How to Comment Meaningfully

Public participation is an important part of developing an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Submitting substantive and concise comments during the scoping period is an important role the public plays in the NEPA process, and can influence the scope of analysis for the EIS.

General recommendations

- **Become familiar with the proposed project** — review the project or agency website, read the Project Description and Purpose and Need statement, monitor local newspapers, and attend public meetings. The website for the Pebble Project EIS is http://www.PebbleProjectEIS.com.
- **Learn about the steps in the NEPA process** and opportunities for submitting to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Public comment periods are during scoping, at the draft EIS and final EIS notice of availability.
- **Keep your comments focused and as specific as possible** on the proposed project under consideration. What you think the EIS analysis needs to address and why?
- **Submit your comments within the timeframes announced** to ensure that your concerns are considered and addressed during the drafting of the EIS; the Scoping Comment period is from April 1 through April 30.

Comments on the project are not counted as votes; they are used to determine the appropriate scope of issues analyzed and contents of the EIS, and to ensure that the impacts are adequately disclosed before the USACE makes a final decision on the proposed project. Avoid simply agreeing or disagreeing with the proposed project. It is more important to identify specific relevant issues, alternatives, mitigation measures/conditions of permitting, and analytic tools so they can be used to inform the EIS analysis. The more clear, concise, and relevant your comments are, the more effective they will be in shaping the development of the EIS.

Tips for Writing Effective Comments

- **Be specific.** For example, if you are concerned about wildlife, focus on a particular problem or issue, such as a species that you feel should be analyzed, instead of making a broad statement such as "I am concerned about the impacts to wildlife".
- **Support your statements** with explanations, facts, and references, as appropriate.
- **Make suggestions,** including resources that should be analyzed, new data or analytic tools that should be used, and substantially different alternatives that should be evaluated in the EIS.