

memorandum

DATE: December 30, 1996

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance:Osborne:202-586-4596

SUBJECT: NEPA Contracting Reform Phase III: Final Report, Including Guidance

TO: Secretarial Officers and Heads of Field Organizations

Strategic Alignment Initiative 29 for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Cost Savings (SAI-29) identified NEPA Contracting Reform Guidance as a major milestone. This past calendar year was the third and final phase of our NEPA Contracting Reform work, and this memorandum provides the concluding report.

This entire NEPA Contracting Reform effort, led by my Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance, was conducted in partnership with the Offices of Human Resources and Administration and General Counsel. I want to thank the involved staff and managers of these partner offices for their unfailing cooperation.

Phase III of NEPA Contracting Reform concludes our implementation of the recommendations of a NEPA Contracting Quality Improvement Team, whose report the Secretary distributed by memorandum of March 20, 1995. The attached "NEPA Contracting Reform Guidance" is one product of our Phase III activities that I am reporting on briefly below. This Guidance incorporates, expands upon, and replaces Phase I Guidance, August 1995, and Phase II Guidance, December 1995. Phase III consisted of pilot programs to test and improve some elements of the Phase II Guidance, and application of the Guidance to the procurement process.

Report on Phase III

I am pleased to note that NEPA Contracting Reform activities brought together NEPA and procurement staffs, often for the first time, in identifying and implementing innovative contracting ideas for the Department's NEPA process. The breakthrough in this cooperative effort occurred at a NEPA Contracting Reform Workshop in March 1996, at which participants explored the theme of "Do It Right the First Time," the central recommendation of our Guidance, and formed two teams to help achieve the NEPA Contracting Reform objectives.

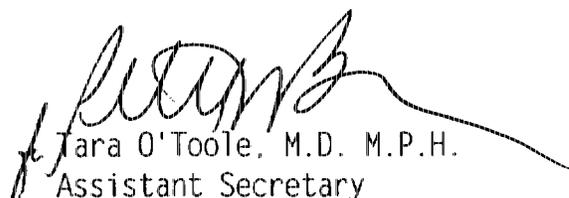
A. Guidance

One team, composed of experienced NEPA Document Managers and NEPA Compliance Officers, prepared guidance for NEPA Document Managers, which the Workshop had established was needed. In parallel, the DOE NEPA community provided products and recommendations under pilot programs for NEPA contractor evaluation and for tracking and reporting NEPA process costs. These undertakings provided the basis for expanding and improving upon the earlier Guidance. As noted above, I am pleased to provide (attached) the revised Guidance for your use.

B. NEPA Procurement

The other team from the Workshop has made considerable progress toward acquisition of multiple task order contracts for NEPA document preparation, which are to be shared by all the Department's Program and Field Offices with NEPA requirements. I thank the Albuquerque Operations Office for conducting this procurement on behalf of the Department. In December 1996, that Office issued a draft Request for Proposal that solicits comments from the vendor community. Services under such contracts are scheduled to be available in mid-1997, and we ask that you plan to use these new NEPA support contracts, as appropriate.

Once again, I thank the involved DOE NEPA, procurement and legal staffs and their managers for dedicated and effective work throughout this effort. Achieving the NEPA process cost saving commitments of SAI-29 requires that you and your staff implement the products of their work to the maximum extent possible. We remain available to support your efforts in any way that we can. Please direct any suggestions or questions to Carol Borgstrom, Director, Office of NEPA Policy and Assistance (phone: 202-586-4600, fax: 202-586-7031).


Tara O'Toole, M.D. M.P.H.
Assistant Secretary
Environment, Safety and Health

Attachment