

(d) *Detailed Comments*—

The format of this section shall follow the organization of the other agency's environmental review document. These comments shall not approve, disapprove, support, or object to proposed actions of other Federal agencies, but shall constructively and objectively comment on the environmental impact of the proposed action, and on the adequacy of the statement in describing the environmental impacts of the action, the alternatives (if appropriate), and the impacts of the alternatives. Comments shall specify any corrections, additions, or other changes required to make the statement adequate.

(e) *Summary Comments, if any*—

In general, the Department will not take a position on the proposed action of another Federal agency, but will limit its comments to those above. However, in those cases where the Department has jurisdiction by statute, executive order, memorandum of agreement, or other authority, the Department may comment on the proposed action. These comments shall be provided in this section and may take the form of support for, concurrence with, concern over, or objection to the proposed action and/or the alternatives.

B. Bureau and Office Comments

Bureau and office reviews of EISs prepared by other Federal agencies are considered informal inputs to the Department's comments and their content will generally conform to paragraph 7.5A of this chapter with the substitution of the bureau's or office's delegated jurisdiction or special environmental expertise for that of the Department.

C. Relationship to Other Concurrent Reviews

(1) Where the Department, because of other authority or agreement, is concurrently requested to review a proposal as well as its EIS, the Department's comments on the proposal shall be separately identified and placed in front of the comments on the EIS. A summary of the Department's position, if any, on the proposal and its environmental impact shall be separately identified and follow the review comments on the EIS.

(2) Where another Federal agency elects to combine other related reviews into the review of the EIS by including additional or more specific information into the statement, the introduction to the Department's review comments will acknowledge the additional review request and the review comments will be incorporated into appropriate parts of the combined statement review. A summary of the Department's position, if any, on the environmental impacts of the proposal and any alternatives shall be separately identified and follow the detailed review comments on the combined statement.

(3) In some cases, the concurrent review is not an integral part of the environmental compliance review but is being processed within the same general time period as the environmental review. If there is also an environmental review being processed by the OEPC, there is potential for two sets of conflicting comments to reach the requesting agency. Bureaus must recognize that this possibility exists and must check with the

Regional Environmental Officer to determine the status of any environmental review prior to forwarding the concurrent review comments to the requesting agency. Any conflicts must be resolved before the separate comments may be filed. One review may be held up pending completion of the concurrent review and consideration of filing a single comment letter. A time extension may be necessary and must be obtained if a review is to be held up pending completion of a concurrent review.

(4) The Department's intervention in another agency's adjudicatory process is also a concurrent review. Such reviews are governed by 452 DM 2 which must be consulted in applicable cases. The most common cases involve the Department's review of hydroelectric and natural gas applications of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. In these cases, it is recommended that bureaus consult frequently with the appropriate attorney of record in the Office of the Solicitor.

7.6 *Availability of Review Comments*

A. Prior to the public availability of another Federal agency's final EIS, the Department shall not independently release to the public its comments on that agency's draft EIS. In accordance with Section 1506.6(f) of the CEQ Regulations, the agency that prepared the statement is responsible for making the comments available to the public, and requests for copies of the Department's comments shall be referred to that agency. Exceptions to this procedure shall be made by the OEPC and the Office of the Solicitor.

B. The availability of various internal Departmental memoranda, such as the review comments of bureaus, offices, task forces, and individuals, which are used as inputs to the Department's review comments is governed by the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. Section 552) and the Departmental procedures established by 43 CFR 2. Upon receipt of such requests and in addition to following the procedures above in A., the responsible bureau or office shall notify and consult their bureau Freedom of Information Act Officer and the OEPC to coordinate any responses.

7.7 *Procedures for Processing Environmental Reviews*

A. General Procedures

(1) All requests for reviews of environmental review documents prepared by or for other Federal agencies shall be received and controlled by the Director, OEPC.

(2) If a bureau or office, whether at headquarters or field level, receives an environmental review document for review directly from outside of the Department, it should ascertain whether the document is a preliminary, proposed, or working draft circulated for technical assistance or input in order to prepare a draft document or whether the document is in fact a draft environmental review document being circulated for official review.

(a) If the document is a preliminary, proposed, or working draft, the bureau or office should handle independently and provide whatever technical assistance

possible, within the limits of their resources, to the requesting agency. The response should clearly indicate the type of assistance being provided and state that it does not represent the Department's review of the document. Each bureau or office should provide the Regional Environmental Officer and the Director, OEPC, copies of any comments involving significant or controversial issues.

(b) If the document is a draft or final environmental review document circulated for official review, the bureau or office should inform the requesting agency of the Department's procedures in subparagraph (1) above and promptly refer the request and the document to the Director, OEPC, for processing.

(3) All bureaus and offices processing and reviewing environmental review documents of other Federal agencies will do so within the time limits specified by the Director, OEPC. From thirty (30) to forty-five (45) days are normally available for responding to other Federal agency review requests. Whenever possible the Director, OEPC, shall seek a forty-five (45) day review period. Further extensions shall be handled in accordance with paragraph 7.7B (3) of this chapter.

(4) The Department's review comments on other Federal agencies' environmental review documents shall reflect the full and balanced interests of the Department in the protection and enhancement of the environment. Lead bureaus shall be responsible for resolving any intra-Departmental differences in bureau or office review comments submitted to them. The OEPC is available for guidance and assistance in this regard. In cases where agreement cannot be reached, the matter shall be referred through channels to the AS/PMB with attempts to resolve the disagreement at each intervening management level. The OEPC will assist in facilitating this process.

B. Processing Environmental Reviews

(1) The OEPC shall secure and distribute sufficient copies of environmental review documents for Departmental review. Bureaus and offices should keep the OEPC informed as to their needs for review copies, which shall be kept to a minimum, and shall develop internal procedures to efficiently and expeditiously distribute environmental review documents to reviewing offices.

(2) Reviewing bureaus and offices which cannot meet the review schedule shall so inform the lead bureau and shall provide the date that the review will be delivered. The lead bureau shall inform the OEPC in cases of headquarters-level response, or the Regional Environmental Officer in cases of field-level response, if it cannot meet the schedule, why it cannot, and when it will. The OEPC or the Regional Environmental Officer shall be responsible for informing the other Federal agency of any changes in the review schedule.

(3) Reviewing offices shall route their review comments through channels to the lead bureau, with a copy to the OEPC. When, in cases, of headquarters-level response, review comments cannot reach the lead bureau within the established review schedule, reviewing bureaus and offices shall