



# FEMA

# SRIA Fact Sheet

## IMPACT ON THE ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION REVIEW

On January 29, 2013, President Barack Obama signed into law the Sandy Recovery Improvement Act of 2013 (SRIA). In many ways, the passage of SRIA represents the most significant legislative change to the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) substantive authorities since the enactment of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The law authorizes several significant changes to the manner in which FEMA may deliver federal disaster assistance to survivors. Among these are the following revisions to FEMA's Environmental and Historic Preservation Program (EHP):

### **The Unified Federal Review Process**

SRIA has added Section 429 to the Stafford Act which directs the President to establish an expedited and unified environmental and historic preservation (EHP) process by July 29, 2014 for disaster recovery actions. The Unified Interagency Review Process is a framework for coordinating Federal agency EHP reviews for disaster recovery projects associated with Presidentially-declared disasters under the Stafford Act.

The Unified Federal Review Process will consider a variety of disaster recovery projects that include but are not limited to:

- Rebuilding infrastructure systems;
- Providing adequate temporary emergency and long-term housing for survivors;
- Restoring health, social, and community services;
- Promoting economic development; and
- Protecting and restoring natural and cultural resources.

Federal assistance for affected communities during a Presidentially-declared disaster continues throughout the response and recovery phases of the event.

The Unified Federal Review is designed to enhance the ability of the Federal environmental and historic preservation review process to inform and expedite disaster recovery decisions for grant applicants and other potential beneficiaries of disaster assistance through better coordination and improving the consistency across Federal agencies, and assisting agencies in better leveraging their resources and tools. The Unified Federal Review Process will be established by July 2014 and the products of the effort will be implemented in the following months.

### **The Unified Federal Review Steering Group**

A Unified Federal Review Steering Group, coordinated by the Council on Environmental Quality, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, and the Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency, will lead the development of the Unified Federal Review Process.

This Steering Group will bring together a broader group of participating Federal agencies that play various roles in disaster recovery to assist in developing the review process, including those that provide Federal assistance and permitting during post-disaster recovery and Federal agencies with a regulatory or consultation role in the reviews. The Steering Group will seek the views of stakeholders including Tribal, State, and local governments, and the public.

The Unified Federal Review Steering Group is coordinating its work with that of other interagency working groups, such as the Federal Infrastructure Permitting and Review Process Improvement working group and the Hurricane Sandy Task Force, which may focus on similar or related issues. New and existing processes will be leveraged to establish tools and protocols in policy, capacity building and data and information technologies areas to accomplish these goals.

A website to inform stakeholders and the public of developments is currently under development and will be announced in the future. This website will allow for public comment. With the announcement of the Unified Federal Review Process to a wide range of stakeholders, the Steering Group is currently soliciting input from those stakeholders via electronic mail at [federal-unified-review@fema.dhs.gov](mailto:federal-unified-review@fema.dhs.gov)

*Status: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) have been posted.*

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