

September 20, 2002

CQ639

1217 Oxford
Houston, Texas 77008

NEPA Task Force
P.O. Box 221150
Salt Lake City, UT 84122

Dear Sir/Madam:

I would urge the Task Force to not only preserve NEPA, but to strengthen it as well. I am a resident of Houston, Texas and have first hand knowledge of the results of unregulated, or under-regulated, resource exploitation. NEPA has provided the current and future generations of American citizens some protection of their natural resources and this protection should not be diluted in any form to facilitate the short-term, bottom-line interests of Business. The environment can not recover from the results of decision processes that do not consider all the potential impacts of a proposed project. Our children and grandchildren will reap the nasty results of shortcutting the NEPA protocol: poor air and water quality, devastated species populations and wildlife habitat, and limited enjoyment of the natural environment.

I ask that NEPA not be made more flexible. It's purpose has always been to balance competing public needs by increasing public input. Any act or ruling that limits such public input is clearly serving the goals of special-interests. Specifically, I urge against the proliferation of "Categorical Exclusions." The Forest Service and other agencies are cramming activities with significant environmental impacts into "Categorical Exclusions." This is illegal and language is needed that limits what qualifies as a "Categorical Exclusion." I also urge against narrowing the range of alternative actions that must be presented in an Assessment or Impact Statement.

I ask that the NEPA be strengthened by eliminating the provision that allows agencies to charge for copies of an Impact Statement. Some agencies have charged up to \$120 per copy. This is equivalent to a "poll tax" in that it effectively eliminates participation in the process. Citizens should have access to review and comment all Environmental Impact Statements and Assessments. I also urge that the process for developing an Impact Assessment follow the same steps as those for developing an EIS. All approaches should be made rigorous and not allow any loopholes for avoiding the intent behind these efforts – assessing the impact of projects and the environment and developing measures for minimizing or eliminating those impacts.

Sincerely yours,



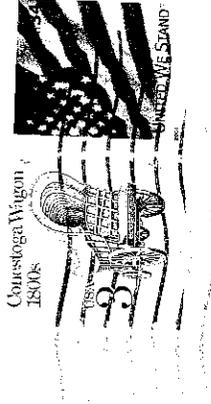
Nancy Singleton

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STAPPS

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