

VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

ENVIRONMENTAL DIVISION

INSTRUCTIONAL AND INFORMATIONAL MEMORANDUM

DIRECTED TO: District Environmental Managers District Environmental Planners	AUTHORITY: Programmatic Agreement Between the Federal Highway Administration, Virginia Division and the Virginia Department of Transportation Regarding the Processing of Actions Classified as Categorical Exclusions for Federal – Aid Highway Projects.
GENERAL SUBJECT: Air and Noise Scoping	NUMBER: IIM-ED-201.1
SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Air and Noise Scoping Requirements for PCEs	DATE: 8/24/2022
	SUPERSEDES: EM-AN-201
APPROVED:	Christopher J Swanson For Public Distribution 2022.08.25 13:48:49-04'00'

BACKGROUND

The requirements for submitting a request for Air and/or Noise scoping determinations were revised based on the current *Programmatic Agreement Between the Federal Highway Administration, Virginia Division and the Virginia Department of Transportation Regarding the Processing of Actions Classified as Categorical Exclusions for Federal – Aid Highway Projects* (hereafter CE Agreement).

PURPOSE

This memorandum provides the requirements for District Environmental staff submitting an Air or Noise scoping form and determination tasks in CEDAR for Categorical Exclusions (CEs).

SCOPE & APPLICABILITY

These requirements apply to any highway project or multimodal project that requires FHWA approval regardless of funding sources, or is funded with Federal-aid highway funds (23 CFR 772.7). In general, Air and Noise scoping shall be coordinated for all transportation projects where NEPA is applicable or if the project is regionally significant and transportation conformity applies. Any question about applicability should be coordinated with the Central Office (CO) Air and Noise section.

REQUIREMENTS

VDOT District Environmental staff shall evaluate the need for air and noise coordination independent of the other. There may be instances when only one task (air or noise) is required with the submittal of the Air and Noise Scoping form.

Noise Abatement

For projects that qualify for use of a CE per the current CE Agreement, only the following require that a noise determination task be assigned and completed prior to completion of the PCE form:

- 1) Any project that adds capacity to the roadway, such as adding auxiliary lanes, the addition or extension of turn lanes, and the extension of acceleration and deceleration lanes, any minor intersection improvements or reconfigurations, and any interchange ramp extensions or modifications;
- 2) Any project that alters horizontal or vertical geometry;
- 3) Any project involving converting a gravel roadway to pavement;
- 4) Any project qualifying for CE per bullet #6 of Appendix A of the CE Agreement, "The installation of noise barriers or alterations to existing publicly owned buildings to provide for noise reduction;"
- 5) Construction and/or modification of a bus transfer facility;
- 6) Construction and/or modification of a Park and Ride facility, weigh station, rest stop, or toll plaza;
- 7) All bridge projects requiring a water quality permit within the NOVA, Richmond, Fredericksburg and Hampton Roads Districts in areas of possible or known Sturgeon populations; and
- 8) Any project meeting the criteria for a CE under bullet #22 and/or #23 of Appendix A of the CE Agreement, and that also meets the criteria in any of the above seven (7) bullets, will require that a noise determination task be completed prior to completion of the PCE form.

For all CE projects that do not fall into the categories noted above, District Environmental staff should indicate "CO Noise Section" as the source for noise scoping determination on the PCE form and "Not a Type I Project" on the Right of Way Reevaluation or the PS&E Evaluation forms.

Air Quality

For projects that qualify for a CE per the current CE Agreement, only the following types of projects require an air determination task to be assigned and completed prior to completion of the PCE form:

- 1) Any project that adds capacity to the roadway, such as adding auxiliary lanes, the addition or extension of turn lanes, and the extension of acceleration and deceleration lanes, any minor intersection improvements or reconfigurations, and any interchange ramp extensions or modifications;
- 2) Construction and/or modification of a Park and Ride or bus transfer facility; and
- 3) Any project that meets the criteria for a CE under bullet #22 and/or #23 of Appendix A of the CE Agreement and that also meets the criteria in any of the above two (2) bullets, will require that an air determination task be completed prior to completion of the CE form.

The purpose of having an air determination completed for these types of projects is to verify that the proposed action will not have significant air quality impacts. For all other CE projects that do not fall into the categories noted above, District Environmental staff should indicate "CO Air Section" as the source for air scoping clearance on the PCE form.

PROCEDURES/REPORTING

Should any project fall under a category identified above for either Air Quality or Noise Abatement, coordination with the CO Environmental Air & Noise Section shall be required, and an air and/or noise scoping determination task shall be created within CEDAR by District Environmental staff.

OTHER INFORMATION

CE Agreement: [Programmatic Agreement Between the Federal Highway Administration, Virginia Division and the Virginia Department of Transportation Regarding the Processing of Actions Classified as Categorical Exclusions for Federal – Aid Highway Projects.](#)