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Current CEQA Guidelines Update

In January 2018, OPR transmitted its proposal for the comprehensive updates to the CEQA Guidelines to the California Natural Resources Agency. Among other things, this package included proposed updates related to analyzing transportation impacts pursuant to Senate Bill 743, proposed updates to the analysis of greenhouse gas emissions, and revised Section 15126.2(a) in response to the California Supreme Court's decision in *California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District* (2015) 62 Cal.4th 369.

In late 2018, the Natural Resources Agency finalized the updates to the CEQA Guidelines. The final adopted text, final statement of reasons (including comments and responses to comments), and related materials are posted under "Documents." See the [Natural Resources Agency CEQA page](#) [↗](#) for the rulemaking documents.

The changes have been approved by the Office of Administrative Law and were filed with the Secretary of State. **The updated Guidelines became effective on December 28, 2018.** The revisions to the Guidelines are prospective and new requirements will apply to steps in the CEQA process not yet undertaken by the effective date of the revisions. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15007, subd. (b).) The revised Guidelines will apply to a CEQA document only if the revised Guidelines are in effect when the document is sent out for public review. (CEQA Guidelines, § 15007, subd. (c).)

More information on the specific proposal to update the CEQA Guideline addressing transportation analyses can be found at [Transportation Impacts \(SB 743\)](#).

Documents

[Final Adopted Text for Revisions to the CEQA Guidelines](#) 

[Final Statement of Reasons for Regulatory Action](#) 

[Responses to Comments on the Revisions to the CEQA Guidelines](#) 

[Public Comments on the Revisions to the CEQA Guidelines](#) 

 [Update Listserv](#)

What are the CEQA Guidelines?

The CEQA Guidelines are administrative regulations governing implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (Public Resources Code section 21000 and following). The CEQA Guidelines reflect the requirements set forth in the Public Resources Code, as well as court decisions interpreting the statute and practical planning considerations. Among other things, the CEQA Guidelines explain how to determine whether an activity is subject to environmental review, what steps are involved in the environmental review process, and the required content of environmental documents. The CEQA Guidelines apply to public agencies throughout the state, including local governments, special districts, and state agencies.

Public Resources Code section 21083 requires the Office of Planning and Research and the Natural Resources Agency to periodically update the CEQA Guidelines.

History

2018 OPR Transmits Package to Natural Resources Agency

In January 2018, OPR transmitted its proposal for the comprehensive updates to the CEQA Guidelines to the California Natural Resources Agency. The proposal consisted of the following documents:

[Transmittal Letter from Ken Alex, Director of OPR, to John Laird, Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency](#) 

[Proposed Updates to the CEQA Guidelines – Comprehensive Package](#) 

[Thematic Responses to Comments](#) 


[Frequently Asked Questions](#) 

[Technical Advisory on Evaluating Transportation Impacts in CEQA \(2017\)](#) 

Public comments received during the public review process on the proposed Guidelines package (see below and at [SB 743](#) for links to the public comments)

Technical research supporting the Guidelines package (see [SB 743](#) for the key resources)

[A list of the numerous stakeholder groups OPR met with or held briefings for over the past four years](#) 

The Natural Resources Agency began the formal administrative rulemaking process under the Administrative Procedure Act in January 2018 and accepted public comments. In July 2018, the Natural Resources Agency made revisions to the originally-proposed changes to the Guidelines (“15-day language”) and accepted public comments on those changes. See the [Natural Resources Agency CEQA page](#) .

The final package was submitted to the Office of Administrative Law in November 2018. The updated Guidelines took effect on December 28, 2018, after the Office of Administrative Law's approval and the Secretary of State's filing of the package on that day.

2016 Update to Hazards Discussion in the CEQA Guidelines

In October of 2016, OPR released a draft of revisions to Section 15126.2(a), responding to the California Supreme Court's decision in California Building Industry Association v. Bay Area Air Quality Management District (2015) 62 Cal.4th 369. These revisions specifically addressed the requirement to analyze hazards that a project may risk exacerbating. The 2016 discussion draft and comments on the proposal are available below:

[2016 Discussion Draft](#) 

[Recording of Public Workshop- November 21, 2016](#) 

2015 Preliminary Discussion Draft

OPR released a preliminary discussion draft of changes to the Guidelines Implementing the California Environmental Quality Act for public review on August 11, 2015. OPR made revisions to the proposed Guidelines package in response to the numerous public comments it received. OPR wishes to thank those that participated in the review.

OPR and the Natural Resources Agency conducted a public workshop on the preliminary discussion draft on October 6, 2015. A recording of the workshop can be viewed below. Additional information on the CEQA Guidelines and the process for updating them is provided below.

[Recording of Public Workshop - October 6, 2015](#) 

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