

**4410.2100 EIS SCOPING PROCESS.**

Subpart 1. **Purpose.** The scoping process shall be used before the preparation of an EIS to reduce the scope and bulk of an EIS, identify only those potentially significant issues relevant to the proposed project, define the form, level of detail, content, alternatives, time table for preparation, and preparers of the EIS, and to determine the permits for which information will be developed concurrently with the EIS.

Subp. 2. **EAW as scoping document.** All projects requiring an EIS must have an EAW filed with the RGU. The EAW shall be the basis for the scoping process.

For projects which fall within a mandatory EIS category or if a voluntary EIS is planned, the EAW will be used solely as a scoping document. For such projects, the RGU shall prepare and circulate with the EAW a draft scoping decision document that addresses the contents specified by subpart 6 to the extent that information is already available. The purpose of the draft scoping decision document is to facilitate the delineation of issues and analyses to be contained in the EIS. The information in a draft scoping decision document shall be considered as preliminary and subject to revision based on the entire record of the scoping process.

If the need for an EIS has not been determined the EAW will have two functions:

- A. to identify the need for preparing an EIS pursuant to part 4410.1700; and
- B. to initiate discussion concerning the scope of the EIS if an EIS is ordered pursuant to part 4410.1700.

Subp. 3. **Scoping period.** If the EIS is being prepared pursuant to part 4410.2000, subpart 2 or 3, item B, the following schedule applies:

A. The 30-day scoping period will begin when the notice of the availability of the EAW is published in accord with part 4410.1500, items A and B. This notice and press release shall include the time, place, and date of the scoping meeting.

B. The RGU shall provide the opportunity for at least one scoping meeting during the scoping period. This meeting shall be held not less than 15 days after publication of the notice of availability of the EAW. All meetings shall be open to the public.

C. A final scoping decision shall be issued within 15 days after the close of the 30-day scoping period.

Subp. 4. **Scoping period for some discretionary EIS's.** If the EIS is being prepared pursuant to part 4410.2000, subpart 3, item A, the following schedule applies:

A. At least ten days but not more than 20 days after notice is published in the EQB Monitor, a public meeting shall be held to review the scope of the EIS. Notice of the time, date, and place of the scoping meeting shall be published in the EQB Monitor within 15 days of receipt of the proposer's scoping cost payment pursuant to part 4410.6500, subpart 1, item A, and a press release shall be provided to a newspaper of general circulation in the area where the project is proposed. All meetings shall be open to the public.

B. Within 15 days of the public scoping meeting, the RGU shall issue its final decision regarding the scope of the EIS. If the decision of the RGU must be made by a board, council, or other similar body which meets only on a periodic basis, the decision may be made at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the body following the scoping meeting but not more than 45 days after the positive declaration is published in the EQB Monitor.

Subp. 5. **Procedure for scoping.** Written comments suggesting issues for scoping or commenting on the EAW must be filed with the RGU during the scoping period. Interested persons may attend the scoping meeting to exercise their right to comment.

Governmental units and other persons shall be responsible for participating in the scoping process within the time limits and in the manner prescribed in parts 4410.0200 to 4410.6500.

Subp. 6. **Scoping decision; contents.** The scoping decision at the least shall contain:

- A. the issues to be addressed in the EIS;
- B. time limits for preparation, if they are shorter than those allowed by parts 4410.0200 to 4410.6500;
- C. identification of the permits for which information will be gathered concurrently with EIS preparation;
- D. identification of the permits for which a record of decision will be required;
- E. alternatives that will be addressed in the EIS;
- F. identification of potential impact areas resulting from the project itself and from related actions which shall be addressed in the EIS; and
- G. identification of necessary studies requiring compilation of existing information or the development of new data that can be generated within a reasonable amount of time and at a reasonable cost.

Subp. 7. **Change in form of EIS.** The form of an EIS may be changed during scoping if circumstances indicate the need or appropriateness of an alternative form.

Subp. 8. **Amendments to scoping decision.** After the scoping decision is made, the RGU shall not amend the decision without the agreement of the proposer unless substantial changes are made in the proposed project that affect the potential significant environmental effects of the project or substantial new information arises relating to the proposed project that significantly affects the potential environmental effects of the proposed project or the availability of prudent and feasible alternatives to the project. If the scoping decision is amended after publication of the EIS preparation notice, notice and a summary of the amendment shall be published in the EQB Monitor within 30 days of the amendment. The notice may be incorporated into the notice of the availability of the draft or final EIS.

Subp. 9. **EIS preparation notice.** An EIS preparation notice shall be published within 45 days after the RGU receives the proposer's cash payment pursuant to part 4410.6410, subpart 3, or

4410.6500, subpart 1, item B. The notice shall be published in the EQB Monitor, and a press release shall be provided to at least one newspaper of general circulation in each county where the project will occur. The notice shall contain a summary of the scoping decision.

Subp. 10. **Consultant selection.** The RGU shall be responsible for expediting the selection of consultants for the preparation of the EIS.

Subp. 11. **Modifying project; terminating EIS process.** After initiation of scoping for an EIS, if the proposed project is modified so that an EIS is no longer mandatory, or the reasons for ordering an EIS no longer apply, the RGU may terminate the EIS process as described in items A and B.

A. If the modified project meets or exceeds any threshold for a mandatory EAW listed at part 4410.4300, an EAW must be prepared on the modified project in accordance with parts 4410.1400 to 4410.1700. The EAW shall be accompanied by a notice of termination of the former EIS explaining the changes made in the proposed project and the reasons for the termination of the EIS.

B. If the modified project does not meet or exceed any thresholds for a mandatory EAW listed at part 4410.4300 and is not exempted pursuant to part 4410.4600, the RGU shall send written notice of its intent to terminate the EIS to all persons who submitted comments on the EIS scope and to all persons on the EAW distribution list under part 4410.1500. The notice shall summarize the reasons for the intended termination of the EIS, identify a contact person to whom comments may be sent, and announce the end of the comment period. The EQB staff shall publish notice in the EQB Monitor, and a press release shall be supplied by the RGU to at least one newspaper of general circulation in the area of the project.

A period of not less than ten days from the date of publication of the notice in the EQB Monitor shall be provided for interested persons to comment on the need for an EIS on the modified project and to object to the termination of the EIS. If no written objections are received by the RGU within the comment period, the EIS process is automatically terminated upon the expiration of the comment period. If any written objections are received by the RGU within the comment period, the RGU shall consider the comments received and determine the need to continue the EIS on the modified project in accordance with part 4410.1700.

Subp. 12. **Amendment of scope by order of EQB pursuant to resolution of a cost dispute.** If in resolving an EIS cost disagreement pursuant to part 4410.6410, the EQB finds that the scope of the EIS is not in conformance with parts 4410.2100 to 4410.2500, the EQB may order the RGU to amend the scope of the EIS to the extent necessary to conform to the requirements of those parts, and the new scope of the EIS shall be considered in resolving the cost dispute.

**Statutory Authority:** *MS s 116D.04; 116D.045*

**History:** *13 SR 1437; 21 SR 1458; 31 SR 539*

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