

Guidance for Enhancing Public Awareness and Participation within the CEQA Process

Introduction

This guidance assists the public with understanding how to participate in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process. The basics of the CEQA process and supportive references are outlined.

More details regarding CEQA statutes and regulations are available in the [California Public Resources Code \(PRC\)](#) Division 13 (sections 21000-21189), and the [California Code of Regulations \(CCR\)](#) Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3 (sections 15000-15387).

What is CEQA and Why is it important?

[CEQA](#) is the California law that requires government agencies to assess and disclose the potential significant environmental impacts of projects and adopt all feasible mitigation measures to reduce or eliminate those impacts before they are approved or undertaken the projects. CEQA's primary purpose is to inform decision-makers and the public about the potential environmental effects of proposed projects, thereby enabling informed decision-making to prevent significant, unavoidable environmental damage.

How is CEQA implemented?

The CEQA documents listed (and discussed in further detail on additional [CEQA guidelines](#)) are used by government agencies to meet the requirements for disclosure and mitigation. The differences between these CEQA documents lie in the level of environmental impact assessment.

Document Type	Document Description	Potential Level of Environmental Impact
Environmental Impact Report	Comprehensive analysis of potential significant impacts, alternatives, and mitigation measures	Significant
Mitigated Negative Declaration	Potential impacts associated with the project are brought to a level below significant with mitigation measures.	Less than significant when mitigation is applied

Negative Declaration	Potential impacts associated with the project are not significant and do not require additional mitigation measures	Less than significant
Statutory/Categorical Exemption	Likely no significant impacts or is listed in the statutory or categorical exemptions found in CEQA regulations.	Negligible

Where can CEQA information related to a specific project be found?

A city/county/state agency that has the main responsibility for approving a project will provide project-related information through various modes:

- Website
- Posting at a department-specific office (i.e., Department of Environmental Health)
- Local County Clerk's office
- The CEQAnet database

To identify where CEQA related information can be accessed, contact the agency that has primary oversight with the CEQA project.

Review the [additional guidance](#) for more information about CEQA documents, timelines, and how to identify the public agency with responsibility for implementing CEQA.

1. CEQAnet

[CEQAnet](#) is a statewide searchable database where CEQA documents are submitted for projects that require a state agency action. Information found on CEQAnet includes:

- Project descriptions
- Timelines
- Contact information
- Downloadable documents

See the [assistance document](#) for specific guidance on how to navigate within CEQAnet and how to find solid waste related projects.

2. Local County Clerk office

Depending on the specific project and its location, check with the local government County Clerk's office for guidance on how to access CEQA-related information.

Visit the [County Profile Information page](#) for a statewide list containing contact information for each county.

3. Local City or County Agency Webpage

Check the local government agency's website that is carrying out a project or issuing a permit or other approval of a project for associated CEQA-related information.

4. CalRecycle's Monthly Public Meeting

For projects that CalRecycle is participating in the CEQA process information is posted regarding its [meetings](#) which includes:

- A review of pending decisions to be made by CalRecycle within 30-60 days of posting.
- An update on ongoing projects and other work activities currently underway
- An opportunity for the public to comment on such activities and the CEQA process.

Actions involving solid waste activities are noted within this forum, and associated project related notices can be found on [CalRecycle's Public Notice webpage](#).

Tips for Participating in the CEQA Process

1. Understand the Project

- Utilize online tools such as CEQAnet to find information on CEQA projects in your community.
- Reach out to your local planning agency or visit their website.
- Review the CEQA documents and keep track of the approval process.

2. Connect with others in your community

- Connect with your community environmental groups and neighborhood associations who share your interests.
- Collaborate and share information with your neighbors about projects.

3. Get Engaged

- Attend and participate in public meetings, workshops, or hearings related to projects.
- Ask questions about the project at public meetings or by reaching out to the agency who is preparing the CEQA document.
- Submit comments during the public comment period and request to be notified of future opportunities for public participation.

Resources Identified within this Guidance

- [CEQA Document Types and Timelines](#)
- [CEQAnet Guidance](#)
- Webpage - [California State Association of Counties Webpage](#)
- Webpage - [CalRecycle Public Meeting Webpage](#)

- Webpage - [CalRecycle Public Notice Webpage](#)
- Webpage - [Governor's Office of Planning and Research - CEQAnet](#)
- Webpage – [California Public Resources Code](#)
- Webpage – [California Code of Regulations](#)

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