

**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
**Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)**  
**Notice of Intent to Prepare a Programmatic Environmental Assessment**  
**For Utility Improvement Projects in the State of Colorado**

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) announces its intent to prepare a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) for utility projects that restore function and mitigate impacts from severe weather, flooding, drought, wildfire, and other natural hazards within the State of Colorado. This PEA would build upon and update the existing PEA for Utility Restoration, Replacement, and Relocation in the State of Colorado. The notice is being published pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), FEMA Instruction 108-1-1, and other applicable environmental laws, including the National Historic Preservation Act, Endangered Species Act, Executive Orders 12898 and 14096 (Environmental Justice), 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), and 11988 (Floodplain Management) because the proposed action has the potential to affect historic, cultural, and archaeological resources; threatened and endangered species; low-income and minority populations; floodplains; and wetlands.

Aging infrastructure, the need for increased resilience, and damage due to natural hazards all have the potential to limit the ability of utility systems to function safely. Failure of these systems can cause injury and loss of life; residents, government entities, and businesses may lose access to services and critical infrastructure; and significant environmental impacts may occur. Proposed activities to be covered under the PEA include utility system installation, restoration, replacement, upgrade, expansion, redesign, or relocation. The purpose of utility improvement projects is to protect life and reduce the threats to property during future severe weather events. These projects would restore utilities and mitigate future losses from natural hazards through the construction of resilient facilities.

The PEA will address the purpose and need for the proposed action, project alternatives considered (including the No Action Alternative), affected environment, environmental consequences, and mitigation measures. The proposed action alternatives may include: (1) Replacement Alternative — repair or replacement of an existing utility and associated facilities within the existing location, and may include changes to materials and dimensions; (2) Relocation Alternative — construction of new or relocated utilities containing a beginning and end point that tie into existing utility infrastructure; (3) Installation Alternative — installation of new utilities needed to restore, increase resilience, or expand the capacity of existing systems, which may include detention and retention pond components, upgrading, repairing, or adding to an existing levee or flood control system, and bank stabilization and grade control; (4) Combination Alternative — some combination of the Replacement, Relocation, and/or Installation of inadequate or damaged utilities. The final alternatives to be considered in the PEA and their extents may be refined based on public comment and further analysis.

In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 C.F.R. § 1500.4(k) and 1501.11), the PEA will identify, by project type, the potential adverse and beneficial effects associated with utility improvement hazard mitigation projects. The review of subsequent site-specific grant applications may be streamlined by tiering from the PEA to reference summary details regarding project

types, alternatives, and effects and to emphasize details specific to a proposed action. The PEA will allow FEMA to focus site-specific reviews on a narrower scope and to eliminate repetitive discussions.

FEMA is accepting comments on the purpose and need, alternatives, and potential impacts from the public; local, state, and federal agencies; Native American Tribes; and other interested parties. FEMA will use these comments to define the scope of the NEPA analysis and inform their decision-making. Following this initial comment period, FEMA will prepare a draft PEA that will be made available for public review and comment at a future date.

Please provide comments in writing and send to the FEMA contact listed below. Comments must be received within 30 days of the publication of this notice. To provide comments on the scope of the PEA please contact Richard Myers at FEMA Region 8 by email at [fema-r8ehp@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:fema-r8ehp@fema.dhs.gov) and include 'Colorado Utilities PEA' in the subject line, or by U.S. Postal Service to Denver Federal Center, Building 710, Box 25267, Denver, Colorado 80225-0267 Attn: Richard Myers.