

CEQ Publishes NEPA-EMS Guide

“The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) has published *Aligning NEPA Processes with Environmental Management Systems – A Guide for NEPA and EMS Practitioner*. This guide provides practitioners with a tool to improve NEPA implementation and achieve the environmental sustainability goals laid out in NEPA and Executive Order 13423: ‘to create and maintain conditions, under which humans and nature can exist in productive harmony, that permit fulfilling the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans.’”

James L. Connaughton
Chairman, CEQ

* CEQ’s goal is to continue developing tools to improve and modernize NEPA. This Guide was developed help practitioners make NEPA implementation more effective and efficient. The guide was developed by an interagency work group following up on recommendations from "The NEPA Task Force Report to the Council on Environmental Quality - Modernizing NEPA Implementation."

* Combining NEPA’s tried and tested framework for assessing the environmental consequences of proposed federal agency actions with the practical tool for managing the environmental aspects of agency actions provides a powerful approach to realize the goals of both NEPA and Executive Order 13423.

* The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires federal agencies to study the environmental effects of their actions through an interdisciplinary environmental planning process.

* An EMS is a structure of procedures and policies used to systematically identify, evaluate, and manage environmental impacts of ongoing activities, products, and services.

* The guide provides examples of how NEPA and EMS together can help federal agencies more effectively manage their environmental responsibilities. For example, identifying environmental aspects in the development of an EMS can build on aspects identified in previous NEPA analyses. Conversely, a new NEPA analysis can consider the identified environmental aspects in an EMS when assessing potential environmental impacts of a proposed future action.