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Broadband Technology Opportunities Program

Applicant Guidance for Preparing the Environmental Questionnaire and U.S. Department of Commerce Environmental Checklist for the BTOP and BIP Program

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Prepared for:

National Telecommunications and Information Administration

**Broadband Technology Opportunities Program
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1 Environmental Review Requirements

All projects funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), and all other applicable federal, state, and local environmental laws. In accordance with the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) implementing regulations for NEPA (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 1500), all federal agencies must independently review and assess each action's potential to impact the human environment, including cultural resources and historic properties. As part of the environmental review process for the U.S. Department of Commerce's (DOC's) National Telecommunications and Information Administration's (NTIA) Broadband Technology Opportunity Program (BTOP) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) Rural Utilities Service's (RUS) Broadband Initiatives Program (BIP), applicants must prepare and submit appropriate environmental information so that the agency can take into account the full scope and environmental impact of any project undertaken or funded by the agency.

In accordance with NEPA, federal agencies must evaluate the environmental impacts associated with their programs and projects. The most pertinent issues for the BTOP/BIP programs include the potential to adversely affect or convert wetlands, floodplains, threatened and endangered species, migratory birds and bats, historic properties, and archeological sites.

In accordance with Section 106 of the NHPA, federal agencies must take into account effects of an undertaking (defined as a project, activity, or program funded in whole or in part under the direct or indirect jurisdiction of a federal agency) on historic properties and afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) an opportunity to comment prior to approval of the undertaking. Section 106 is implemented through regulations, including "Protection of Historic Properties" (36 CFR 800) promulgated by the ACHP. In accordance with 36 CFR 800.2 (c) (4), RUS and NTIA have delegated to their applicants the authority to initiate the Section 106 review process with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Federal agencies cannot delegate to applicants their Section 106 responsibilities for government-to-government consultation with federally recognized Indian tribes.

In order for NTIA and RUS to fulfill the necessary NEPA and Section 106 requirements, applicants seeking funding under Broadband Infrastructure (Infrastructure), Public Computer Centers (PCC), and Sustainable Broadband Adoption (SBA) projects that include a construction component must prepare and submit an Environmental Questionnaire (EQ) (included in the Broadband Infrastructure Application, page 36, and this document, Section 3.1). Applicants seeking funding for PCC and SBA projects that do not include construction must submit a DOC Environmental Checklist (included in the PCC Application, page 13; the SBA Application, page 14; and this document, Section 4.1). The EQ and DOC Environmental Checklist are required for NTIA/RUS to identify the potential environmental impacts of the proposed projects and determine the level of environmental review required to comply with NEPA/Section 106 requirements. NTIA and RUS will review the submitted information and may follow up as necessary with applicants concerning any questions, unresolved issues, and other concerns, to complete the NEPA/Section 106 review process.





2 Application Process

Before submitting an application, applicants are encouraged to read the Grant Guidelines and the Environmental Review Process Helpful Tips and become familiar with the requirements of NEPA. All of these materials are available at www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa. Applicants should also review the list of classes of actions in NTIA/RUS environmental policies and procedures: see DOC categorical exclusions and BTOP categorical exclusions (described in further detail below and included in Appendix 1 and 2) and RUS's 7 CFR 1794. A large volume of applications from highly qualified entities are anticipated and, in order to be competitive, applicants should ensure that all application materials and responses are complete and that adequate information is provided to NTIA and RUS.

2.1 Step One

All BTOP/BIP applications must go through a two-step process. In Step One, an independent review of applications will be conducted. The most highly qualified applicants will be asked to complete Step Two.

2.2 Step Two

In Step Two of the review process, the qualifying applicants will be asked to submit additional information. For Infrastructure projects, an EQ must be completed and submitted (See Section 3.1). The qualifying applicant should submit the EQ within ten days and in no event, more than thirty (30) days, after notification that the applicant has qualified for Step Two.

