

Attachment 8A

Explanatory Note for Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Report May 2, 2011

The following information addresses the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) spreadsheet on the status of NEPA compliance for DHS projects/activities receiving funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). More than \$122 million was obligated during the reporting period ending March 31, 2011, bringing the total obligations to over \$2.2 billion. Also during the period, more than 16 NEPA reviews were completed and 10 additional ARRA funded projects/activities were identified.

For this reporting period, a number of items should be noted when reviewing the page 1 of the DHS Spreadsheet:

Page 1, row 2 of the Spreadsheet – The “Number of ARRA Funded Projects/Activities” increased from three to four. This does not match with the “All NEPA Actions for the Recovery Act Funded Activity or Project” of three because one project does not have any NEPA actions associated with it at this time and no funds have been expended.

Page 1, row 12 - FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter, Recovery Act, NEPA is not applicable because DHS performs purely an administrative function to support a committee of federal and non-federal members (chaired by the Red Cross) that determines which activities should receive funding. This has been an item since the first DHS NEPA ARRA Report.

Page 1, row 13 - "Number of ARRA Funded Projects/Activites" under Federal Protective Services increased from 53 to 63. These projects are for contracting with private firms to provide building services at government buildings.

Explanation of Pending NEPA Reviews over multiple reports:

Page 2, row 2 - (Item from 4/30/2009 report) DHS Consolidated Headquarters at St Elizabeth’s (Phase 2): This program for the DHS Consolidated Headquarters at St Elizabeth’s requires an EIS. This EIS is being prepared with the General Services Administration as the lead agency. The public comment period for the EIS ended 3/24/2011. The comments are being addressed with a projected completion date of 9/31/2011.

Page 2, row 3 - CBP Non-intrusive Inspection Systems shows no NEPA actions because program managers have not decided on the proposals to be funded. This remains unchanged since the first DHS Report.

Page 2, rows 4-6 – (Item from 4/30/2009 report) CBP, Tactical Communications and Radios: HLT Sector, - this project has the historic consultant contract issued and work is progressing. Sectors P25 EPT and P25 RGV have the historic reviews completed and CBP expects to have the NEPA review completed by summer 2011.

Page 2, row 95 – (Items pending from 12/31/2009) Port Security, Recovery Act, FEMA. Number of pending CEs has decreased from 25 to 19, These projects are pending NEPA approval for two reasons. Some of the projects are awaiting additional information from the grantee to ensure that the actions meet the requirements for a categorical exclusion(s). The remaining projects have the potential for impacts to environmental and historic resources and require further analysis to ensure that the potential impacts are less than significant. In order to expedite the review process, FEMA has completed an initial review of all projects and provided grantees with a list of additional information that is required for the completion of the Environmental & Historic Planning compliance reviews.

Page 2, row 97 - Port Security, Recovery Act, FEMA, these projects will require environmental assessments and are a combination of new and existing projects. The projects are currently pending and in the process of being listed as completed EAs. The number decreased from 3 to 2 because upon further review these projects were eligible for a categorical exclusion.

Page 2, row 102 & 103- Renovation, expansion, and construction of fire stations throughout the US; the projects are currently pending and in the process of being listed as completed CEs. The number of pending reviews has not changed from last quarter (29 ea) and (1 ce).

Explanation of New NEPA Actions and Withdrawn Projects:

Page 2, row 70 - The four projects listed were withdrawn during previous reporting periods. One was withdrawn during the fourth reporting period because it was funded with non-ARRA appropriations. Another project was withdrawn during fourth reporting period because a site did not wish to pursue acquisition of the equipment. During the fifth reporting period, two more projects were withdrawn because they were funded with non-ARRA appropriations.

Page 2, rows 99 - Firefighter Assistance Grants, Recovery Act, FEMA, Renovation, expansion, and construction of fire stations throughout the US. Two projects are withdrawn.

