

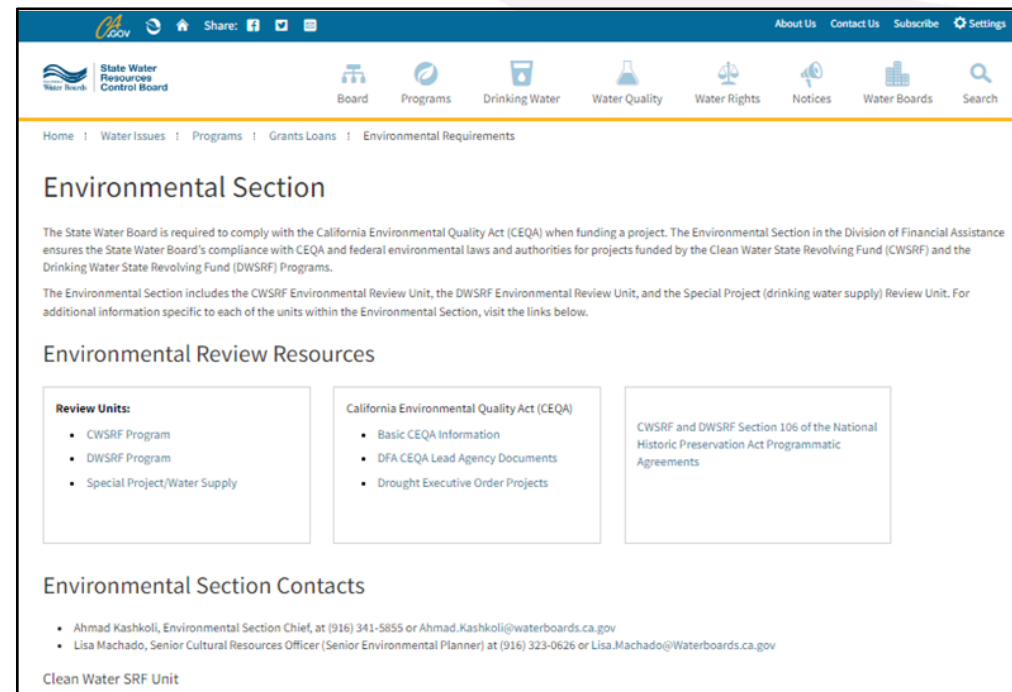
Division of Financial Assistance's Funding Programs Environmental Package Guidance



DFA Environmental Section, May 15, 2025

Environmental Package Resources

https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/environmental_requirements.html



Environmental Package

The Environmental Package is the environmental portion of a funding application. Separate environmental packages exist for both Planning and Construction projects.

The Environmental Package illustrates a project's compliance with:

- CEQA
- 40 CFR Part 35
- Federal cross-cutters

Environmental Review Process

- Environmental Section staff confirms that the Environmental Package is both complete and adequate.

Note: Completeness of environmental package contributes to project fundability

- Environmental Section staff reviews the env package to ensure there is enough information to determine a project's direct and indirect environmental impacts.
- Ensure that there is enough information to adequately support federal consultation requirements.
- Ensure compliance with CEQA & Federal Environmental Cross Cutters
- Conduct applicable federal consultations
- Complete environmental review documentation

NOTE: The Environmental Package is regularly updated. Make certain you use the current version when applying.

State Water Board's CEQA Roles

As a lead agency

- Consultants prepare the technical studies and draft the CEQA document
- State Water Board provides direct oversight of the technical studies and CEQA document development
- State Water Board conducts consultation under AB 52

As a responsible agency

- Relies upon applicant's CEQA document

Important Federal Environmental Requirements

- Environmental Alternative Analysis
- Clean Air Act
- Endangered Species Act
- National Historic Preservation Act

If another federal agency conducted federal consultations (SHPO, NMFS, USFWS), provide copies of all supporting documentation

Biological Resources Review

ERU staff reviews:

- CEQA document
- Species lists (USFWS IPAC, CDFW Natural Diversity Database, and CA Native Plants)
- Project level biological resources and habitat evaluation including field surveys
- Records of any federal consultation and correspondence, if available
- Guidance:
https://waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/cwsrf_requirements.html

Federal Consultation: Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act

Three Paths to ESA Compliance

- Technical Assistance: Environmental Section staff determine "no effect"
- Informal: EPA staff determines project "May affect, not likely to adversely affect"
- Formal: EPA staff determine project "Likely to adversely affect"

Federal Consultation: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

- Prepare a historic property identification report that meets federal requirements
 - Includes CHRIS records search, pedestrian survey, tribal outreach, etc.
 - Reports prepared for CEQA may not meet federal requirements
 - https://waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/docs/cultural_resources_report_prep.pdf
- Additional guidance:
https://waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/grants_loans/wsrf_requirements.html
- State Water Board will conduct tribal consultation and SHPO consultation

Efficiencies

- Early and regular coordination with the PM and Environmental Section staff
- Use the application resources online and upload all documents through FFAST. Cultural reports should be emailed directly to cultural staff.
- Preliminary design plans are crucial prior to commencing environmental studies
- CEQA vs Federal Cross Cutters
 - Submit environmental documents appropriate for the level of review
 - Allow Environmental Section staff ample time to review and comment on CEQA document

Efficiencies, cont.

- Project changes
 - If they occur, be sure to notify the PM and ERU as early as possible
 - Environmental review may need to start over, as new technical studies and new federal consultations may be needed
- Submit complete information
 - Assure project description, footprint, and scope remains consistent across various documents submitted as part of the Environmental Package (e.g. bio report, cultural report, CEQA doc) especially if project changes occur.
- Adequate coordination with other funding agencies

Contacts

- Clean Water SRF: CleanWaterSRF@waterboards.ca.gov
- Drinking Water SRF: DrinkingWaterSRF@waterboards.ca.gov
- Cultural Resources: CulturalResources@waterboards.ca.gov

Questions?