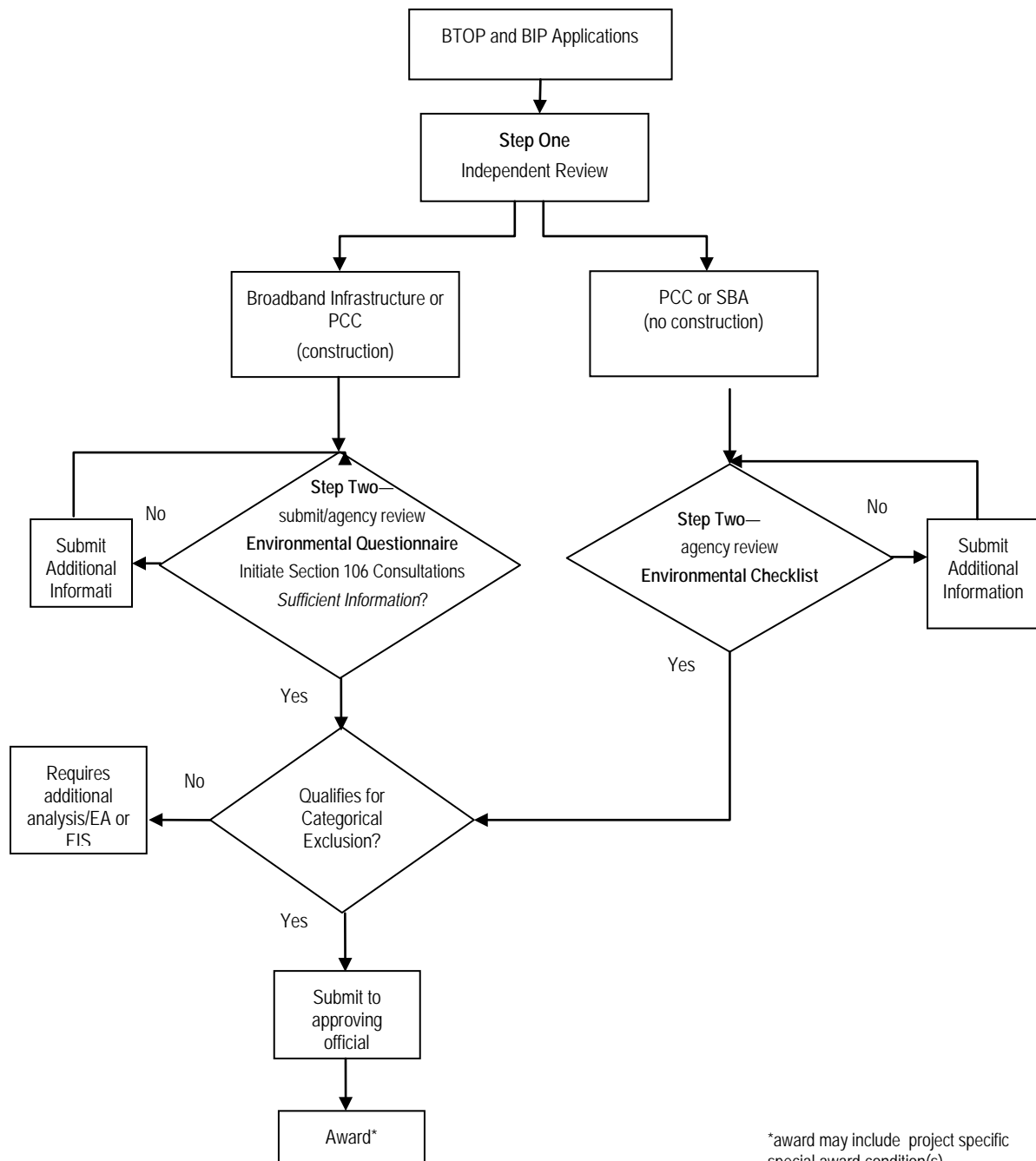
For PCC and SBA projects, a completed DOC Environmental Checklist is required to be included with the application (See Section 4.1). If the review of the application and checklist indicates construction or renovation activities, then the applicant may be asked to submit a completed EQ.

NTIA and RUS will evaluate the information provided, may request additional information, and will make any necessary environmental determinations.





2.3 Environmental and Historic Preservation Review Flowchart for Round One Funding





2.4 U.S. Department of Commerce and Broadband Technology Opportunities Program Categorical Exclusions

Categorical exclusions apply to types of activities identified by an agency that typically do not individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the environment. However, these types of activities still require the agency to ensure that there are no "extraordinary circumstances" that would preclude the applicability of a categorical exclusion, and that other environmental related requirements are followed, such as Section 106 of the NHPA and the Endangered Species Act. Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 includes the list of eligible BTOP- and DOC-wide categorical exclusions.

