter completing the environmental review.

Funding Agencies' Environmental Review Contacts:

VDH-Office of Drinking Water

Mr. Matt Beyer
Program Support Technician
131 Walker Street
Lexington, VA 24450
Phone: (540) 463-0406
Email: matt.beyer@vdh.virginia.gov

Mr. Keith Kornegay
Project Team Leader
131 Walker St.
Lexington, VA 24450
Phone: (540) 463-0420
Email: keith.kornegay@vdh.virginia.gov

Mr. Anthony Hess
Project Manager
131 Walker St.
Lexington, VA 24450
Phone: (540) 463-0419
Email: anthony.hess@vdh.virginia.gov

Mr. Jack Hinshelwood
Project Engineer
407 E. Main St., Ste. 2
Abingdon, VA 24210
Phone: (276) 525-6167
Email: jack.hinshelwood@vdh.virginia.gov

Mr. Brad Humphrey
Project Manager
407 E. Main St., Suite 2
Abingdon, VA 24210
Phone: (804) 337-7178
Email: brad.humphrey@vdh.virginia.gov

Ms. May Fornari
Project Manager
109 Governor Street, 6th Floor
Richmond, VA 23219
Phone (804) 584-8412
Email: may.fornari@vdh.virginia.gov

Ms. Tamara Anderson
Project Manager
211 Nor Dan Drive, Suite 1040
Danville, VA 24540
Phone: (804) 370-2439
Email: tamara.anderson@vdh.virginia.gov

USDA-Rural Development

Mr. James P. Warner
State Environmental /
Civil Rights Coordinator
140 Highland Drive, Suite 5
Lebanon, VA 24266
Phone: (276) 415-3518
Email: james.warner2@usda.gov

Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

Mr. Rodney Baker
Water Quality Section Supervisor
Division of Mined Land Reclamation
3405 Mountain Empire Road
Big Stone Gap, VA 24219
Phone: (276) 523-8159
Email: rodney.baker@dmme.virginia.gov

Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development

Mr. Matt Weaver, Associate Director of Community Development Policy
Community Development
600 East Main St, Suite 300
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Phone: (804) 371-7000
Email: matthew.weaver@dhcd.virginia.gov

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AGENCIES

The agencies listed below are typically involved in the environmental review. Project circumstances may be such that environmental review input may be needed from other agencies than those listed here. As an example, if important farmland is affected, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) would have to be contacted. NRCS can be contacted at www.va.nrcs.usda.gov/. On occasions, including when Abandoned Mine Land (AML) funds are part of the project funds, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) will need to participate in the environmental review.

1. **Department of Transportation**

Ms. Angel Deem, Division Administrator
Environmental Division
1201 East Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Phone: (804) 371-6756
Email: angel.deem@vdot.virginia.gov

2. **Department of Historic Resources**

Mr. Roger Kirchen, Director
2801 Kensington Avenue
Richmond, Virginia 23221
Phone: (804) 482-6091
Email: roger.kirchen@dhr.virginia.gov
Please submit all projects for review through ePIX at <https://epix.dhr.virginia.gov/>
Also send a cc: to:

Jenny Bellville-Marrion, Archaeologist
Phone: (804) 482-8091
Email: jennifer.bellville-marrion@dhr.virginia.gov

Adrienne Birge-Wilson, Architectural Historian
Phone: (804) 482-6092
Email: adrienne.birge-wilson@dhr.virginia.gov

3. **Virginia Marine Resources Commission**

Project review should be sent to the Environmental Engineer in the appropriate region (Figure 1)

Norfolk Area

Ms. Allison Lay
Phone: (757) 247-2254

Northern Virginia

Mr. Jay Woodward
Phone: (757) 247-8032

Southwest Virginia

Mr. Jeff Madden
Phone: (757) 247-2276

Southeast Virginia

Mr. Justin Worrell
Phone: (757) 247-8063

Central Virginia

Mr. Mark Eversole
Phone: (757) 247-8028

South Central Virginia

Mr. Mike Johnson
Phone: (757) 247-2255

East Central Virginia

Mr. Randy Owen
Phone: (757) 247-2251

4. **Local Wetlands Boards:** Contact Virginia Marine Resources Commission obtain the address and telephone number of the Local Wetlands Board
Phone: (757) 247-2252
Email: beth.howell@mrc.virginia.gov

