



July 15, 2020

Leading Aquariums Oppose Weakening of Federal Environmental Review Regulations:

As 20 of the nation’s leading aquariums, we are united in our opposition to the final rule announced today by the Trump Administration to modify the regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The rule poses a threat to many of our communities and to valuable ocean and freshwater ecosystems that our aquariums work to restore and protect.

NEPA was enacted with strong bipartisan support to ensure environmental review of industrial and development projects. It was designed to strengthen our nation’s ability to advance economic growth while protecting our invaluable natural resources. The changes to regulations finalized today undermine the intent of the law, which includes a strong reliance on science, the assessment of the cumulative impacts, and the meaningful inclusion of affected communities in decision making. The likely outcome is that development proceeds with minimal consideration for the wellbeing of the people in frontline and impacted communities or the health of the environment.

The urgent need to act for racial and environmental justice together with increasing threats, including climate change, to our ocean, lakes, rivers, and wildlife, means federal decision makers should be doing more—not less—to ensure a healthy and equitable environment for all Americans. Our aquariums are deeply invested in the health and prosperity of our communities. We see, first-hand, the connection between strong environmental protections, thriving economies, and the welfare of people in our regions. The weakening of NEPA and other bedrock U.S. environmental laws is a significant step backward that disrupts this balance and threatens the quality of life of current and future generations.

In the face of decisions like today’s rule, our aquariums will continue to advance science-driven policy solutions that protect and restore the ocean and freshwater ecosystems, biodiversity and wildlife, and clean air and water that underpin the wellbeing of all communities across the nation.