



FirstNet™

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FirstNet Environmental Requirements



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It is the mission of the FirstNet Environmental Compliance Team to ensure that the nationwide public safety broadband network can be built as efficiently as possible, using the environmental compliance process as a tool to improve network planning while minimizing adverse impacts to the human environment

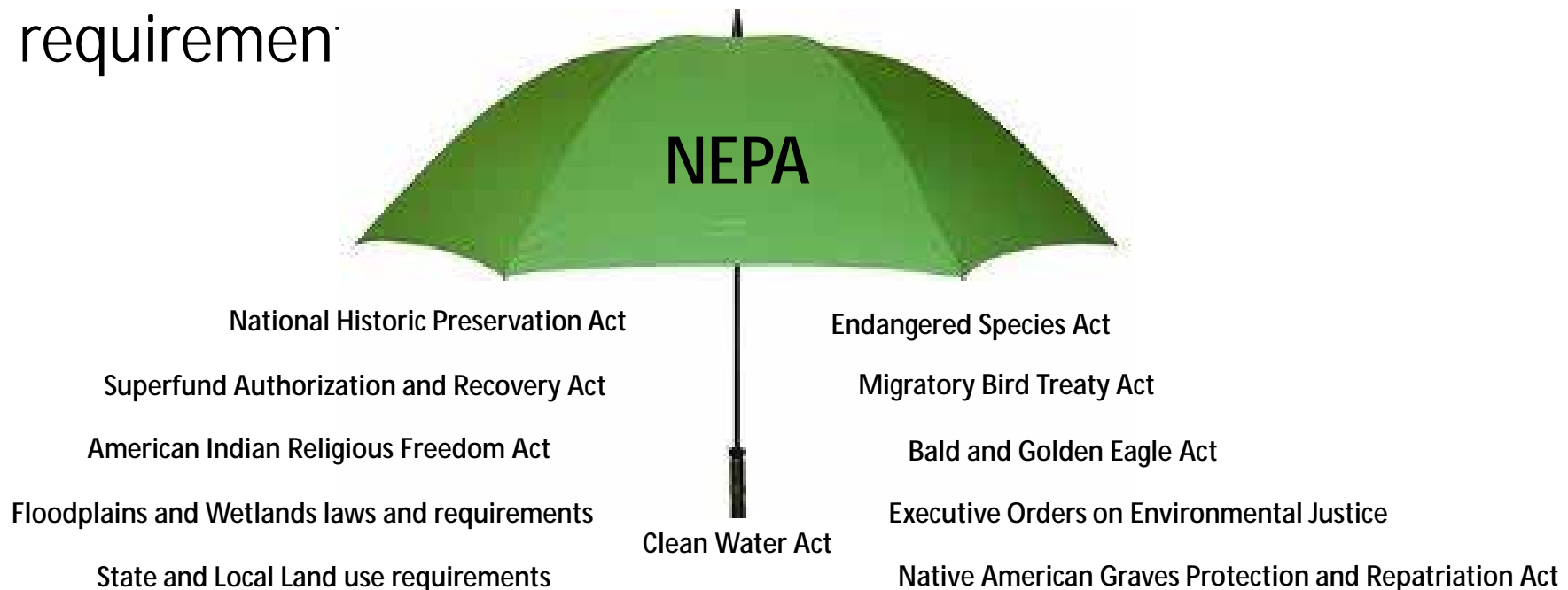


Environmental Compliance



- § As a Federal entity, FirstNet is required by law to evaluate the potential environmental and historic preservation impact of its proposed actions
- § FirstNet must comply with hundreds of Laws, Regulations, Treaties, Conventions, Agreements, and Executive Orders (EO) that are typically identified through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process

§ NEPA is considered an “umbrella law” as it provides a framework within which a wide variety of environmental requirements



Just a few of the requirements addressed under NEPA

Why NEPA is Important?