If a project does not fall within one or more of the approved categorical exclusions, then additional environmental documentation may be required (See Environmental Review Flowchart for Round One Funding). Successful completion of the EQ, including supporting documents, will assist reviewers in evaluating the provided information and will expedite the approval process. If, after submitting additional documentation, it is determined that the project does not qualify for a categorical exclusion, then an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) may be required. Given the short timeframe for implementing projects under the ARRA, projects requiring an EA or EIS may not be able to be completed in time to meet the funding deadlines. Thus, applicants should take care to provide complete, accurate, and timely responses in the EQ.

Please be aware that it is not permitted to split up a project that may require an EA into multiple, smaller projects that may each be eligible for categorical exclusions. This practice is referred to as *segmentation* and is a violation of the CEO's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (40 CFR 1502.4(a)).





3 Broadband Infrastructure

Infrastructure projects are intended to deliver broadband access to areas that are not served or have insufficient resources (in the case of BTOP) or to rural areas (in the case of BIP) of the United States.

3.1 Environmental Questionnaire

For all projects that include construction or ground disturbance, the EQ and all supporting materials must be submitted within ten (10) days and no more than thirty (30) days of being notified that the applicant has qualified for Step Two. Applicants are encouraged to submit materials prior to the deadline in order to expedite review and processing.

Applications with deficiencies and issues that cannot be resolved in a timely manner may be unable to meet the NTIA and RUS dates for grant award announcements.

When additional information is required that is expected to be available within a reasonable amount of time, then awards may be made that include project-specific special award conditions that may have to be satisfied before funds are made available to the applicant. In such cases where funding is withheld, the applicant may request management and administration funds to support the collection of additional information and completion of required reviews.

i. Project Description: Describe all project-related construction activities, including, but not limited to building construction related to installing prefabricated buildings; internal modifications, or equipment additions to buildings or other structures (e.g., relocating interior walls or adding computer facilities); the construction and installation of buried cable; or installation of telecommunications transmission facilities including construction of new monopole towers, satellite dishes. Complete descriptions must be provided for each site affected by project-related construction activities.

To avoid delays in the review, this description must accurately discuss all of the construction related activities proposed in the application.

ii. Map: Include a map for each site affected by construction (recommend U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 7.5-minute quadrangle maps at a map scale of 1:24,000; larger scale maps may be provided for site-specific proposals). USGS maps may be obtained and purchased at the following website: <http://www.usgs.gov/pubprod/maps.html>. If appropriate, photographs or aerial photographs of site-specific proposals may be provided.

If possible, locations of all proposed activities must be indicated on each map submitted. If specific locations of project components are unknown, then proposed service area territories must be delineated on any map(s) created. The map is required to verify locations of the proposed construction activities or service territories and will assist the agencies in making determinations. More than one map may be necessary in order to convey the information required to facilitate the review.

On the map provided in response to **item ii**, in the EQ, show the following:

- a) The footprint of any construction and identify the surrounding area that would be disturbed (from EQ **items i, iii, and iv**)





- b) Rights-of way, easements, or other land encumbrances in the vicinity of the project, public lands, any nearby wildlife refuge, wild and scenic river, migratory bird flyway, tribal lands, or parks and recreational areas (includes information from EQ *item iii*)
- c) Wetland designations in the vicinity of the project (potentially affected) taken from Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) National Wetland Inventory maps (from EQ *item v.*)
- d) Critical habitat areas in the vicinity of the project (potentially affected) as specified by the FWS (from EQ *item vi*)
- e) One hundred and five hundred year floodplains as designated by Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (from EQ *item vii.*)
- f) The location of any protected lands (from EQ *item viii.*)
- g) Coastal zone management areas (from EQ *item ix.*)
- h) Brownfield sites (from EQ *item x.*)

iii. Property Changes: Describe and indicate the amount of property to be cleared, excavated, fenced, or otherwise disturbed by the project and describe the current land use and zoning for each project site affected by construction including whether the project is proposed to be located on public land owned or managed by the federal government.

