

## Environmental Impact Reports

If the Initial Study determines that an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is necessary, the Applicant or the County may contract with an acceptable consultant for preparation of the EIR. The cost of preparation of an EIR is the responsibility of the project applicant. The County will confer with the project applicant prior to selection of a consultant.

The preparation of the Draft EIR will require several weeks. When the Draft EIR is completed it will be available for public review and will be circulated to various public agencies, the public library and any other interested parties.

After conclusion of the public review period, the County will require the preparation of the Final EIR which incorporates any changes to the Draft EIR resulting from comments and questions raised during the public review period.

If the Final EIR identifies any unavoidable significant environmental impacts resulting from the project, CEQA requires the County to make certain “findings” prior to approval of the project. The County may also incorporate “mitigation measures” identified in the EIR that are designed to reduce the environmental effects of the project. After these steps have been taken, the County may certify the EIR and act upon the project permit itself.

## For More Information....

If you have any questions regarding the environmental review process, the Community Development Department is available to assist you. You may call the Department Monday through Friday, 8:00 am to 5:00 p.m. or drop by in person. Persons interested in environmental review are also encouraged to check out materials on the subject in their public library.

**Be Safe:**  
Check for Building and Zoning Requirements  
before buying or leasing a building or parcel.

Del Norte County  
Community Development Department  
981 H Street, Suite 110  
Crescent City, CA 95531

---

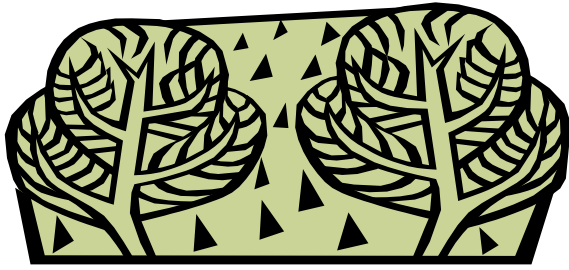
# HOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS WORKS



Del Norte County  
Community Development Dept.

---

700 Fifth Street  
Crescent City, CA 95531  
(707)-464-7254



Many people are confused by terms such as “environmental review”, “environmental assessment” “Environmental Impact Report” and other terms used to describe the process of reviewing development projects for their impact on the environment.

This brochure explains the environmental review process and how it may affect you and your project.

#### Purpose

In 1970 the State of California adopted the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). In simple terms, this act set up a process to assess how development projects for their impact on the environment. CEQA has four main purposes:

- 1) To inform public agency decision-makers, and the general public about the potential environmental effects of proposed projects;
- 2) To identify ways that the environmental effects of projects can be avoided or significantly reduced;
- 3) To prevent significant, avoidable environmental damage by requiring changes in projects;
- 4) To disclose to the public why a project was approved if that project will have significant environmental effects.

#### What Types of Projects Require Review?

Environmental review is not required for all types of development projects. For instance, CEQA contains a list of projects that are exempt from environmental review. In Del Norte County the following projects are normally required to undergo environmental review:

- 1) Subdivision of land creating two or more parcels. (Unless specifically exempted by CEQA)
- 2) Construction of non-residential buildings (such as

stores, restaurants, etc.) with an occupant load of more than 30 people.

- 3) Construction of multi-family residential projects with five or more buildings or more than six units within one building.
- 4) Grading on land with slopes of 10 percent or more.
- 5) Zone changes
- 6) General Plan Amendments
- 7) A Site Plan Review permit, Conditional Use Permit or Variance Permit involving one of the situations listed in 1-4 above.

Other types of projects may require environmental review depending on the particular circumstances of the project. The Community Development Director and/or the ERC will make a determination as to which projects require environmental review and which are exempt.

In Del Norte County, the environmental review process takes place concurrently with the processing of all development permits.

A fee and associated information is required for environmental review. These items must be submitted along with all other applications, plans and maps required for the project.

#### Initial Environmental Study

The first step in environmental review is for the staff to conduct an Initial Environmental Study (also called Initial Study) to determine if the project may have a significant environmental impact. Some of the major issues and questions evaluated in an Initial Study include the following:

- Earth and geologic condition. How will the project affect soils?
- Air and water quality. Will the project cause air or water pollution?
- Plant and animal life. Will the project impact endangered plants or animal? Will the project necessitate the removal of agricultural crops?
- Noise and human health. Will the project cause increased noise levels? Do any components of the project have the capacity to impact human health?
- Land use and housing. Will the project alter present or planned land use of an area?
- Transportation and circulation systems. How will

the project affect local streets or State highways? How much traffic will be generated?

- Public services and facilities. Can the project be accommodated by the sewer, water and storm drainage system? Can the schools accommodate additional children that may result from the project?
- Archaeologic and historic resources. Will the project destroy any historic artifacts or buildings?
- Population and growth. Could the project cause a sudden increase in growth and population? What are the effects of such growth?
- Consistency with adopted plans. County codes and standards. Does the project comply with applicable County plans?

Based on the findings of the Initial Study, staff will make one of three determinations:

- 1) The project will not have a significant impact on the environment.
- 2) The project could have a significant impact on the environment but certain mitigation will be incorporated into the design of the project to preclude any impacts.
- 3) The project could have a significant impact on the environment that requires further study, and an Environmental Impact Report must be prepared.

#### Negative Declaration

If the Initial Study determines that the project will have no significant impacts (#1 or #2 above) staff will prepare a form called a Negative Declaration (ND). A public notice of the ND will be published in the newspaper to allow any interested person time to review the project and make any comments.

The ND must be adopted as complete and accurate in accordance with CEQA by the Planning Commission\* before they act on the proposed project. This usually occurs at the same time that the project is reviewed.

\*or any subsequent review by the BOS.