



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

January 9, 2017

Lois J. Schiffer
General Counsel
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., NW, Room 78032
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Ms. Schiffer:

Thank you for consulting with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) on the revision of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) implementing procedures for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). The CEQ regulations provide that agencies, in consultation with CEQ, develop agency specific procedures to implement NEPA and revise them as necessary to ensure full compliance with the purposes and provisions of NEPA (40 C.F.R. § 1507.3).

The consultation with CEQ on the NOAA NEPA implementing procedures took into consideration public comments received in response to the publication of the proposed implementing procedures. With respect to the categorical exclusions, NOAA has considered the potential environmental impacts of the activities covered by these categorical exclusions, requested and considered public comments on the proposed categorical exclusions, and determined that the categorical exclusions set forth in the proposed NEPA implementing procedures would not normally, either individually or cumulatively, have a significant effect on the human environment and therefore would not require additional NEPA analysis and documentation unless extraordinary circumstances exist (40 C.F.R. § 1508.4).

Based on this consultation, CEQ concludes that establishing the revised NOAA NEPA implementing regulation is in conformity with NEPA and the CEQ regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA. The new procedures will be effective upon publication of a notice of availability in the Federal Register. This notice serves to notify the public that NOAA has finalized revisions to the agency's procedures for implementing NEPA and related authorities, as contained in the Companion Manual to NOAA Administrative Order NAO 216-6A.

Thank you for your responsiveness to our comments and recommendations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. A. Boling', written in a cursive style.

Edward A. Boling
Associate Director for NEPA