

E-mail comment received 08/07/06 from Cynthia Neely, Town of Georgetown, CO:

As a lay person I would like to respond to the EMS - NEPA Guidance for Complimentary Processes. First, I believe it is a good idea to have these two systems aligned. I would see no problem in having the ongoing environmental studies which inform an agency's EMS be part, or form the base of, the required NEPA action.

I do have some questions. Do most federal agencies have an EMS? Do DOTs usually have them? How does an EMS relate to community impacts? Is "environmental" basically considered to be the natural environment? If so, is that a major difference with NEPA, which I believe does require the consideration of community impacts and the quality of the human environment?

Secondly, it concerns me when public "involvement" is discussed as providing the public with information. The FHWA is strongly promoting Context Sensitive Solutions which, to me, encourages real public involvement toward consensus driven projects. Is this important in the streamlining of NEPA? I also wonder, in your chart, the precise meaning of "An organization has discretion about communicating externally on significant environmental aspects".