

# STATE ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY REVIEW ACT SEQR

**AUTHORITY:** ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION LAW, ARTICLE 8,  
SECTIONS 3-0301(1)(b), 3-0301(2)(m) and 8-0113

**IMPLEMENTING REGULATIONS:** 6 NYCRR Part 617  
LAST REVISED JULY 12, 2002

**APPLICABILITY:** ALL STATE AND LOCAL **AGENCIES** WITHIN NYS, INCLUDING ALL POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS, DISTRICTS, DEPARTMENTS, AUTHORITIES, BOARDS, COMMISSIONS AND PUBLIC BENEFIT CORPORATIONS

**PURPOSE:** TO INCORPORATE THE CONSIDERATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS INTO PLANNING, REVIEW AND DECISIONS MAKING PROCESSES AT THE EARLIEST POSSIBLE TIME.

**REQUIRES:** ALL **AGENCIES** (AS IDENTIFIED BELOW) TO DETERMINE WHETHER THE **ACTIONS** THAT THEY **DIRECTLY UNDERTAKE, FUND OR APPROVE** MAY HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. YOU ARE AN **INVOLVED AGENCY** IF YOU HAVE ONE OF THESE FUNCTIONS IN ANY ASPECT OF THE **ACTION**

**ACTIONS:** INCLUDE:

- (1) projects or physical activities, such as construction or other activities that may affect the environment by changing the use, appearance or condition of any natural resource or structure, that:
  - (i) are directly undertaken by an agency; or
  - (ii) involve funding by an agency; or
  - (iii) require one or more new or modified approvals from an agency
- (2) agency planning and policy making activities that may affect the environment and commit the agency to a definite course of future decisions;
- (3) adoption of agency rules, regulations and procedures, including local laws, codes, ordinances, executive orders and resolutions that may affect the environment; and
- (4) any combinations of the above.

**AGENCIES:** INCLUDE: any local agency, board, authority, district, commission or governing body, including any city, county and other political subdivision of the state

**INVOLVED AGENCY:** means an agency that has jurisdiction by law to fund, approve or directly undertake an action. If an agency will ultimately make a discretionary decision to fund, approve or undertake an action, then it is an "involved agency", notwithstanding that it has not received an application for funding or approval at the time the SEQR process is commenced. The lead agency is also an "involved agency".

**INTERESTED AGENCY:** means an agency that lacks the jurisdiction to fund, approve or directly undertake an action but wishes to participate in the review process because of its specific expertise or concern about the proposed action. An "interested agency" has the same ability to participate in the review process as a member of the public.

**LEAD AGENCY:** means an involved agency principally responsible for undertaking, funding or approving an action, and therefore responsible for determining whether an environmental impact statement is required in connection with the action, and for the preparation and filing of the statement if one is required.

## SEQR PROCESS

### FIRST STEP: DETERMINE *TYPE OF ACTION*

***TYPE I ACTION*** means an *ACTION* or class of *ACTIONS* identified in section 617.4 or in any involved agency's procedures adopted pursuant to section 617.14.

***TYPE II ACTION*** means an *ACTION* or class of *ACTIONS* identified in section 617.5. The fact that an *ACTION* is identified as a Type II *ACTION* in any agency's procedures does not mean that it must be treated as a Type II *ACTION* by any other involved agency not identifying it as a Type II *ACTION* in its procedures.

***UNLISTED ACTION*** means all *ACTIONS* not identified as a Type I or Type II *ACTION* or, in the case of a particular agency *ACTION*, not identified as a Type I or Type II *ACTION* in the agency's own SEQR procedures

**DEPENDING UPON TYPE OF ACTION PROCEED WITH PREPARATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FORM (EAF) – OR CONTACT COUNTY PLANNING FOR ASSISTANCE:**