Benefits:

The following are examples of projects where benefits have been provided as a result of NEPA actions administered by DHS:

USCG Coast Guard Cutter (CGC) Sycamore Cordova, AK - Construction of the final phase of a housing project (DHS spreadsheet, page 2, row 76):

The Environmental Assessment for the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Sycamore housing project in Cordova, Alaska, identified potential wetlands impacts which resulted in considering additional alternatives for site locations and housing configurations. An Environmental Assessment published in 2002 identified a requirement for additional site hydrology studies of wetlands within the building location. The environmental field studies discovered extensive on-site wetlands, the impact to which could not be totally avoided. The supplemental Environmental Assessment process provided the opportunity to consider additional alternatives for configuration of the housing as well as an opportunity for public input on those alternatives. The supplemental Environmental Assessment and Finding of No Significant Impact provided

recommendations that preserve and maintain much of these wetlands and minimize down slope storm water runoff.

USCG Support Center Elizabeth City, NC - Replace Thrun Hall Barracks Phase 1 (DHS spreadsheet, page 2, row 78):

A draft EA was completed November 10, 2009. This EA incorporates the Coast Guard's determination of the existing Thrun Hall Barrack's eligibility for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The NEPA process has provided for documentation of the structure's unique architecture, as well as the historical attributes of Chief Gunner Theodore Thrun, the first Coast Guard enlisted man to qualify as an aviator and who lost his life in the line of duty during a rescue mission.

USCG Alteration of Burlington Bridge (DHS spreadsheet, page 2, row 91):

The NEPA process allowed the Coast Guard proposed alteration of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Bridge between Iowa and Illinois to determine and address the potential impacts the bridge construction would have on the Spectaclecase mussels located on the existing bridge piers. The mussels are a species of conservation concern in Iowa and endangered in Illinois. As part of the NEPA process, a Biological Assessment concluded the mussels would be relocated prior to construction in order to avoid an adverse effect on the mussels and construction processes were modified to mitigate impacts to these species.

Bridge Program, USCG, Alteration of Galveston Causeway Bridge, Galveston TX (DHS spreadsheet, page 2, row 92):

In a similar example, the NEPA process allowed the Coast Guard to determine the potential impacts of the alteration of the Galveston Causeway Bridge in Texas on species of concern and construction processes were modified to mitigate impacts to affected meiofauna and microfauna species.

FEMA Transit and Rail Security, Recovery Act, Port Security, Recovery Act, Firefighter Assistance Grants, Recovery Act (DHS spreadsheet, page 2, row 93-101):

The NEPA process has had a positive impact on FEMA ARRA grants by enabling more informed decision making for actions undertaken by grantees. Grantees are taking into account ways to minimize impacts to sensitive resources, including historic structures, endangered species, wetlands, and floodplains. This will not only encourage them to minimize the impacts of the projects that they are proposing, but it also helps to raise their awareness and improve their planning for future grant-funded projects so that they can proactively begin data gathering and can know what resources to avoid as they move forward. In addition, as more projects progress through the NEPA process, mitigation measures will be identified and implemented in order to protect valuable resources. This process is already underway for the ARRA Fire Fighter Assistance, Fire Station Construction Grants, where award making decisions were considered potential impacts to sensitive resources.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is using the NEPA process for ARRA grants to engage grantees early in the process so that environmental issues can be addressed to avoid or minimize potential impacts to the environment. FEMA's grant awards are intended to help strengthen the resiliency of communities in their overall homeland security preparedness, and the grant award documents are written to help ensure that grant funded projects are accomplished with little to no impact to the environment. Grant award terms and conditions prevent the release of grant funding until FEMA has determined that a project is eligible for a categorical exclusion, a finding of no significant impact or the grantee has agreed to implement mitigation activities. Grantees are taking into account ways to minimize impacts to sensitive resources, including historic structures, endangered species, wetlands, and floodplains. This encourages grantees to identify ways to minimize the impacts of the projects that they are proposing, but it also helps to raise the grantees' awareness and improve their planning for future grant-funded projects so that they can proactively begin data gathering and will know what resources to avoid as they move forward. In addition, as more projects progress through the NEPA process, mitigation measures will be identified and implemented in order to protect valuable resources. This process is most evident in the types of projects implemented by the ARRA Fire Fighter Assistance and Fire Station Construction Grants, where the award making decisions consider potential impacts to sensitive resources.

###