



City of
Santa Monica™

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August 12, 2004

David Reese
Office of Safety and Environment
Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

SUBJECT: Comments on Proposed NEPA Directive

Dear Mr. Reese:

I am writing on behalf of the City of Santa Monica to comment on the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) proposed directive containing policy and procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). 69 Fed. Reg. 33043 (June 14, 2004). Many communities, including Santa Monica, could be affected by DHS activities and deserve an opportunity to comment through a public review process. Three specific proposed categorical exclusions (CEs), concern us as follows:

A7. All references to waste disposal should be deleted. The record does not provide anything to support the inclusion of waste disposal in this CE. CEs previously used by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the Coast Guard were limited to the procurement and storage of non-hazardous goods, not their disposal. Waste disposal can affect water quality, air quality, drinking water supplies, land uses and property values. These are significant community concerns. The fact that waste disposal may be limited to "permitted landfills or other authorized facilities," does not resolve these issues. Many sites may have been permitted many years ago and new analysis of the addition of new waste may be necessary. Furthermore, the waste disposal permit process does not consider many of the factors integral to the NEPA process, such as disproportionate impacts on minority communities, socio-economic concerns, and cumulative impacts.

D3. The reference to "pest control activities" should be deleted. Widespread use of pesticides can have significant adverse effects on the environment and public health. The existing Coast Guard CE does not justify the proposed CE to cover all "buildings, roads, airfields, grounds, equipment and other facilities under DHS jurisdiction.

F1. References to the disposal of hazardous material/waste should be deleted. Neither the Coast Guard's nor the Department of Energy's existing CEs related to hazardous material covers its disposal. Questions of hazardous waste disposal, especially of large quantities, deserve a public process to resolve.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Richard Bloom
Mayor

cc: Honorable Henry Waxman, U.S. House of Representative
Honorable Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senate
Honorable Dianne Feinstein, U.S. Senate

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