

§ 137.286 Do Self-Governance Tribes become Federal agencies when they assume these Federal environmental responsibilities?

No, while Self-Governance Tribes are required to assume Federal environmental responsibilities for projects in place of the Secretary, Self-Governance Tribes do not thereby become Federal agencies. However, because Self-Governance Tribes are assuming the responsibilities of the Secretary for the purposes of performing these Federal environmental responsibilities, Self-Governance Tribes will be considered the equivalent of Federal agencies for certain purposes as set forth in this subpart.

§ 137.287 What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

The NEPA is a procedural law that requires Federal agencies to follow established environmental review procedures, which include reviewing and documenting the environmental impact of their actions. NEPA establishes a comprehensive policy for protection and enhancement of the environment by the Federal Government; creates the Council on Environmental Quality in the Office of the President; and directs Federal agencies to carry out the policies and procedures of the Act. CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500–1508) establish three levels of environmental review: categorical exclusions, environmental assessments, and environmental impact statements.

§ 137.288 What is the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)?

The NHPA requires Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings, such as construction projects, on properties covered by the NHPA, such as historic properties, properties eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, or properties that an Indian Tribe regards as having religious and/or cultural importance. Section 106 of the NHPA [16 U.S.C. 470f] requires Federal agencies to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, acting through the SHPO or the THPO, a reasonable opportunity to comment on such undertakings.

§ 137.289 What is a Federal undertaking under NHPA?

The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation has defined a Federal undertaking in 36 CFR 800.16(y) as a project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a Federal agency, including those carried out by or on behalf of a Federal agency; those carried out with Federal financial assistance; those requiring a Federal permit, license or approval; and those subject to State or local regulation administered pursuant to a delegation or approval by a Federal agency.

§ 137.290 What additional provisions of law are related to NEPA and NHPA?

(a) Depending upon the nature and the location of the construction project, environmental laws related to NEPA and NHPA may include:

- (1) Archaeological and Historical Data Preservation Act [16 U.S.C. 469];
- (2) Archeological Resources Protection Act [16 U.S.C. 470aa];
- (3) Clean Air Act [42 U.S.C. 7401];
- (4) Clean Water Act [33 U.S.C. 1251];
- (5) Coastal Barrier Improvement Act [42 U.S.C. 4028 and 16 U.S.C. Sec. 3501];
- (6) Coastal Barrier Resources Act [16 U.S.C. 3501];
- (7) Coastal Zone Management Act [16 U.S.C. 1451];
- (8) Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act [42 U.S.C. 9601];
- (9) Endangered Species Act [16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*];
- (10) Farmland Protection Policy Act [7 U.S.C. 4201 *et seq.*];
- (11) Marine Protection, Research, and Sanctuaries Act [33 U.S.C. 1401–1445; 16 U.S.C. 1431–1447F; 33 U.S.C. 2801–2805];
- (12) National Historic Preservation Act [16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq.*];
- (13) National Trails System Act [16 U.S.C. 1241];
- (14) Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act [25 U.S.C. 3001];
- (15) Noise Control Act [42 U.S.C. 4901];
- (16) Resource Conservation and Recovery Act [42 U.S.C. 6901];
- (17) Safe Drinking Water Act [42 U.S.C. 300F];

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(18) Toxic Substance Control Act [15 U.S.C. 2601];

(19) Wild and Scenic Rivers Act [16 U.S.C. 1271]; and

(20) Wilderness Act [16 U.S.C. 1131].

(b) This section provides a list of environmental laws for informational purposes only and does not create any legal rights or remedies, or imply private rights of action.

§ 137.291 May Self-Governance Tribes carry out construction projects without assuming these Federal environmental responsibilities?

Yes, but not under section 509 of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-8]. Self-Governance Tribes may otherwise elect to perform construction projects, or phases of construction projects, under other legal authorities (see § 137.272).

§ 137.292 How do Self-Governance Tribes assume environmental responsibilities for construction projects under section 509 of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-8]?

Self-Governance Tribes assume environmental responsibilities by:

(a) Adopting a resolution or taking an equivalent Tribal action which:

(1) Designates a certifying officer to represent the Self-Governance Tribe and to assume the status of a responsible Federal official under NEPA, NHPA, and related provisions of law; and

(2) Accepts the jurisdiction of the Federal court, as provided in § 137.310 and § 137.311 for purposes of enforcement of the Federal environmental responsibilities assumed by the Self-Governance Tribe; and

(b) Entering into a construction project agreement under section 509 of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-8].

§ 137.293 Are Self-Governance Tribes required to adopt a separate resolution or take equivalent Tribal action to assume environmental responsibilities for each construction project agreement?

No, the Self-Governance Tribe may adopt a single resolution or take equivalent Tribal action to assume environmental responsibilities for a single project, multiple projects, a class of projects, or all projects performed

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under section 509 of the Act [25 U.S.C. 458aaa-8].

§ 137.294 What is the typical IHS environmental review process for construction projects?

(a) Most IHS construction projects normally do not have a significant impact on the environment, and therefore do not require environmental impact statements (EIS). Under current IHS procedures, an environmental review is performed on all construction projects. During the IHS environmental review process, the following activities may occur:

(1) Consult with appropriate Tribal, Federal, state, and local officials and interested parties on potential environmental effects;

(2) Document assessment of potential environmental effects; (IHS has developed a form to facilitate this process.)

(3) Perform necessary environmental surveys and inventories;

(4) Consult with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, acting through the SHPO or THPO, to ensure compliance with the NHPA;

(5) Determine if extraordinary or exceptional circumstances exist that would prevent the project from meeting the criteria for categorical exclusion from further environmental review under NEPA, or if an environmental assessment is required;

(6) Obtain environmental permits and approvals; and

(7) Identify methods to avoid or mitigate potential adverse effects;

(b) This section is for informational purposes only and does not create any legal rights or remedies, or imply private rights of action.

§ 137.295 May Self-Governance Tribes elect to develop their own environmental review process?

Yes, Self-Governance Tribes may develop their own environmental review process or adopt the procedures of the IHS or the procedures of another Federal agency.

§ 137.296 How does a Self-Governance Tribe comply with NEPA and NHPA?

Self-Governance Tribes comply with NEPA and the NHPA by adopting and following: