

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PUBLIC INVITED TO ASSESS ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS OF PROPOSED FISH AND WILDLIFE COORDINATION ACT RULES

The Departments of the Interior and Commerce are inviting additional public comment - this time on the preparation of a new environmental assessment - on their May 18 proposed regulations for Federal agency compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

Comments limited to the regulations' probable and significant environmental impacts will be accepted through September 17 and at a public meeting September 14 at the Interior Department, Room 7000-A, beginning at 9 a.m.

The joint regulations would implement the Acts' requirement that Federal agencies give equal weight to fish and wildlife conservation with other project features and consult with State and Federal wildlife agencies on potential impacts to these resources from water-related projects they fund or approve. Such projects include wetlands dredging and filling, hydroelectric power generation, and flood control.

During the course of six public hearings and the 90-day comment period on the proposed rulemaking, several persons suggested that an environmental impact statement (EIS) should be prepared, although they did not identify significant impacts.

The new environmental assessment will help determine whether an EIS will be prepared. The public can help decide the scope and content of the assessment by citing specific examples of how the rules would significantly affect the environment; alternatives that should be addressed; and significant issues raised by the proposed rules.

Written comments and requests for additional information should be submitted to the Director (AE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240; 202/343-5000.

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