- § NEPA compliance promotes well-informed decisions to improve planning, resulting in a more reliable network
- § Failure to adequately address NEPA could result in significant project delays or cancellation, injunctions, costly litigation, and poor public opinion
- § The NEPA process can incorporate compliance with other environmental laws that carry criminal penalties for Federal and non-Federal staff in cases of non-compliance

Addressing NEPA

§ There are three ways to document compliance with NEPA:

- Categorical Exclusion;
- Environmental Assessment*; or
- Environmental Impact Statement*



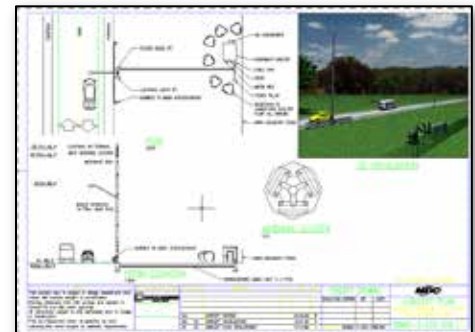
§ There are no Categorical Exclusions under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)

§ Due to the geographic scope of the program, we anticipate that each of these compliance mechanisms will be required for NEPA compliance

**Environmental Assessments or Environmental Impact Statements can be site-specific or overarching*

NEPA and Uncertainties

- § Although it is anticipated that the majority of FirstNet actions will be covered by the existing Categorical Exclusions, there will likely be numerous actions that will require detailed environmental analysis
- § Any construction, irretrievable commitment of resources, or other network build-out activities cannot begin until completion of NEPA documentation
 - Documentation for actions such as planning and network design can be completed immediately



Moving Forward with the Network



§ We propose an approach that will enable FirstNet to move forward with network build-out as efficiently and rapidly as possible while still remaining fully compliant with all environmental and historic preservation requirements



- § FirstNet will likely employ multiple build scenarios that are not yet fully defined and could encompass multiple technology and location options anywhere in the 56 states and territories
- § In circumstances like these, the preparation of an overarching analysis before the project is fully defined is referred to as a Programmatic NEPA document