TYPE 1 ACTION: LONG EAF IS REQUIRED

COORDINATION WITH OTHER INVOLVED AGENCIES IS REQUIRED TO DETERMINE LEAD AGENCY

LEAD AGENCY MAKES SEQR DETERMINATION

TYPE II ACTION: NO FORMAL ACTION REQUIRED

NOTIFY LINDA PALMER FOR INCLUSION IN ANY LEGISLATURE RESOLUTION

UNLISTED ACTION: SHORT EAF IS REQUIRED

MAY DO UNCOORDINATED REVIEW – NO LEAD AGENCY IS SELECTED – ALL INVOLVED AGENCIES MAKE THEIR OWN INDEPENDENT SEQR DETERMINATION

**SEQR DETERMINATION MUST BE MADE PRIOR TO *UNDERTAKING, FUNDING OR APPROVING AN ASPECT OF THE ACTION***

**TYPICALLY DETERMINATION WILL BE “NON-SIGNIFICANCE” AND A NEGATIVE DECLARATION MAY BE FILED:**

TYPE 1 ACTION: ALL INVOLVED AGENCIES, PLUS DEC (REGION AND ALBANY) MUST BE NOTIFIED

UNLISTED ACTION: IF UNCOORDINATED REVIEW - MAY SIMPLY KEEP NEGATIVE DECLARATION ON FILE

IF COORDINATED REVIEW – TYPE FILING IS REQUIRED

**DETERMINATION OF SIGNIFICANCE** – PROJECT WILL HAVE SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS ⇒ POSITIVE DECLARATION AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT PROCESS – TIME TO CALL IN A CONSULTANT

## §617.4 TYPE I ACTIONS.

(a) The purpose of the list of Type I actions in this section is to identify, for agencies, project sponsors and the public, those actions and projects that are more likely to require the preparation of an EIS than Unlisted actions. All agencies are subject to this Type I list.

(1) This Type I list is not exhaustive of those actions that an agency determines may have a significant adverse impact on the environment and require the preparation of an EIS. However, the fact that an action or project has been listed as a Type I action carries with it the presumption that it is likely to have a significant adverse impact on the environment and may require an EIS. For all individual actions which are Type I or Unlisted, the determination of significance must be made by comparing the impacts which may be reasonably expected to result from the proposed action with the criteria listed in subdivision 617.7(c) of this Part.

(2) Agencies may adopt their own lists of additional Type I actions, may adjust the thresholds to make them more inclusive, and may continue to use previously adopted lists of Type I actions to complement those contained in this section. Designation of a Type I action by one involved agency requires coordinated review by all involved agencies. An agency may not designate as Type I any action identified as Type II in section 617.5 of this Part.

(b) The following actions are Type I if they are to be directly undertaken, funded or approved by an agency:

(1) the adoption of a municipality's land use plan, the adoption by any agency of a comprehensive resource management plan or the initial adoption of a municipality's comprehensive zoning regulations;

(2) the adoption of changes in the allowable uses within any zoning district, affecting 25 or more acres of the district;

(3) the granting of a zoning change, at the request of an applicant, for an action that meets or exceeds one or more of the thresholds given elsewhere in this list;

(4) the acquisition, sale, lease, annexation or other transfer of 100 or more contiguous acres of land by a state or local agency;

(5) construction of new residential units that meet or exceed the following thresholds:

(i) 10 units in municipalities that have not adopted zoning or subdivision regulations;

(ii) 50 units not to be connected (at the commencement of habitation) to existing community or public water and sewerage systems including sewage treatment works;

