



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

April 23, 2025

Karen Budd-Falen
Acting Deputy Secretary
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC, 20240

Dear Acting Deputy Secretary Budd-Falen,

This letter responds to your request that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) consult on the Department of the Interior's (Interior) proposed alternative arrangements for compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), so that Interior may respond to Executive Order 14156, *Declaring a National Energy Emergency*,¹ by facilitating prompt review of certain types of energy-related projects.

As Interior's request explains, the President has declared an energy emergency requiring urgent action to improve the reliability, diversity, and affordability of energy in the United States. Section 3 of Executive Order 14156 requires Interior to "use all relevant lawful emergency and other authorities available to them to expedite the completion of all authorized and appropriated infrastructure, energy, environmental, and natural resources projects" within Interior's authority. Consistent with the President's emergency declaration and related instructions to Interior, you have specifically proposed alternative arrangements for compliance with NEPA, under which Interior would, with respect to certain energy-related projects, not observe the following stages provided for in its NEPA procedures:

1. The publication of a draft environmental impact statement prior to finalizing the EIS and any record of decision;
2. Solicitation of public comment on the draft EIS; and
3. Any waiting period between publication of the EIS and any record of decision.

Furthermore, these alternative arrangements would apply to the following energy-related projects: (1) projects that seek to identify, lease, site, produce, transport, refine, or generate energy resources as defined in section 8 of Executive Order 14156; and (2) for which the project applicant(s) that have submitted plans of operations, applications for permits to drill, or other applications.

¹90 Fed. Reg. 8433 (Jan. 20, 2025).



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CEQ has reviewed Interior's proposed alternative arrangements and authorizes them as an appropriate means of complying with NEPA as a response to the emergency declared in Executive Order 14156. CEQ concurs with Interior's determination that the procedures it proposes to observe with respect to energy-related actions that it determines are necessary and appropriate responses to the declared energy emergency are an appropriate means of complying with NEPA's requirements. CEQ looks forward to continuing to consult with Interior as it applies these alternative arrangements to particular actions and projects. Specifically, CEQ appreciates that Interior will consult with CEQ when Interior determines that a particular energy-related project is a project subject to the criteria Interior has set forth as constituting grounds for application of Interior's proposed alternative arrangements. CEQ commits to working constructively and expeditiously with Interior in this regard.

Sincerely,

Katherine R. Scarlett
Chief of Staff
Council on Environmental Quality