

§ 1794.53

best afford an opportunity for public involvement. Any person or representative of an organization, or government body desiring to make a statement at the meeting may make such statement in writing or orally. The format of the meeting may be one of two styles. It can either be of the traditional style which features formal presentations followed by a comment period, or the open house style in which attendees are able to individually obtain information on topics or issues of interest within an established time period. A transcript will be made of the scoping meeting.

(e) As soon as practicable after the scoping meeting(s), RUS, as lead agency, shall determine the significant issues to be analyzed in depth and identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review. RUS will develop a proposed scope for further environmental study and review. RUS shall send a copy of this proposed scope to cooperating agencies and the applicant, and allow recipients 30 days to comment on the scope's adequacy and emphasis. After expiration of the 30-day period, RUS shall provide written guidance to the applicant concerning the scope of environmental study to be performed and information to be gathered.

§ 1794.53 Environmental analysis.

(a) After scoping procedures have been completed, RUS shall require the applicant to develop and submit an EVAL. The EVAL shall be prepared under the supervision and guidance of RUS staff and RUS shall evaluate and be responsible for the accuracy of all information contained therein.

(b) The EVAL will normally serve as the RUS EA. The EVAL can also serve as the basis for an EIS, and under such circumstances will be made an appendix to the EIS. After RUS has reviewed and found the EVAL to be satisfactory, the applicant shall provide RUS with a sufficient number of copies of the EVAL to satisfy the RUS distribution plan.

(c) The EVAL shall include a summary of the construction and operation monitoring and mitigation measures

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for the proposed action. These measures may be revised as appropriate in response to comments and other information, and shall be incorporated by summary or reference into the FONSI or ROD.

§ 1794.54 Agency determination.

Following the scoping process and the development of a satisfactory EA, RUS shall determine whether the proposed action is a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment. If RUS determines the action is significant, RUS will continue with the procedures in subpart G of this part. If RUS determines the action is not significant, RUS will proceed in accordance with §§ 1794.42 through 1794.44.

§§ 1794.55-1794.59 [Reserved]

Subpart G—Procedure for Environmental Impact Statements

§ 1794.60 Normal sequence.

For proposed actions requiring an EIS (see §1794.25), the NEPA process shall proceed in the same manner as for proposed actions requiring an EA with scoping through the point at which the scoping process is completed (see §1794.52).

§ 1794.61 Environmental impact statement.

(a) *General.* An EIS shall be prepared in accordance with 40 CFR part 1502. Funding, in whole or in part, for an EIS can be obtained from any lawful source (*e.g.*, cooperative agreements developed in accordance with Section 759A, Federal Agricultural Improvement and Reform Act of 1996, Pub. L. 104-127 and 31 U.S.C. 6301). A third-party consultant selected by RUS and funded by the applicant (7 CFR part 1789) may prepare the EIS.

(1) After a draft or final EIS has been prepared, RUS and the applicant shall concurrently have a notice of availability for the document published. The time period allowed for review will be a minimum of 45 days for a draft EIS and 30 days for a final EIS. This period is measured from the date that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) publishes a notice in the