

## What is an EIS?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires all federal agencies to evaluate potential environmental impacts when planning a major federal action. Through the evaluation process, agencies prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS). NEPA is our country's basic national charter for protecting the environment.

### How does this relate to fisheries management?

Environmental impacts of proposed fishery management measures must be assessed under NEPA. For this reason, the Western Pacific Fishery Management Council has taken the initiative to prepare EISs for the bottomfish, seamount groundfish and crustacean fisheries in the Western Pacific Region.

### What is the EIS process?

Under the NEPA process, the first question asked is whether an action will have significant impacts on the environment. If the answer is yes, NEPA requires an EIS be prepared.

Preparing an EIS is a well established process.

- The agency issues a Notice of Intent in the *Federal Register*.
- The agency then conducts "scoping" hearings. The general public and other agencies are asked to give their comments on potential environmental impacts.
- The Draft EIS is written.
- The Draft is made available for

the public with a 45-day review period to receive public comment after the draft is issued.

- The final EIS which responds to oral and written comments on the draft is made available for review.
- After a 30 day waiting period, the agency issues a Record of Decision.
- Proposed action is implemented. (See reverse for diagram)

### How can you participate?

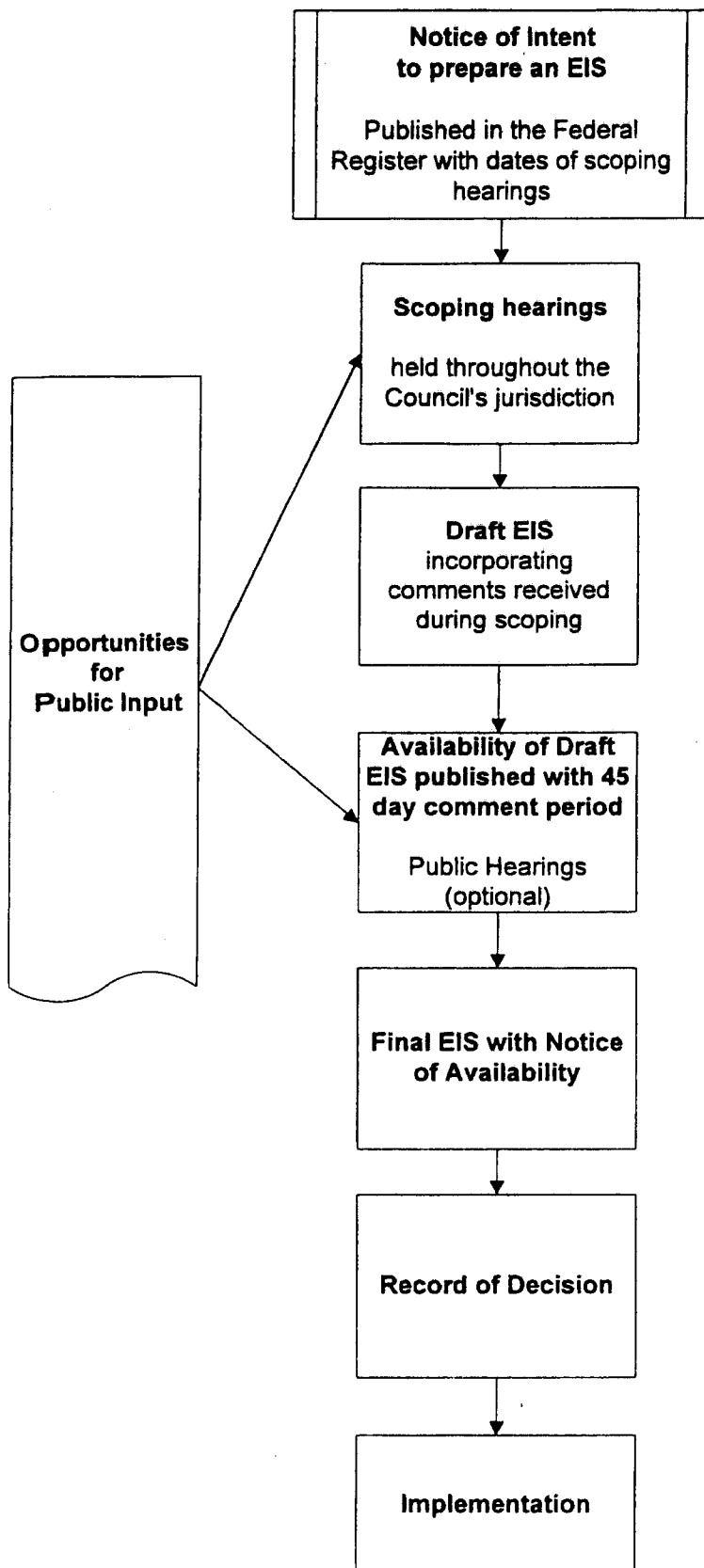
The process above provides two opportunities for the public input in the EIS process, through scoping hearings and 45 day comment period after the draft is issued. Public hearings are also likely to be held during the 45 day comment period. The Council will publish scheduled hearings in the *Federal Register* and local papers (see reverse for hearing schedule). The Council will also mail documents to interested persons. For more information, please contact:

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## Sample Process for Preparing the Coral Reef Ecosystems FMP EIS



## Public Hearing Schedule

### December 1999:

- 20 American Samoa, Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, 3-6 p.m. (Monday)
- 28 Kona, King Kamehameha Hotel 6-9 pm, and Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association, 7:00-9:00 p.m. (Tuesday)
- 29 Hilo, Cooperative Extension Services, College of Ag, Room A, 6-9 pm, and CNMI, Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, 6:30-8:30 p.m. (Wednesday)

### January 2000:

- 4 Maui, Maui Beach Hotel, Maui Room 6-9 pm (Tuesday)
- 5 Oahu, Haleiwa Alii Beach Park, 6-9 p.m. (Wednesday)
- 6 Kauai, Wilcox Elementary School, Cafeteria, 6-9 pm. (Thursday)
- 10 Oahu, Waianae Public Library, 6-9 pm. (Monday)
- 11 Lanai, Lanai Airport Conference Room 6-9 pm. (Tuesday)
- 12 Molokai, Mitchell Pauole Center, Conference Room, 6-9 p.m. (Wednesday)
- 13 Oahu, Ala Moana Hotel, Carnation Room, 6-9 p.m. (Thursday)