5. **Department of Wildlife Resources**
Mr. Ray Fernald, Manager
Environmental Services
P.O. Box 90778,
Henrico, VA 23228
Phone: (804) 367-8364
Email: ray.fernald@dwr.virginia.gov
Attention: Amy Ewing or Ernie Aschenbach
Amy Ewing
Phone: (804) 367-2211
Email: amy.ewing@dwr.virginia.gov

Ernie Aschenbach
Phone: (804) 367-2733
Email: ernie.aschenbach@dwr.virginia.gov

6. **Department of Conservation and Recreation**
Ms. Robbie Rhur, Environmental Impact Review Coordinator
Recreational Planning
600 E Main St
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Phone: (804) 371-2594
Email: robbie.rhur@dcr.virginia.gov (electronic submittal preferred)

7. **U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, Norfolk District**
Mr. William T. (Tom) Walker, Regulatory Branch Chief
803 Front Street
Norfolk, Virginia 23510
Phone: (757) 647-9843
Email: William.T.Walker@usace.army.mil

8. **Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services**
Mr. Kevin Schmidt
Office of Policy, Planning and Research
P.O. Box 1163
Richmond, Virginia 23219
Phone: (804) 786-1346
Email: kevin.schmidt@vdacs.virginia.gov
CC: Dr. Jewel H. Bronaugh, Commissioner
Phone: (804) 786-3501
Email: jewel.bronaugh@vdacs.virginia.gov

9. The Virginia Coastal Resource Management Program is administered by the Virginia Marine Resources Commission. See #3 above for contact information

10. U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Mr. Troy Andersen, Supervisory Fish & Wildlife Biologist
Ecological Services, Virginia field office
6669 Short Lane
Gloucester, VA 23061
Phone: (804) 693-6694 ext. 2428
Email: troy_andersen@fws.gov
https://www.fws.gov/northeast/virginiafield/endangered/projectreviews_step1.html

11. Department of Environmental Quality

Document submission guidelines:
<https://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/EnvironmentalImpactReview/DocumentSubmissions.aspx>

Send one copy to the appropriate DEQ regional contact:

Southwest Regional Office

Mr. Michael Hutchinson
Department of Environmental Quality
355-A Deadmore St.
Abingdon, Virginia 24210
Phone: (276) 676-4800
Email: michael.hutchison@deq.virginia.gov

Northern Regional Office

13901 Crown Court
Woodbridge, VA 22193
Phone: (703) 583-3800
Email: eir@deq.virginia.gov

Blue Ridge Regional Office

Mr. Kevin A. Harlow
901 Russell Drive
Salem, Virginia 24153
Phone: (540) 562-6700
Email: kevin.harlow@deq.virginia.gov

Piedmont Regional Office

4949-A Cox Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060
Phone: (804) 527-5020
Email: eir@deq.virginia.gov

Valley Regional Office

Mr. Keith Fowler
4411 Early Road
P.O. Box 3000
Harrisonburg, Virginia 22801
Phone: (540) 574-7800
Email: keith.fowler@deq.virginia.gov

Tidewater Regional Office

5636 Southern Blvd.
Virginia Beach, VA 23462
Phone: (757) 518-2000
Email: eir@deq.virginia.gov

VMRC Environmental Engineer Territory Map

 Allison Lay 757-247-2254	 Justin Worrell 757-247-8063	 Randy Owen 757-247-2251
 Jay Woodward 757-247-8032	 Mark Eversole 757-247-8028	
 Jeff Madden 757-247-2276	 Mike Johnson 757-247-2255	

Independent Cities:

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1. Alexandria | 15. Fredericksburg | 29. Poquoson |
| 2. Bedford | 16. Galax | 30. Portsmouth |
| 3. Bristol | 17. Hampton | 31. Radford |
| 4. Buena Vista | 18. Harrisonburg | 32. Richmond |
| 5. Charlottesville | 19. Hopewell | 33. Roanoke |
| 6. Chesapeake | 20. Lexington | 34. Salem |
| 7. Clifton Forge | 21. Lynchburg | 35. Staunton |
| 8. Colonial Heights | 22. Manassas | 36. Suffolk |
| 9. Covington | 23. Manassas Park | 37. Virginia Beach |
| 10. Danville | 24. Martinsville | 38. Waynesboro |
| 11. Emporia | 25. Newport News | 39. Williamsburg |
| 12. Fairfax | 26. Norfolk | 40. Winchester |
| 13. Falls Church | 27. Norton | |
| 14. Franklin | 28. Petersburg | |

