State of California
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

Memorandum

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To: ALL DISTRICT DEPUTY DIRECTORS
FOR ENVIRONMENTAL/PLANNING
ALL DISTRICT ENVIRONMENTAL
OFFICE CHIEFS

Date: May 21, 2003

File: Biology

From: GARY R. WINTERS
Chief
Division of Environmental Analysis, MS27

Subject: Standard Biological Assessment (BA), Biological Evaluation (BE), Natural Environment Study (NES) and Natural Environment Study (Minimal Impact) (NES(MI)) Outline and Templates and Quality Control Processes

As part of the Department of Transportation's (Department) continuing effort to streamline the environmental process and facilitate development of well crafted, high quality environmental documents and technical reports, the Division of Environmental Analysis (DEA) has adopted new standard outlines and templates for the organization of BA, BE, NES reports and simple NES(MI). These new formats, templates, and guidance were developed by the Biological Consultancy Group in partnership with FHWA to facilitate and streamline reviews of the Department's biological technical studies. They address changes in regulations, information needs, electronic publishing requirements, and other current issues.

These templates use standard fonts and styles, which need to be maintained in the final reports.

Effective immediately, all new BA, BE, NES and NES(MI) documents prepared for projects on the State Highway System will be prepared by, or reviewed by an Associate Environmental Planner, Natural Science (NS), or by a Senior Environmental Planner with experience as an NS, and will use the standard BA, BE, NES or NES(MI) format found in Attachment A, B, C and D. Districts will develop and use a quality control system that follows the guidance in Attachment E.

The Department strongly recommends the use of these formats and quality control processes for the biological technical documents prepared for federal aid projects on local streets and roads. The formats and templates are available on the Intranet and Internet (http://www.dot.ca.gov/ser/forms.htm) for easy access by Environmental and other staff. The standardized document format with guidance, along with careful quality control that includes peer review, technical

editing, biological and other technical specialty review, and supervisor approval consistent with the Environmental Document Quality Control Program (Memorandum, January 13, 2003 in Attachment F) are important steps in strengthening the quality of the Department's biological documents.

If you have questions, please contact Gregg Erickson, Chief, Office of Biology and Technical Assistance, at (916) 654-6296.

Attachments