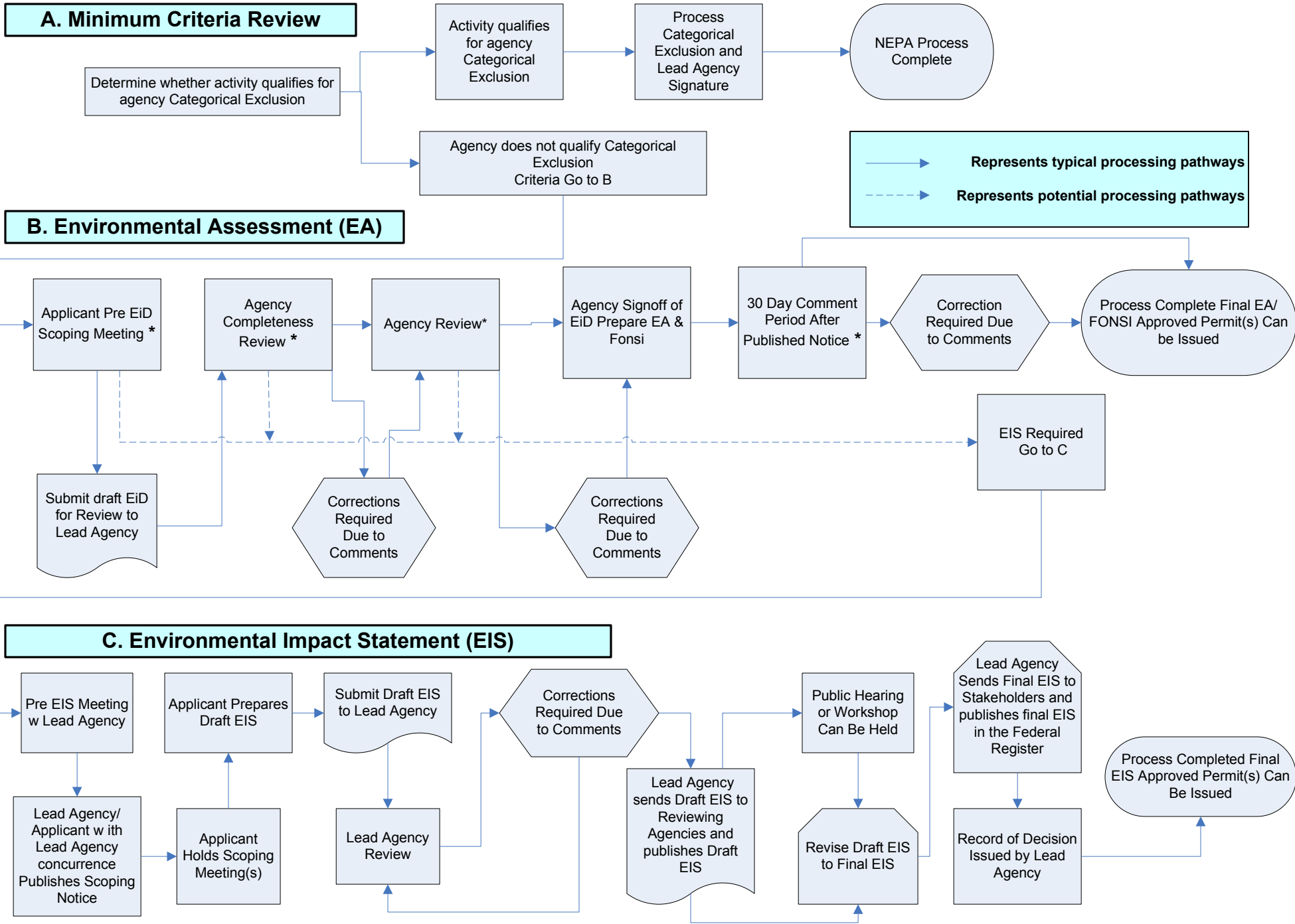


New Mexico Environmental Policy Act Review Process



→ Represents typical processing pathways
 - - - Represents potential processing pathways

*** Potential conditions that can trigger the EIS process are listed in the lead agency guidelines/regulations.**

NEW MEXICO NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 is a federal law that establishes national environmental policy and goals for the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of the environment. It establishes the Council on Environmental Quality which provides a process for implementing these goals within the federal agencies. Federal agencies and state agencies that use federal funding for a proposed project or action or that need a permit from a federal agency are required to implement NEPA.

The NEPA requires, to the fullest extent possible, that the policies, regulations, and laws of the Federal Government are interpreted and administered in accordance with its environmental protection goals. The NEPA also requires Federal agencies to use an interdisciplinary approach in planning and decision-making for any action that adversely impacts the environment. The NEPA requires, and the State of New Mexico, is committed to the examination and avoidance of potential impacts to the natural and human environment when considering approval of proposed projects. One of the goals of NEPA is to ensure that potential environmental impacts of a federal action are evaluated and considered by decision makers before the action is implemented.

Public input and interagency coordination establish degrees of agency participation and coordination. The complexity of proposed projects and types and severity of environmental impacts that may result from a proposed action determine the level of effort of environmental review. Levels of effort follow.

A Categorical Exclusion (CATX or CE) is prepared when:

- a proposed action is minor; and
- is not expected to cause significant environmental effects; and
- when no extraordinary circumstances exist; and
- [is listed as a categorical exclusion activity in the federal agency's regulations](#)

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared to determine if [a proposed action would cause significant environmental effects. If the effects are not significant, then a Finding of No Significant Impact \(FONSI\) may be prepared. If the effects are significant then an environmental impact statement must be prepared.](#)

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is prepared [when a proposed action is expected to cause significant environmental effects](#)

Comment [R1]: Add link provided by Susan to new website

Comment [R2]: Add link to NEPA

Acknowledgements: The Following Agencies worked on this document together in 2009: **Border Environment Cooperation Commission, Bureau of Indian Affairs, Indian Health Services, Natural Resources Conservation Service, New Mexico Finance Authority, NM Dept of Cultural Affairs, NM Dept of Finance and Administration, NM Dept of Transportation, NM Energy Minerals and Natural Resources Dept, NM Environment Dept, NM Environmental Finance Center, NM Indian Affairs Dept, Rural Community Assistance Corporation, US Army Corps of Engineers, US Bureau of Land Management, US Bureau of Reclamation, US Dept of Agriculture, US Dept of Housing and Urban Development, US Fish and Wildlife Service, and US Forest Service.**

2009 NM Environmental Review Working Group

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