

environmental justice concerns in its programs, policies and regulations. The thrust of the Executive Order is to avoid disproportionately high and adverse impacts on minority and low-income populations with respect to human health and the environment.

Published elsewhere in this edition of the **Federal Register** is a proposed Order on environmental justice providing guidance to be followed by the Department of Transportation and its operating administrations to implement executive Order 12898.

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Department of Transportation

Environmental Justice Strategy

Introduction

This strategy is issued in response to Executive Order 12898, signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994, on "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." This strategy sets forth the Department of Transportation's (DOT) approach to implementing E.O. 12898 in all relevant programs and activities sponsored, supported and undertaken by the Department. The Executive Order requires each Federal agency to develop a specific agency-wide strategy for implementing its provisions. The thrust of the Executive Order is to identify and address, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of each agency's programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

The strategy contains the Department's commitment to certain principles of environmental justice embodied in the Secretary's Strategic Plan, and identifies actions the Department intends to take to implement Executive Order 12898. The strategy is published as a final document; however, it should be viewed as a living document that may

be adjusted periodically in response to insights acquired while implementing its various provisions. DOT plans further opportunity for public comments on its strategy and implementing actions.

DOT is committed to embracing the objectives of Executive Order 12898 by promoting enforcement of all applicable planning and environmental regulations and legislation, and by promoting non-discrimination in its programs, policies and activities that affect human health and the environment, consistent with Executive Order 12898, and Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. DOT is also committed to bringing government decisionmaking closer to the communities and people affected by these decisions and ensuring opportunities for greater public participation in decisions relating to human health and the environment.

Many of the objectives of the E.O. are embodied in the missions, goals, and objectives of the Secretary's Strategic Plan and are briefly summarized as follows:

- Improve the environment and public health and safety in the transportation of people and goods, and the development and maintenance of transportation systems and services.
- Harmonize transportation policies and investments with environmental concerns, reflecting an appropriate consideration of economic and social interests.

- Consider the interests, issues, and contributions of affected communities, disclose appropriate information, and give communities an opportunity to be involved in decisionmaking.

The Department will implement the E.O. by integrating its provisions into existing DOT programs, policies, activities, regulations, and guidance to the greatest extent possible.

Development of the DOT Strategy

1. Secretary's Directive

Upon receipt of the Executive Order and the accompanying Presidential Memorandum, Secretary Peña established a Department-wide working group and directed the development of a Department-wide strategy.

During senior level staff meetings in December 1994 and March 1995, Secretary Peña emphasized his commitment to comply with Executive Order 12898 and instructed senior level staff to support the executive order and encouraged them to incorporate the principles of environmental justice in program planning, budgeting, program development, program activities, and program evaluation, as appropriate.

In a recent memorandum to Secretarial offices and operating administrations,* Secretary Peña stated his strong personal endorsement of their efforts to carry out the responsibilities set out in the Department's Environmental Justice Strategy in an effective and timely manner.

a. National Conference on Transportation, Social Equity, and Environmental Justice in Chicago.

This conference, cosponsored by the Federal Transit Administration and the Surface Transportation Policy Project, brought together approximately 150 persons, mostly community activists from around the country, with DOT and other public officials. The meeting, held on November 17-18, 1994, in Chicago identified key transportation-related environmental and social issues of concern to persons living in predominately low-income and minority communities. Suggestions for actions to redress these concerns were also sought.

b. Inter-Departmental Public Meeting in Atlanta

On January 20, 1995, DOT participated, along with other Federal departments/agencies, in a public meeting in Atlanta to solicit comments on environmental justice issues as they relate to Federal Government programs. A portion of the meeting was televised nationwide by satellite to designated downlink sites.

c. Federal Register Notice

DOT published its proposed strategy in the **Federal Register** on February 21, 1995, with a request for comment. In addition, the Department mailed approximately 3,000 copies of the document to Departmental constituent groups and representatives of the environmental justice community. Based on comments received, DOT modified its strategy and streamlined its description in this document.

Elements of the DOT Strategy

1. Public Outreach on Implementation of the Environmental Justice Strategy

DOT plans, and will review with environmental justice stakeholders, its plans for the following activities: (1)

*Operating administrations, a.k.a. modal administrations, include: The United States Coast Guard, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Railroad Administration, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the St. Lawrence Seaway Development Corporation, the Maritime Administration, and Research and Special Programs Administration.