- (iii) in a city, town or village having a population of less than 150,000, 250 units to be connected (at the commencement of habitation) to existing community or public water and sewerage systems including sewage treatment works;
  - (iv) in a city, town or village having a population of greater than 150,000 but less than 1,000,000, 1,000 units to be connected (at the commencement of habitation) to existing community or public water and sewerage systems including sewage treatment works; or
  - (v) in a city or town having a population of greater than 1,000,000, 2,500 units to be connected (at the commencement of habitation) to existing community or public water and sewerage systems including sewage treatment works;
- (6) activities, other than the construction of residential facilities, that meet or exceed any of the following thresholds; or the expansion of existing nonresidential facilities by more than 50 percent of any of the following thresholds:
  - (i) a project or action that involves the physical alteration of 10 acres;
  - (ii) a project or action that would use ground or surface water in excess of 2,000,000 gallons per day;
  - (iii) parking for 1,000 vehicles;
  - (iv) in a city, town or village having a population of 150,000 persons or less, a facility with more than 100,000 square feet of gross floor area;
  - (v) in a city, town or village having a population of more than 150,000 persons, a facility with more than 240,000 square feet of gross floor area;
- (7) any structure exceeding 100 feet above original ground level in a locality without any zoning regulation pertaining to height;
- (8) any Unlisted action that includes a nonagricultural use occurring wholly or partially within an agricultural district (certified pursuant to Agriculture and Markets Law, article 25-AA, sections 303 and 304) and exceeds 25 percent of any threshold established in this section;
- (9) any Unlisted action (unless the action is designed for the preservation of the facility or site) occurring wholly or partially within, or substantially contiguous to, any historic building, structure, facility, site or district or prehistoric site that is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or that has been proposed by the New York State Board on Historic Preservation for a recommendation to the State Historic Preservation Officer for nomination for inclusion in the National Register, or that is listed on the State Register of Historic Places (The National Register of Historic Places is established by 36 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) Parts 60 and 63, 1994 (see section 617.17 of this Part));

- (10) any Unlisted action, that exceeds 25 percent of any threshold in this section, occurring wholly or partially within or substantially contiguous to any publicly owned or operated parkland, recreation area or designated open space, including any site on the Register of National Natural Landmarks pursuant to 36 CFR Part 62, 1994 (see section 617.17 of this Part); or
- (11) any Unlisted action that exceeds a Type I threshold established by an involved agency pursuant to section 617.14 of this Part.

## **§617.5 TYPE II ACTIONS .**

- (a) Actions or classes of actions identified in subdivision (c) of this section are not subject to review under this Part. These actions have been determined not to have a significant impact on the environment or are otherwise precluded from environmental review under Environmental Conservation Law, article 8. The actions identified in subdivision (c) of this section apply to all agencies.
- (b) Each agency may adopt its own list of Type II actions to supplement the actions in subdivision (c) of this section. No agency is bound by an action on another agency's Type II list. An agency that identifies an action as not requiring any determination or procedure under this Part is not an involved agency. Each of the actions on an agency Type II list must:
  - (1) in no case, have a significant adverse impact on the environment based on the criteria contained in subdivision 617.7(c) of this Part; and
  - (2) not be a Type I action as defined in section 617.4 of this Part.
- (c) The following actions are not subject to review under this Part:
  - (1) maintenance or repair involving no substantial changes in an existing structure or facility;
  - (2) replacement, rehabilitation or reconstruction of a structure or facility, in kind, on the same site, including upgrading buildings to meet building or fire codes, unless such action meets or exceeds any of the thresholds in section 617.4 of this Part;
  - (3) agricultural farm management practices, including construction, maintenance and repair of farm buildings and structures, and land use changes consistent with generally accepted principles of farming;
  - (4) repaving of existing highways not involving the addition of new travel lanes;
  - (5) street openings and right-of-way openings for the purpose of repair or maintenance of existing utility facilities;
  - (6) maintenance of existing landscaping or natural growth;
  - (7) construction or expansion of a primary or accessory/appurtenant, non-residential structure or facility involving less than 4,000 square feet of gross floor area and not involving a change in zoning or a use variance and consistent with local land use controls, but not radio communication or microwave transmission facilities;
  - (8) routine activities of educational institutions, including expansion of existing facilities by less than 10,000 square feet of gross floor area and school closings, but not changes in use related to such closings;