For projects on federal or state land, the applicant must provide information on whether the project is consistent with federal or state land management plans.

iv. Buildings: Describe buildings or other structures (i.e., transmission facilities), including dimensions, to be constructed or modified. For linear projects, state whether the project is to be located on or within previously disturbed public rights-of-way.

For buildings or structures that are listed or are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, please see EQ *item viii*. For all other buildings or structures, applicants should provide accurate dimensions and complete descriptions of proposed construction and/or modifications.

v. Wetlands: Describe and indicate whether wetlands are present on or near the project site(s) affected by construction (maps of wetlands may be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory website: <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/> or from soil maps obtained from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS's) Web site: <http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/HomePage.htm>).

If a project occurs in or near a wetland, then the applicant should provide additional information, such as whether any permits or correspondence with US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) or other responsible federal agencies have been obtained. In many cases this may be in the form of a letter from the USACE or another federal agency responsible for oversight. Applicants cannot self-certify that there are no wetlands. Regulatory agencies should be contacted and written determinations should be submitted as part of the EQ response.





vi. Critical Habitats: Describe and indicate whether any project site(s) include or are near critical habitats or will affect any threatened, endangered or candidate species. Applicants must provide species lists and appropriate species accounts obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory website: http://ecos.fws.gov/tess_public/ for each county affected by construction of the project.

In addition to the link provided above, it may be useful for applicants to visit the [FWS Webpage](#) in order to find the list of species by county. If a threatened or endangered species is listed in the area of the proposed project, then the FWS should be contacted, and this correspondence should be part of the materials submitted for the EQ.

vii. Floodplains: Describe whether or not any facility(ies) or site(s) are located within a 100 or 500-year floodplain. Information related to floodplains and National Flood Insurance Maps may be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wetland Inventory website: <http://www.msc.fema.gov/webapp/wcs/storeservlet/CategoryDisplay?catalogId=10001&storeId=10001&categoryId=12001&langId=-1&usertype=G&type=1>. If any project-related construction activities are within floodplains, a copy of the FEMA, "FIRMette" with construction activities depicted on the map must be included. For obtaining FIRMettes review the tutorial provided by FEMA.

The FEMA link provided in the EQ is no longer functional. Applicants should instead visit the following site to obtain a FEMA floodplain map. A FIRMette is a full-scale section of a FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) that applicants can create online and are formatted to fit on printers commonly found in offices. There is no cost for creating a FIRMette. Buildings or habitable structures within the 100- or 500-year floodplain must demonstrate compliance with local floodplain ordinances.

viii. Protected Lands: Describe any cultural resources, including historic properties, i.e., properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, which are located in or within a one-mile radius of the project area and how they may be impacted by the project. Information related to historic properties can be obtained from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) in your respective State - see the website of the National Conference of SHPO: <http://www.ncshpo.org/find/index.htm> or from the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) when tribal lands are involved. Applicants must gather information about the nature and location of these properties from the SHPO. SHPOs should be asked the following questions:

1. Is the proposed project located on, within or adjacent to any properties listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places? Is the proposed project located on, within or adjacent to a National Historic Landmark? If the answer is yes, describe and indicate the geographic relationship between the project and property with maps.
2. Will the proposed project impact, use or alter a building or structure that was constructed more than 50 years ago? If so, describe the building/structure with a statement of its condition, including photographs, and document its age.
3. Is any portion of the project located on tribal lands, meaning lands within the exterior boundaries of any Indian reservation and all dependent Indian communities?
4. Applicants must provide SHOP/THPO responses/information to these questions including any correspondence with the SHPO/THPO, as applicable.





Applications must record the actions taken by the applicant to respond to this question and the information gathered. At the initiation of Step Two, applicants must contact the appropriate State Historical Preservation Officer/Tribal Historical Preservation Officer (SHPO/THPO) as soon as possible. It can take up to thirty (30) days to receive a response.