FirstNet NEPA Compliance

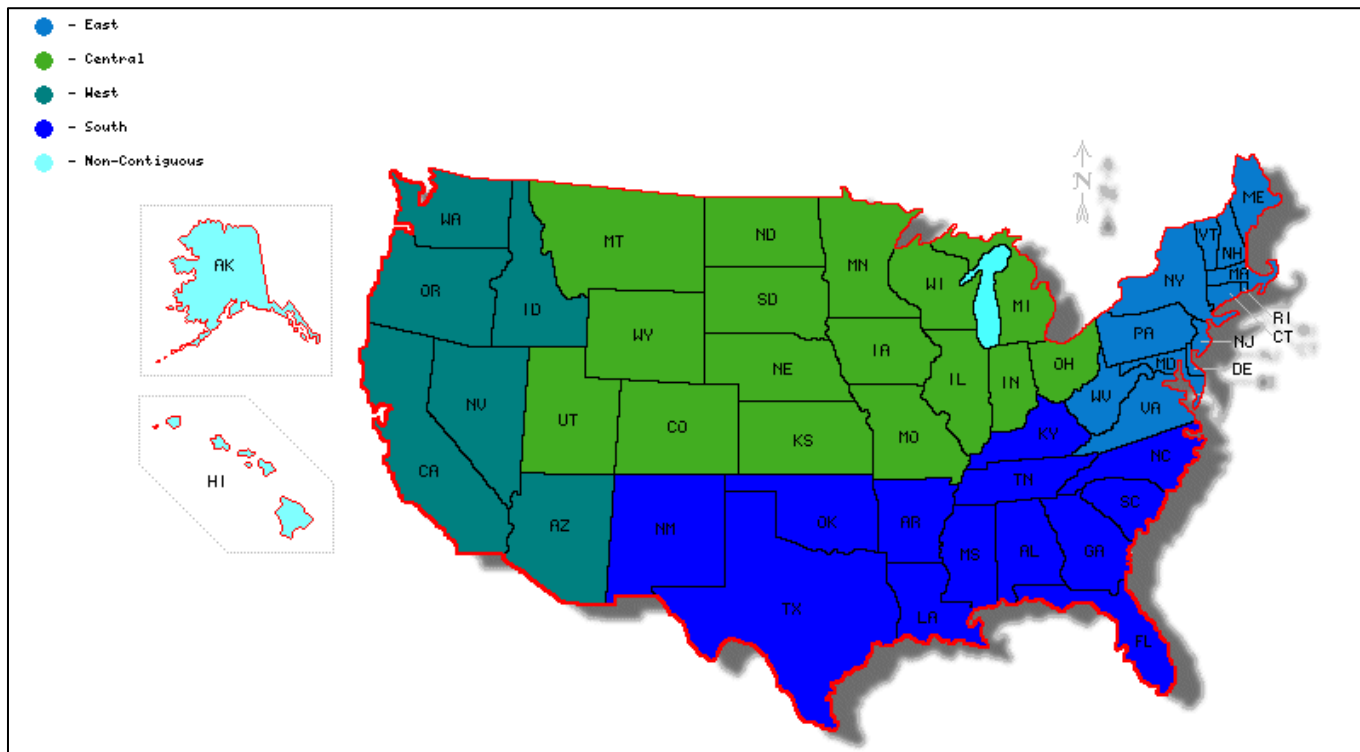


- § We recommend preparing five coordinated regional Programmatic Environmental Impact Statements (PEIS)
- § The PEISs would address most of the potential issues associated with FirstNet implementation, and identify best management practices and mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts
- § This would decrease the time needed for future site-specific analysis once individual projects are defined



Proposed NEPA Analysis

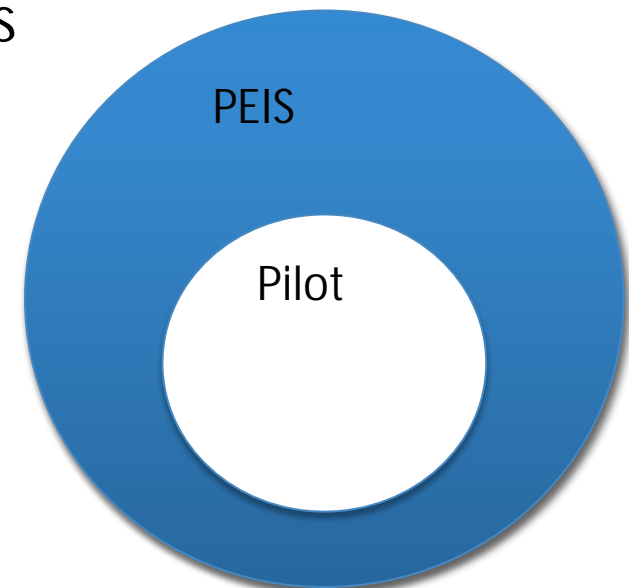
The programmatic documents will cover five regions



Note: Puerto Rico, USVI, Guam, American Samoa, and the Northern Mariana Islands, not shown, are categorized as "Non-Contiguous"

PEIS Benefits

- § Subsequent site-specific NEPA documents would only need to address issues not covered by the PEISs, reducing duplicative analyses and significantly streamlining any further environmental work
- § Without a programmatic framework, each project would need to undergo full analysis once its design was complete
- § Analysis for Pilot or Demonstration Projects could go forward and would not be affected by the PEIS schedule as they would become part of the development of the PEIS



- § Early action to address environmental and historic preservation regulations will enable FirstNet to fulfill its obligations in a timely manner
- § The proposed programmatic approach will provide FirstNet with the tools it needs to meet its environmental and historic preservation compliance requirements as rapidly as possible

Thank you

