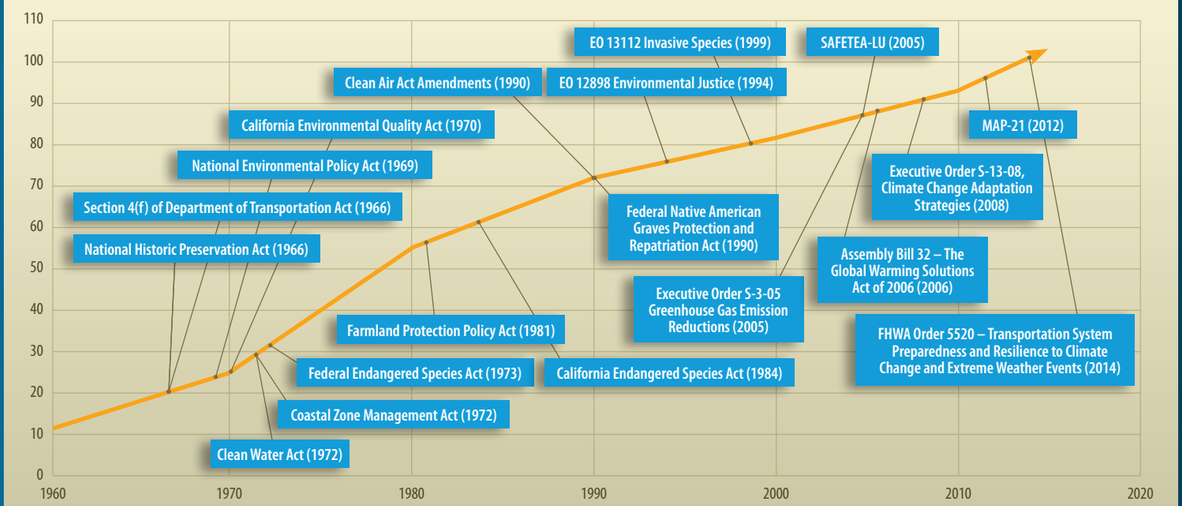
The Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis and the District Environmental Offices make up a statewide multi-disciplinary team of professionals with knowledge in environmental science and related specialty areas, including biology, archaeology, architectural history, community impacts, Native American consultation, paleontology, air quality, noise and vibration, water quality, stormwater, and hazardous waste. Caltrans environmental professionals carry out responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and other federal and state environmental laws.

Caltrans environmental planners provide quality environmental services through the partnerships we foster, the new ideas we bring to the table, and the excellent workforce we invest in and train. We are committed to being responsive, working collaboratively, and empowering our employees to carry out our departmental goals and objectives. We deliver projects using our values of integrity, commitment, teamwork, and innovation.

- For more than 30 years and working with our partners, Caltrans environmental professionals have developed innovative measures that comply with federal and state environmental laws and regulations while meeting project schedules.
- The number of federal and state environmental laws, regulations, and orders continues to increase and as of mid-2015, there were over 100 federal and state laws, regulations, and orders.
- Environmental laws and regulatory compliance continue to be increasingly complex.
- Efficiencies build predictability into the process and allow for the timely environmental delivery of projects from project initiation through construction, maintenance, and operations.
- Some efficiencies authorize Caltrans environmental professionals to complete the reviews that historically have been completed by other federal and state agencies.
- Caltrans was the first state department of transportation to be assigned, through the Federal Highway Administration, all of the United States Department of Transportation Secretary's responsibilities under NEPA and related federal environmental laws and regulations. Caltrans has successfully carried out these responsibilities since 2007.

Number of Environmental Laws by Decade

The environmental laws shown are a representative sampling only. The orange line depicts the number of laws, regulations, and orders. For a comprehensive listing, please see Chapters 1 and 2 of the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference.



Environmental Delegations, Efficiencies, and Effectiveness

California Department of Transportation
Division of Environmental Analysis

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Mission

Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability

Vision

A performance-driven, transparent and accountable organization that values its people, resources and partners, and meets new challenges through leadership, innovation and teamwork

Environmental Efficiencies through the Decades… Supporting Caltrans' Mission and Vision

Integrity

We promote trust and accountability through our consistent and honest actions

Commitment

We are dedicated to public service and strive for excellence and customer satisfaction

Innovation

We are empowered to seek creative solutions and take intelligent risks

Teamwork

We inspire and motivate one another through effective communication, collaboration and partnership

1983

- Office of Environmental Analysis develops its "Environmental Handbook"

1988

- Approval and circulation of draft environmental documents and approval of final environmental documents, endangered species consultations, and certain cultural resources studies are delegated from the Director to District Directors
- First version of the Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report (PEAR) Handbook created
- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Caltrans and U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) for early and continuous coordination of transportation project development activities

1989

- Authority to approve and process Section 106 documents is delegated from Headquarters (HQ) to the Districts

1990

- MOU between Caltrans and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), now the Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), to establish procedures for threatened and endangered species consultation
- Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between Caltrans and CDFG regarding early mitigation planning for transportation projects in California

1991

- Agreement between Caltrans and USFWS on mitigation monitoring and maintenance (based on 1988 MOU)

1992

- MOA with CDFG for Mohave Ground Squirrel and Desert Tortoise

1993

- MOU between Caltrans and the US Forest Service (USFS) for coordinating activities related to state highways across Forest Service lands in CA
- Beach Lake Mitigation Bank MOA among Caltrans, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), U.S. Enivronmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), USFWS, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and CDFG