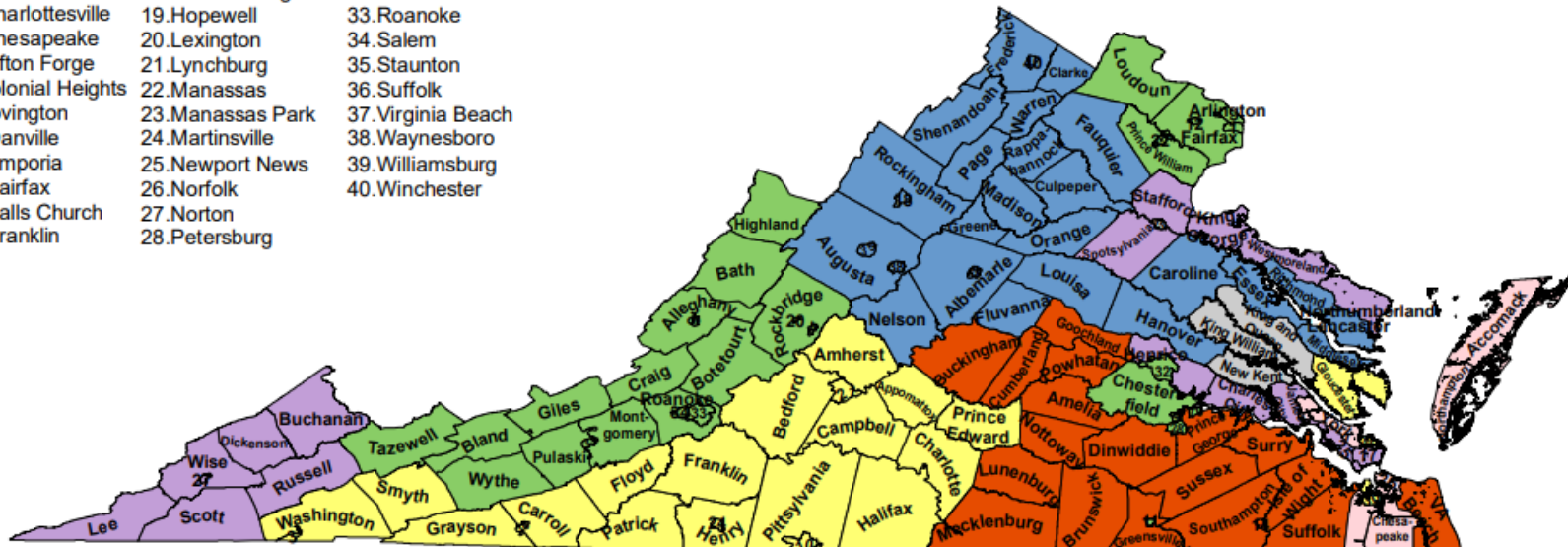


Exhibit A – Agency Correspondence for Information Gathering

Included in this exhibit are sample letters directed to a variety of Federal and State agencies that are normally contacted during the preparation of an ER. These examples are designed to provide guidance to the loan recipients in preparing information requests to environmental regulatory agencies. Individual letters should be tailored to the nature of the specific project and the issues involved. At times a briefer format may be reasonable, while in other instances a more detailed explanation may be necessary.

A.1 State Historic Preservation Officer Letter Concerning Cultural Resources

"The (Recipient's name) is in the process of performing an environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for the (appropriate funding agency) in order that it may assess the environmental impacts of (description of the project)¹ in (county), (State). The project is being proposed to (give a brief statement supporting project needs). Enclosed is a U.S. Geological Survey map(s) that depicts the proposed project's area of potential effect for all construction activities and a description of the work involved².

(Recipient's name) requests the assistance of your office in identifying historic properties that are listed or eligible for listing by on the National Register of Historic Places and that may be affected by the project. Please provide any recommendations you may have to mitigate or avoid these impacts, to properties that may be affected.

We would appreciate a response within 30 days. If you need any further information or wish to discuss the project, please contact (name) at (telephone number)."

¹Recipients could provide a complete project description as an attachment to this letter. In order for the SHPO to provide appropriate project reviews, the project descriptions submitted need to be explicit in the types and locations of all construction activities that are being proposed (see footnote 2).

²In order to expedite SHPO reviews, the recipient should submit maps of an appropriate scale that will show the proposed project's area of potential effect. These areas should cover all proposed construction including easements, staging areas, etc. Recipients should consider submitting photographs of these areas with letters.