Any and all responses or comments received from the SHPO/THPO must be submitted with the EQ. RUS and NTIA will evaluate the submitted information in order to determine how to conclude the Section 106 review. If the SHPO/THPO is not forthcoming with information, then the applicant should state this fact in their response, including the date when the SHPO/THPO was contacted.

ix. Coastal Areas: *Determine whether or not the project is within the boundaries of a coastal zone management area (CZMA). For boundary related and contact information related to CZMA, see National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management's website: <http://coastalmanagement.noaa.gov/consistency/welcome.html>*

State coastal zone management (CZM) programs that have received approval from NOAA may review any proposed federal assistance to a state or local government entity for an activity that is listed in the management program as a type of activity that will have a reasonably foreseeable effect on any coastal use or resource and will occur within the coastal zone (see 15 CFR 930.95(a)) or within a described geographic area outside of the coastal zone (see 15 CFR 930.95(b)). The applicant agency shall provide to the state CZM office a brief evaluation on the relationship of the proposed activity and any reasonably foreseeable coastal effects to the enforceable policies of the management program, in addition to the federal application. These requirements only apply to Catalogue of Domestic Assistance funds, specifically listed by state for consistency review. Applicants should consult with the state as to whether these funds are listed for review.

At that time, if the state agency responsible for Federal Consistency reviews intends to review the activity, then it that agency obligated to notify the applicant and NTIA or RUS. In this instance, NTIA/RUS will not approve the release of federal funds until the state agency completes the Federal Consistency review and concurs that the activity is consistent with the enforceable policies of the state's Coastal Management Program.

x. Brownfields: *Determine whether the project is located within a brownfield site. Per 42 U.S.C. 9601, the term "brownfield site" means real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. Maps and locations of sites, facilities and properties that have been contaminated by hazardous materials and are being, or have been, cleaned up under EPA's Superfund, RCRA and/or brownfields cleanup programs can be found at the following website: <http://iaspub.epa.gov/Cleanups/>.*

If a proposed project is located within a brownfield site, then the applicant should contact the state regulatory authority for hazardous waste contamination issues to determine whether there are any restrictions or regulations regarding development of the site. If there are restrictions, then the applicant should provide that information in the application along with an analysis of how any such restriction could affect the proposed construction, including any potential mitigation measures that the state or EPA recommend.





Note: The applicant may submit a copy of any environmental review document that has been prepared in connection with obtaining permits, approvals, or other financing for the proposed project from State, local or other federal bodies. Such material, to the extent relevant, may be used to meet the requirements herein.

If an applicant has already addressed many of the questions in the EQ in a separate environmental review document, then that document may be submitted and used to meet the requirements. However, any questions in the EQ that are not specifically addressed in the environmental review document must be addressed separately and submitted to NTIA/RUS.





4 Public Computer Centers and Sustainable Broadband Adoption

Applicants with PCC and SBA projects were required to complete and submit with their applications using the DOC Environmental Checklist (See Section 4.1 below). The DOC Environmental Checklist is included on page 13-14 of the Public Computer Center Application and on page 14-15 of the Sustainable Broadband Adoption Application. Since projects in these categories do not include construction or ground disturbance, the DOC Environmental Checklist contains fewer questions to expedite the review process in compliance with NEPA, Section 106, and other environmental laws. If, upon review of the application and checklist, it is determined that any construction or renovation activities may have impacts that need to be better understood, then the applicant will be asked to complete and submit the EQ in no later than thirty (30) days (See Section 3.1 above).

4.1 U.S. Department of Commerce Environmental Checklist

41. SECTION 1-*To be completed for those projects historically shown not to create significant environmental impacts to the human or natural environment. Any answer of "No" or "Unknown" may require additional documentation or review.*

a. Is the proposed action solely a procurement action for materials intended to be installed, stored or operated in an existing building or structure?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

b. If the proposed action involves procurement of electronic equipment, will the equipment be disposed of in an environmentally sound manner at the end of its useful life?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

c. Does the proposed action involve only minor interior renovations to a structure, facility, or installation?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable

d. Is the proposed action solely for the production and/or distribution of informational materials, brochures, or newsletters?

- Yes
- No
- Not Applicable





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Applicants should check responses on the Environmental Checklist with either a "Yes," "No," or "Not Applicable". A "No" or "Not Applicable" response must be accompanied with an explanation or additional information. Responses must be consistent with the project description provided in the rest of the application. Any inconsistencies between responses and the project description may require additional information. If additional information is requested, then applicants will be given seven (7) days to respond. Those questions not relevant should be checked "Not Applicable."





5 Resources

Should you have any questions, or need advice or help in understanding and complying with the BTOP or BIP environmental review process, feel free to contact NTIA or RUS.