1994

- First National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)/404 Integration Process MOU
- USFWS Biological Opinion (BO)* for Routine Highway Maintenance, Desert Tortoise (District 8 [D8])

1995

- Programmatic Agreement between FHWA and Caltrans for the seismic retrofit of bridges
- UUSFWS BO for Desert Tortoise for Routine Highway Maintenance Activities
- The California Department of Toxic Substances Control grants Caltrans a variance for aerially deposited lead

1996

- Programmatic BO* with USFWS for Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle
- Agreement on Rancho San Diego Mitigation Bank among San Diego Association of Governments (SANDAG), Caltrans, FHWA, USFWS, and CDFG

1997

- "Hazardous Waste Exceptions" delegated from the Director to District Directors
- Two MOUs between Caltrans and CDFG for Routine Maintenance Activities (D5)
- Programmatic BO* with USFWS for Giant Garter Snake

1998

- First Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol

1999

- Caltrans funds positions at resource/regulatory agencies for enhanced services
- Caltrans is issued the nation's first statewide stormwater National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit by the State Water Resources Control Board
- Maintenance Agreement between Caltrans and CDFG for test bore drilling (D5, D6, D9, and D10)
- MOA between Caltrans and CDFG for the transfer, conservation, and maintenance of mitigation parcels (D11)
- Maintenance Agreement between Caltrans and CDFG for Routine Maintenance Activities (D6)
- Agreement on Pilgrim Creek Mitigation Bank among SANDAG, Caltrans, USACE, U.S. EPA, USFWS, and CDFG
- "General Guidelines for Identifying and Evaluating Historic Landscapes" published by the Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA)

2000

- MOU between Caltrans and CDFG for Routine Maintenance Activities in Unimproved and Improved Channels (D3)
- "Water Conveyance Systems in California, Historic Context Development and Evaluation Procedures" published by DEA

2001

- First chapters of the Caltrans Standard Environmental Reference (SER) posted

2002

- Streambed Alteration Agreement for Routine Maintenance Activities (D7)

2003

- Standard Environmental Reference Volume I posted
- Stormwater Construction Site Best Management Practices (BMPs) Manual is published
- Two Streambed Alteration Agreements for Routine Maintenance Activities (D8 and D12)
- USFWS Programmatic BO* for California Red-Legged Frog (portions of D5 and D7)

2004

- Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA) among FHWA, Caltrans, State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO), and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)
- FHWA approves the use of the joint NEPA/CEQA [California Environmental Quality Act] Environmental Document Annotated Outlines
- Two USFWS Programmatic BOs* for various species (D8, and D6 and D10)

2005

- Programmatic BO* with USFWS for Giant Garter Snake

2006

- Revised NEPA/404 Integration Process MOU

2007

- 23 USC 326 Categorical Exclusion (CE) MOU
- 23 USC 327 NEPA Assignment MOU: Caltrans assumes FHWA's responsibilities under NEPA
- "A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Agricultural Properties in California" published by DEA

2008

- USFWS Programmatic BO with Caltrans for Smith's Blue Butterfly (D5)
- Streambed Alteration Agreement for Routine Maintenance Activities (D5)
- "A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Mining Properties in California" published by DEA

2009

- MOU among Caltrans, USACE, and USFS for compensatory mitigation on National Forests in CA
- Creation of Section 14 of the Construction Standard Specifications which consolidated most environmental requirements

2010

- 23 USC 326 CE Assignment MOU Renewed
- Streambed Alteration Agreement for Routine Maintenance Activities (D12)
- "A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Townsite Properties in California" published by DEA

2011

- Programmatic BO with USFWS for California Red-legged Frog
- Amended 23 USC 327 NEPA Assignment MOU
- Environmental tracking database is implemented
- Statewide Advance Mitigation Initiative (SAMI) MOU among Caltrans, CDFG, USACE, U.S. EPA, USFWS, and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)
- "Tract Housing in California, 1945-1973: A Context for National Register Evaluation" published by DEA

2012

- New 23 USC 327 NEPA Assignment MOU under the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21)

2013

- The Mini-PEAR [Preliminary Environmental Analysis Report] is implemented
- Caltrans begins new program that offers training for consultants and Local Agencies through UC Davis Extension
- 23 USC 326 CE Assignment MOU Renewal
- NMFS Programmatic BO for routine maintenance, small capital projects, and geotechnical drilling (D1, D2, and D4)
- Caltrans Division of Environmental Analysis Coastal Program established
- USFWS Desert Tortoise Programmatic BO for Routine Maintenance Activities
- "A Historical Context and Archaeological Research Design for Work Camp Properties in California" published by DEA
- A statewide Caltrans Cultural Resources Database was established, which allows environmental staff to quickly identify potential cultural resources within a project area

2014

- First Amended Section 106 Programmatic Agreement (PA) among FHWA, Caltrans, SHPO, and ACHP
- Streambed Alteration Agreement for Routine Maintenance Activities (D9)
- USFWS Programmatic Letter of Concurrence (various species) for Routine Maintenance, Repair Activities, and Small Projects Program (D1 and D2)

2015

- MOU between Caltrans and SHPO Regarding Compliance with Public Resources Code Section 5024 and Governor's Executive Order W-26-02: The 5024 MOU brings cultural resources compliance for state-owned properties into consistency with the Section 106 PA, delegating many of the same responsibilities to the District Professionally Qualified Staff (PQS)
- GIS-based PEAR tool implemented

1980 | 1990 | 2000 | 2010

*Programmatic BO with FHWA or other federal agency acting as lead agency (Pre-NEPA Assignment).