



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Highway
Administration**

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Memorandum

Subject: Environmental Impact Statement

Date: August 19, 1976

From: Federal Highway Administrator
Washington, D.C. 20590

Reply to
Attn. of: HRE-1

To: Regional Federal Highway Administrators
Regions 1-10

It would be timely in the process for the preparation of environmental impact statements (EIS's) that you assure evaluations are made to eliminate duplicate reviews and delays. Within the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) the overall processing of EIS's could be improved by the concentration of FHWA input into the EIS during its preparation at the State highway agency rather than through a series of detailed reviews at different operating levels at different times. This action should reduce the time needed by the division, region, Washington Office, and Office of the Secretary in the processing of draft and final EIS's.

The basic responsibility for conducting necessary studies and coordination of EIS's for highway projects rests with State highway agencies. They have the responsibility along with the FHWA for the preparation of the EIS. Court decisions and sound operational policy emphasize that this document must reflect the views of the FHWA, and to do this, the FHWA contribution must take place during the study and EIS preparation stage. It is, therefore, essential that the division offices work with State highway agencies during the preparation of EIS's to identify problem areas and to obtain at that time the assistance and input that is needed from the regional and Washington offices. This will assure you that the experience, technical know-how, and abilities at the division, region, and Washington Office levels are used to perfect the EIS during its preparation and not during a later processing review with separate timetables. Processing review discoveries necessitate late corrective action which causes undesirable project delays.

These efforts should not result in the regional or Washington Office input being eliminated, but in being used to the proper extent while the EIS is being prepared by the State so that when the EIS is submitted to the regional or Washington Office, it is not alien to it nor does it contain defects which proper cooperation with technical and legal offices at the EIS preparation stage would have eliminated.

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This effort does not eliminate later overall review by your office or review by the Washington Office or the Office of the Secretary to assure that the EIS is properly prepared, nor your responsibility to determine whether the EIS should be approved, but it should result in a more timely and better prepared EIS for your review and decision.

Norbert T. Tiemann