NTIA	RUS
Frank Monteferrante NEPA Environmental Specialist Broadband Technology Grant Program 1401 Constitution Avenue, N.W., Suite 4228 Washington, D.C. 20230 Phone: 202-482-4208 Fax: 202-482-0995 Email: FMonteferrante@ntia.doc.gov	Mark S. Plank, Director Engineering and Environmental Staff Water and Environmental Programs Rural Utilities Service 1400 Independent Ave, SW Mail Stop 1571, Room 2242 Washington, DC 20250 Phone 202-720-1649 Fax: 202-690-0649

List of Internet Environmental and Historic Preservation Resources:

Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) for guidance on the Section 106 review:

www.achp.gov/

Bureau of Land Management's (BLM's) Web site, (U.S. Department of the Interior [DOI]) for issues related to government managed lands:

www.blm.gov/wo/st/en.html

CEQ's Web site for guidance on NEPA issues:

www.whitehouse.gov/ceq/

CEQ's NEPA site, NEPANet for guidance and information concerning environmental review process:

www.nepa.gov/nepa/nepanet.htm

US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) Web site for general regulatory environmental information:

www.epa.gov/

EPA's NEPA compliance Web site:

www.epa.gov/Compliance/nepa/epacompliance/index.html

EPA Regional Office Contacts:

www.epa.gov/epahome/regions.htm

FEMA's Regional Offices for regional information related to flood plain development issues:

www.fema.gov/about/contact/regions.shtm

Local Emergency Planning Committee Database Web site (for hazardous materials):

<http://yosemite.epa.gov/oswer/lepddb.nsf/HomePage>





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National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers' (NATHPO's) Web site:

http://www.nathpo.org/THPO/state_list.htm

National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers' (NCSHPO's) contact information:

www.ncshpo.org/stateinfolist/fulllist.htm

National Register of Historic Places Web site:

www.nps.gov/nr/

NTIA BTOP:

www.ntia.doc.gov/broadbandusa

NEPA statute:

<http://www.nepa.gov/nepa/regs/nepa/nepaegia.htm>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Coastal Zone Management Program for information on coastal development issues:

<http://oceanservice.noaa.gov/topics/coasts/management/welcome.html>

USDA's Web site:

www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome

USDA's National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Web site:

www.nrcs.usda.gov/

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Web site (U.S. DOI) for issues related to Endangered Species:

www.fws.gov/

U.S. Forest Service (USDA) for Issues Related to Projects on Forest Service Managed areas:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/publications/>

USACE Wetlands Information:

<http://www.wetlands.com/regs/1pge02c.htm>

USACE Wetlands Delineation Manual:

<http://www.wetlands.com/regs/1pge02e.htm>

USDA RUS Environmental Review Information:

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/pdf/1794.pdf>

<http://www.usda.gov/rus/water/ees/pdf/1794A-603.pdf>





6 Appendix 1: Broadband Technology Opportunities Program Eligible Categorical Exclusions

A. General administrative actions:

Certain types of actions undertaken by BTOP will not normally require the completion of the BTOP/BIP NEPA Environmental Questionnaire. These categorically excluded proposals are:

- A.1: The issuance of bulletins and information publications that do not concern environmental matters or substantial facility design, construction, or maintenance practices.
- A.2: Procurement activities related to the operation of BTOP.
- A.3: Personnel and Administrative Actions.
- A.4: Purchase of existing facilities or a portion thereof where use or operation will remain unchanged.
- A.5: Internal modifications or equipment additions (*e.g.*, computer facilities, relocating interior walls) to structures or buildings.

B. Broadband Activities:

Applications for financial assistance for the types of proposed actions covered in this section require the submission of an Environmental Questionnaire. Applicants shall sufficiently identify all proposed actions so their proper classification can be determined. Detailed descriptions shall be provided for each proposal noted in this section. BTOP may require additional information in addition to a description of what is being proposed, to ensure that proposals are properly classified. Proposed actions within this classification are:

- B.1: Construction of buried and aerial telecommunications lines, cables, and related facilities.
- B.2: Construction of microwave facilities involving no more than five acres (2 hectares) of physical disturbance at any single site.
- B.3: Construction of cooperative or company headquarters, maintenance facilities, or other buildings involving no more than 10 acres (4 hectares) of physical disturbance or fenced property.
- B.4: Changes to existing transmission lines that involve less than 20 percent pole replacement, or the complete rebuilding of existing distribution lines within the same right of way. Changes to existing transmission lines that require 20 percent or greater pole replacement will be considered the same as new construction.
- B.5: Changes or additions to existing substations, switching stations, telecommunications switching or multiplexing centers, or external changes to buildings or small structures requiring one acre (0.4 hectare) or more but no more than five acres (2 hectares) of new physically disturbed land or fenced property.
- B.6: Construction of substations, switching stations, or telecommunications switching or multiplexing centers requiring no more than five acres (2 hectares) of new physically disturbed land or fenced property.
- B.7: Changes or additions to microwave sites, substations, switching stations, telecommunications switching or multiplexing centers, buildings, or small structures requiring new physical disturbance or fencing of less than one acre (0.4 hectare).
- B.8: Ordinary maintenance or replacement of equipment or small structures (*e.g.* line support structures, line transformers, microwave facilities, telecommunications remote switching and multiplexing sites).
- B.9: The construction of telecommunications facilities within the fenced area of an existing substation, switching station, or within the boundaries of an existing electric generating facility site.
- B.10: Testing or monitoring work (*e.g.*, soil or rock core sampling, monitoring wells, air monitoring).





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B.11: Studies and engineering undertaken to define proposed actions or alternatives sufficiently so that environmental effects can be assessed.

B.12: Rebuilding of power lines or telecommunications cables where road or highway reconstruction requires the applicant to relocate the lines either within or adjacent to the new road or highway easement or right-of-way.

B.13: Phase or voltage conversions, reconductoring or upgrading of existing electric distribution lines, or telecommunication facilities.

B.14: Construction of standby diesel electric generators (one megawatt or less total capacity) and associated facilities, for the primary purpose of providing emergency power, at an existing applicant headquarters or district office, telecommunications switching or multiplexing site, or at an industrial, commercial or agricultural facility served by the applicant.

Certain types of actions undertaken by BTOP will not normally require the completion of the BTOP/BIP NEPA Environmental Questionnaire. These categorically excluded proposals are:





7 Appendix 2: U.S. Department of Commerce Categorical Exclusions

A-1 Minor renovations and additions to buildings, roads, airfields, grounds, equipment, and other facilities that do not result in a change in the functional use of the real property (e.g. realigning interior spaces of an existing building, adding a small storage shed to an existing building, retrofitting for energy conservation, or installing a small antenna on an already existing antenna tower that does not cause the total height to exceed 200 feet and where the FCC would not require an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for the installation).

A-2 New construction upon or improvement of land where all of the following conditions are met: (a) The site is in a developed area and/or a previously disturbed site, (b) The structure and proposed use are compatible with applicable Federal, Tribal, State, and local planning and zoning standards and consistent with Federally approved State coastal management programs, (c) The proposed use will not substantially increase the number of motor vehicles at the facility or in the area, (d) The site and scale of construction or improvement are consistent with those of existing, adjacent, or nearby buildings, and (e) The construction or improvement will not result in uses that exceed existing support infrastructure capacities (roads, sewer, water, parking, etc.).

A-3 Software development, data analysis, or testing, including but not limited to computer modeling in existing facilities.

A-4 Siting/construction/operation of microwave/radio communication towers less than 200 feet in height without guy wires on previously disturbed ground.

A-5 Retrofit/upgrade existing microwave/radio communication towers that do not require ground disturbance.

A-6 Adding fiber optic cable to transmission structures or burying fiber optic cable in existing transmission line rights-of-way.

A-7 Acquisition, installation, operation, and removal of communications systems, data processing equipment, and similar electronic equipment.

A-8 Planning activities and classroom-based training and classroom based exercises using existing conference rooms and training facilities.

A-9 Purchase of mobile and portable equipment and infrastructure which is stored in previously existing structures or facilities.

A-10 Siting, construction (or modification), and operation of support buildings and support structures (including, but not limited to, trailers and prefabricated buildings) within or contiguous to an already developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible).

A-11 Personnel, fiscal, management, and administrative activities, such as recruiting, processing, paying, recordkeeping, resource management, budgeting, personnel actions, and travel.

