Providing Effective Public Comments for State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) Environmental Reviews

How to Make Your Voice Heard!

Useful Comments

Including these elements makes a comment more helpful and improves the SEPA review. Your comments will have more impact!

- Talk about specific impacts.
- Reference data or specific language that you are concerned about.
- Identify new or unknown information.
- Describe specific actions for agencies to take.

Less Helpful Comments

These elements do not improve the environmental review and are less helpful.

- Statement opposing or supporting a project or action with no details.
- Opinions without supporting information or data.
- Asking for a project to be approved or denied.

I oppose this project. It will harm the environment so you should deny the permits and stop the project.

Examples of Effective Comment Text

This review does not identify appropriate mitigation measures. You should consider X, Y and Z to reduce impacts.

The project will negatively affect water quality in the Sandy and Rocky Streams. These streams are in areas that don't meet water quality standards now for sediment and this project will add additional sediment to the system.

The construction of this project includes work near wetlands along Sandy Stream, but the review does not include analysis of potential wetland impacts. These wetlands are identified as critical areas in the County Comprehensive Plan.

This project will cause a significant increase in traffic to a residential area. The SEPA review should analyze these impacts, especially any potential impacts to emergency services.

Helpful Tips!

- Useful comments **can improve** the environmental review!
- SEPA reviews the impacts of a proposed project for agencies issuing permits to consider. **They do NOT approve or deny a project.**
- **Comments are NOT votes.** The number of comments does not matter, the substance of the comments does!

For more information on SEPA, visit Ecology's website:
https://ecology.wa.gov/regulations-permits/sepa/environmental-review