

# Never Eliminate Public Advice: NEPA Success Stories

With an emphasis on “smart from the start” federal decision making, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) protects our health, our homes, and our environment. When the government undertakes a major project such as constructing a dam, highway, or power plant, it must ensure that the project’s impacts—environmental and otherwise—are considered and disclosed to the public. And because informed public engagement often produces ideas, information, and even solutions that the government might otherwise overlook, NEPA leads to better decisions and outcomes for everyone. The NEPA process has saved money, time, lives, historical sites, endangered species, and public lands, while encouraging compromise and cultivating better projects with more public support.




NEPA has improved countless projects, resulting in better uses of federal funds. Here are some examples:

- NEPA helped mitigate the impacts of Minneapolis Central Corridor Light Rail construction on small business owners, including loss of customer parking.
- NEPA united a diverse coalition of stakeholders who felt a lease sale in the North Fork Valley of Colorado was ill-conceived, unnecessary, and ignored the Valley’s economic and environmental attributes. Through the NEPA processes, those negatively affected by the proposal were able to voice their concerns. The Bureau of Land Management listened and, in the end, deferred the parcels in response to the groundswell of public outcry.
- In Clark, Wyoming, public input required by NEPA helped the local community protect their land, property value, game species, and historical sites from explosive-charge seismic surveying. Instead, passive seismic was used to achieve project goals, while protecting community interests.
- In North Carolina, NEPA helped save over \$685 million dollars when it led to the conclusion that improving existing roads rather than constructing a new bypass could meet project goals of reducing severe congestion in the region without unnecessary expense to taxpayers or the environment.
- NEPA protected farming communities in Wisconsin during the construction of the Highway 26 Bypass by providing stakeholders with an opportunity to engage in discussions about the project. Thanks to this citizen involvement, the final decision created a route with the least impact and disruption to the local community.
- NEPA gave the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Government and citizen groups an opportunity to participate in the design process of US-93 in western Montana. Because of their input, the final project successfully addressed safety, environmental, and cultural concerns, while avoiding negative impacts on tribal culture, family farms, and the environment.

For more examples, visit: [www.nrdc.org/legislation/nepa-success-stories.asp](http://www.nrdc.org/legislation/nepa-success-stories.asp)



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