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To: <ceq_nepa@fs.fed.us>
cc: "Jo Ann Emerson" <iris.bernhardt@mail.house.gov>, "Jean Carnahan" <senator_carnahan@carnahan.senate.gov>
Subject: Comment to the NEPA process

NEPA Task Force
PO Box 221150
Salt Lake City, UT 84122

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to comment on the July 9, 2000 Federal Register notice soliciting comments regarding the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

It appears to me that implementation of NEPA is used to justify a pre-determined decision or an agenda of an individual or an agency, and does not adhere to the law.

Short comment periods have been a problem...90 days would be more appropriate, especially in rural areas where internet access is limited.

Accountability of the accuracy of draft documents should be a priority, thus saving everyone time and frustration.

The current mode of conducting so-called informational meetings/open house discussions is not adequate. The meetings should be presented in a forum where public comment is welcomed and accepted. Top personnel from the agencies should be present at these meetings to answer questions and take responsibility for their answers. If not, the meetings are a waste of time for the public, which I suspect is the general idea.

An email address should be provided in the EA or EIS and in the Federal Register for a contact person to answer questions, receive comments and provide additional information when needed.

The NEPA meeting should be held in the area of the proposed action, not hundreds of miles away, or in other states.

Oral comments from the meeting participants should be accepted by available agency personnel.

The open house meetings are a joke and a waste of time. Public input should be a finalizing process and qualified agency personnel should listen, answer questions and keep records of the meeting for public scrutiny.

Sincerely
Wanda Benton

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