- (9) construction or expansion of a single-family, a two-family or a three-family residence on an approved lot including provision of necessary utility connections as provided in paragraph (11) and the installation, maintenance and/or upgrade of a drinking water well and a septic system;
- (10) construction, expansion or placement of minor accessory/appurtenant residential structures, including garages, carports, patios, decks, swimming pools, tennis courts, satellite dishes, fences, barns, storage sheds or other buildings not changing land use or density;
- (11) extension of utility distribution facilities, including gas, electric, telephone, cable, water and sewer connections to render service in approved subdivisions or in connection with any action on this list;
- (12) granting of individual setback and lot line variances;
- (13) granting of an area variance(s) for a single-family, two-family or three-family residence;
- (14) public or private best forest management (silvicultural) practices on less than 10 acres of land, but not including waste disposal, land clearing not directly related to forest management, clear-cutting or the application of herbicides or pesticides;
- (15) minor temporary uses of land having negligible or no permanent impact on the environment;
- (16) installation of traffic control devices on existing streets, roads and highways;
- (17) mapping of existing roads, streets, highways, natural resources, land uses and ownership patterns;
- (18) information collection including basic data collection and research, water quality and pollution studies, traffic counts, engineering studies, surveys, subsurface investigations and soils studies that do not commit the agency to undertake, fund or approve any Type I or Unlisted action;
- (19) official acts of a ministerial nature involving no exercise of discretion, including building permits and historic preservation permits where issuance is predicated solely on the applicant's compliance or noncompliance with the relevant local building or preservation code(s);
- (20) routine or continuing agency administration and management, not including new programs or major reordering of priorities that may affect the environment;
- (21) conducting concurrent environmental, engineering, economic, feasibility and other studies and preliminary planning and budgetary processes necessary to the formulation of a proposal for action, provided those activities do not commit the agency to commence, engage in or approve such action;



- (22) collective bargaining activities;
- (23) investments by or on behalf of agencies or pension or retirement systems, or refinancing existing debt;
- (24) inspections and licensing activities relating to the qualifications of individuals or businesses to engage in their business or profession;
- (25) purchase or sale of furnishings, equipment or supplies, including surplus government property, other than the following: land, radioactive material, pesticides, herbicides, or other hazardous materials;
- (26) license, lease and permit renewals, or transfers of ownership thereof, where there will be no material change in permit conditions or the scope of permitted activities;
- (27) adoption of regulations, policies, procedures and local legislative decisions in connection with any action on this list;
- (28) engaging in review of any part of an application to determine compliance with technical requirements, provided that no such determination entitles or permits the project sponsor to commence the action unless and until all requirements of this Part have been fulfilled;
- (29) civil or criminal enforcement proceedings, whether administrative or judicial, including a particular course of action specifically required to be undertaken pursuant to a judgment or order, or the exercise of prosecutorial discretion;
- (30) adoption of a moratorium on land development or construction;
- (31) interpreting an existing code, rule or regulation;
- (32) designation of local landmarks or their inclusion within historic districts;
- (33) emergency actions that are immediately necessary on a limited and temporary basis for the protection or preservation of life, health, property or natural resources, provided that such actions are directly related to the emergency and are performed to cause the least change or disturbance, practicable under the circumstances, to the environment. Any decision to fund, approve or directly undertake other activities after the emergency has expired is fully subject to the review procedures of this Part;
- (34) actions undertaken, funded or approved prior to the effective dates set forth in SEQR (see chapters 228 of the Laws of 1976, 253 of the Laws of 1977 and 460 of the Laws of 1978), except in the case of an action where it is still practicable either to modify the action in such a way as to mitigate potentially adverse environmental impacts, or to choose a feasible or less environmentally damaging alternative, the commissioner may, at the request of any person, or on his own motion, require the preparation of an environmental impact statement; or, in the case of an action where the responsible agency proposed a modification of the action and the modification

may result in a significant adverse impact on the environment, an environmental impact statement must be prepared with respect to such modification;

- (35) actions requiring a certificate of environmental compatibility and public need under articles VII, VIII or X of the Public Service Law and the consideration of, granting or denial of any such certificate;
- (36) actions subject to the class A or class B regional project jurisdiction of the Adirondack Park Agency or a local government pursuant to section 807, 808 and 809 of the Executive Law, except class B regional projects subject to review by local government pursuant to section 807 of the Executive Law located within the Lake George Park as defined by subdivision one of section 43-0103 of the Environmental Conservation Law; and
- (37) actions of the Legislature and the Governor of the State of New York or of any court, but not actions of local legislative bodies except those local legislative decisions such as rezoning where the local legislative body determines the action will not be entertained.