



Assemblymember Rudy Salas, 32nd District
ASSEMBLY BILL 2034 – CEQA/NEPA RESPONSIBILITIES
FACT SHEET

ISSUE

Since 2007, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has participated in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Assignment Program, a federal program which allows states to streamline environmental review for transportation projects that use federal funding.

Specifically, the program allows Caltrans to carry out various responsibilities for environmental review through the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process that would otherwise be performed by the federal government through the NEPA environmental review process.

The state's environmental review process is comprehensive which eliminates the need for duplicative environmental review by the federal government. This process saves time and removes an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy in the environmental review process.

In January 2016, Caltrans reported the NEPA Assignment Program has helped (1) expedite environmental review of transportation projects resulting in a faster delivery of project benefits, (2) facilitate the approval of more transportation projects, and (3) stimulate job creation. The report adds that administrative costs have decreased since the initiation of the program.

EXISTING LAW

Existing law authorizing Caltrans' participation in the Assignment Program will expire on January 1, 2017.

Federal agencies are required by NEPA to assess the environmental effects of their proposed actions. The range of actions covered by NEPA is broad and includes: making decisions on permit applications, adopting federal land management actions, and constructing highways and other publicly-owned facilities.

Existing federal law requires the United States Secretary of Transportation to carry out a surface transportation project delivery pilot program, under which the participating states, including California, assume certain responsibilities for environmental review and clearance of transportation projects that would otherwise be the responsibility of the federal government.

Existing state law requires Caltrans to submit a report every 5 years to the Legislature regarding state and federal environmental review.

SUPPORT

- California Transportation Commission
- Ventura Transportation Commission

THIS BILL

AB 2034 will remove the January 1, 2017 sunset date and allow Caltrans to continue to participate in the NEPA Assignment Program.

The bill will require CalTrans, beginning January 1, 2021, to continue reporting to the Legislature every 5 years regarding the progress and effectiveness of the program

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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