A.2 U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or National Marine Fisheries Service Letter Concerning Endangered Species

"The (Recipient's name) is in the process of performing an environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for the (appropriate funding agency) in order that it may assess the environmental impacts of (description of the project)¹ in (county), (State). The project is being proposed to (give a brief statement supporting project needs). Enclosed is a U.S. Geological Survey map(s) that depicts the proposed project's area of potential effect for all construction activities and a description of the work involved.

The proposed project does not represent a "Major construction activity" as defined in 50 CFR 402.02. We request a list of any Federally listed or proposed threatened or endangered species and designated or proposed critical habitat that may be present in the project area. In addition, please advise us of any present concerns you may have related to possible effects of the project listed above on such species or critical habitat, as well as any other wildlife concerns.

We would appreciate a response within 30 days. If you need any further information or wish to discuss the project, please contact (name) at (telephone number)."

¹Recipients could provide a complete project description as an attachment to this letter. In order for the USFWS to provide appropriate project reviews, the project descriptions submitted need to be explicit in the types and locations of all construction activities that are being proposed.

A.3 Natural Resources Conservation Service (State or field office) Letter Concerning Important Farmland

"The (Recipient's name) is in the process of performing an environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for the (appropriate funding agency) in order that it may assess the environmental impacts of (description of the project)¹ in (county), (State). The project is being proposed to (give a brief statement supporting project needs). Enclosed is a U.S. Geological Survey map(s) that depicts the proposed project's construction activities and a description of the work involved.

We are requesting information on the possible effects of the proposed project on important farmland and prime rangeland and any recommendations you have to minimize or avoid these effects. We also seek your assessment of the compatibility of the proposed project with State and local government of any private programs and policies to protect important farmland.

We would appreciate a response within 30 days. If you need any further information or wish to discuss the project, please contact (name) at (telephone number)."

¹Recipients could provide a complete project description as an attachment to this letter. In order for NRCS to provide appropriate project reviews, the project descriptions submitted need to be explicit in the types and locations of all construction activities that are being proposed.

A.4 State Coastal Management Program Agency Letter Concerning Coastal Zone Management Issues

"The (Recipient's name) is in the process of performing an environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act for the (appropriate funding agency) in order that it may assess the environmental impacts of (description of the project)¹ in (county), (State). The project is being proposed to (give a brief statement supporting project needs). Enclosed is a U.S. Geological Survey map(s) that depicts the proposed project's construction activities and a description of the work involved.

Please advise us if the proposed project is within areas of the State's Coastal Management Program. If so, we request your review of this project so that you may assist us in ensuring that our construction activities will be consistent with program goals. Any other information you may wish to provide regarding environmental impacts of suggestions for mitigating impacts will be appreciated and taken into consideration.

We would appreciate a response within 30 days. If you need any further information or wish to discuss the project, please contact (name) at (telephone number)."

¹Applicants could provide a complete project description as an attachment to this letter. In order for the State CMP agency to provide appropriate project reviews, the project descriptions submitted need to be explicit in the types and locations of all construction activities that are being proposed.

Exhibit B – Finding of No Significant Impact Notice

The recipient shall publish a public notice informing the public of (the approval funding agency) determination of a FONSI for the proposed project.

Notice of a Finding of No Significant Impact

"The (funding agency) has received an application for financial assistance from (insert recipient's name). The proposed project consists of (itemize the project's construction activities and locations; include information regarding any conversion(s) of (insert issue¹).

As required by the National Environmental Policy Act, the (funding agency) has assessed the potential environmental effects of the proposed project and has determined that the proposal will not have a significant effect on the human environment and for which an Environment Impact Statement will not be prepared. The basis of this determination is (briefly summarize reasons). (Add if necessary) in order to avoid or minimize any adverse environmental impacts, the (funding agency) will require the applicant to incorporate the following mitigation measures into the proposed project's design (briefly summarize all proposed mitigation measures and locations). Prior to implementing construction, all applicable permits and approvals must be obtained.

Copies of the Environmental Assessment can be reviewed or obtained at (insert the funding agency office location and telephone number). For further information, please contact (insert the funding agency official's name and telephone number).

Any person interested in commenting on this FONSI may submit comments to the address above by (have newspaper insert date that is 15 days from the publication of this notice)."

¹Important Farmland, Wetland, Floodplain, or an "Adverse Effect to a Cultural Resource"