

## APHA Session 3314.0

Health Impact Assessment and U.S. Environmental  
Policy:

Novel Strategies for Addressing Public Health  
within the U.S. Environmental Regulatory System

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# “NEPA”

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## National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

*42 USC § 4321-4375*

- Requires that all federal agencies evaluate and disclose the potential consequences of any “*major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment*” (MFASAQHE)
- Created the Environmental Impact Statement, or EIS as the mechanism to accomplish this goal



# NEPA:

Why is it important to public health?

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- Applies to most projects with large-scale environmental effects
- Projects of this scale also impact living conditions:
  - Housing
  - Employment
  - Income
  - Social conditions
  - Political balance of power
  - The built environment



# NEPA:

## Why is it important to public health?

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- Over 500 federal EISs completed annually
- 17 states have NEPA-like laws, resulting in thousands more EIAs at the state level
- Activity regulated by some form of EIA:
  - The regulation of genetically modified crops
  - Large natural resource development projects – mines, oil and gas, refineries, logging
  - Urban redevelopment programs
  - Highway and other transit corridors
  - Housing developments/large construction projects
  - Water resource management
  - Policy changes with predicted environmental effects