Environmental Impact Statements

February 2016

It began in 1971...

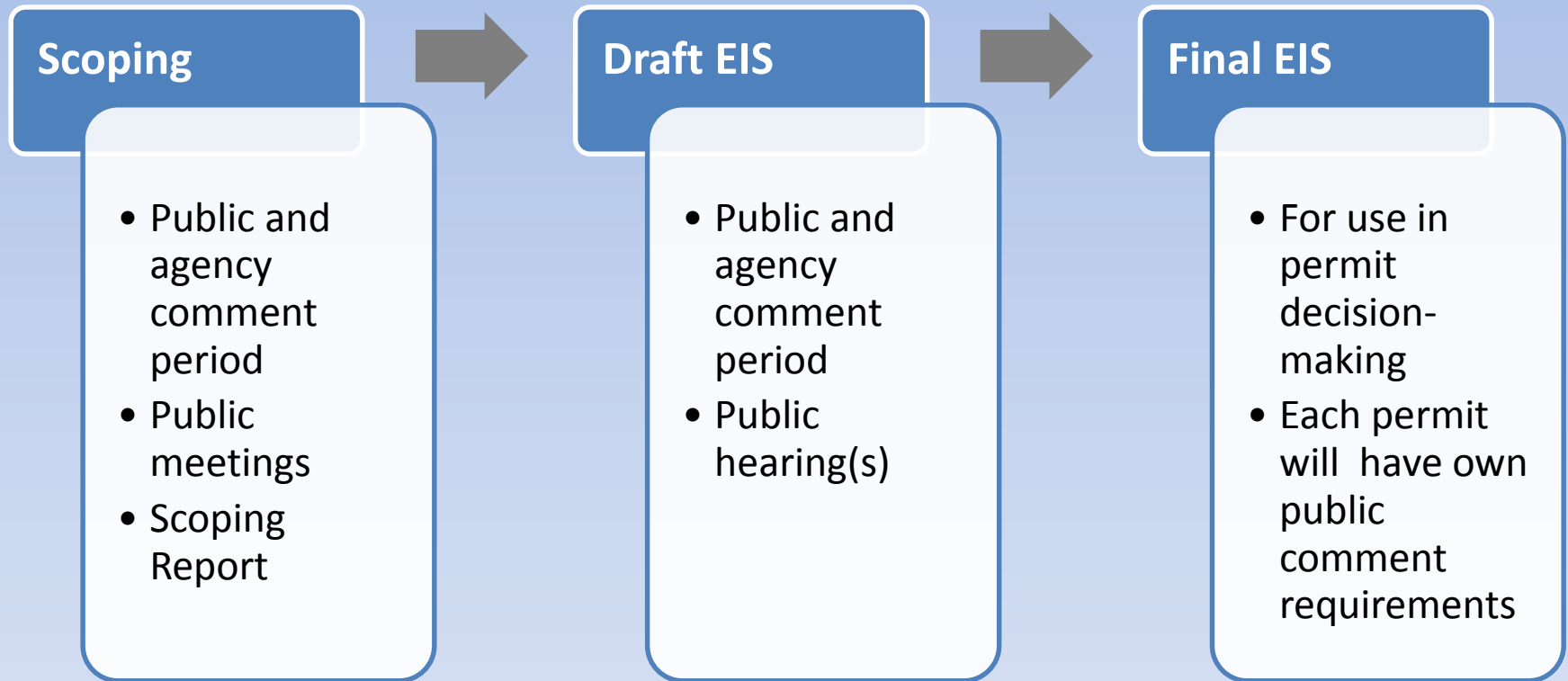# State leaders adopted the State Environmental Policy Act

State Environmental Policy Act

- SEPA is the first step after a project is proposed – a prerequisite to permit decisions

- Intended to ensure that environmental values are considered before actions are taken

- Provides information to the public and to agencies making decisions on permits

Why an Environmental Impact Statement?

- Under SEPA, an EIS is necessary if a proposal is likely to result in significant adverse environmental impacts

- Impartial discussion of potential environmental impacts from the proposal and identifies potential ways to avoid or minimize adverse impacts

Process and Public Participation

Scoping

- Public and agency comment period
- Public meetings
- Scoping Report

Draft EIS

- Public and agency comment period
- Public hearing(s)

Final EIS

- For use in permit decision-making
- Each permit will have own public comment requirements

Elements of the Environment

- Earth
- Air
  - Air Quality
  - Climate
- Water
  - Surface Water
  - Water Quality
  - Groundwater
  - Floods
- Plants & Animals
- Land & Shoreline Use

- Energy & Natural Resources
- Environmental Health
  - Hazardous Materials
  - Noise and Vibration
- Transportation
- Public Services & Utilities
- Historic and Cultural Preservation
- Aesthetics

Each Element of the Environment is similarly evaluated:

- Existing conditions

- Direct and Indirect Impacts of Proposal

- Impacts from No Action Alternative

- Cumulative Impacts

- Potential Mitigation Measures

Project vs Programmatic EIS

Project EIS

Examples:

    Wastewater treatment plant

    New road

    New factory

    Housing Development

Non Project / Programmatic EIS

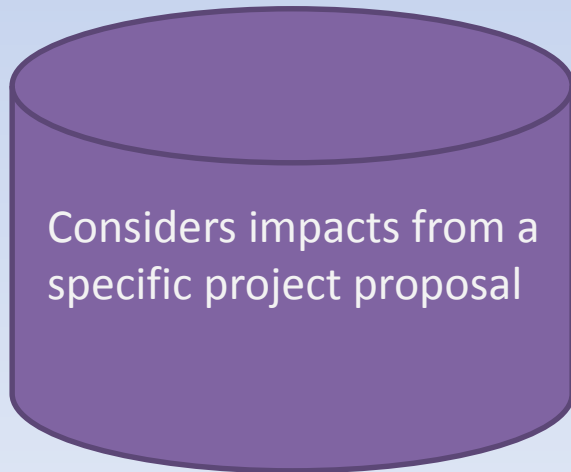**Examples:**

    Local Comprehensive Plan
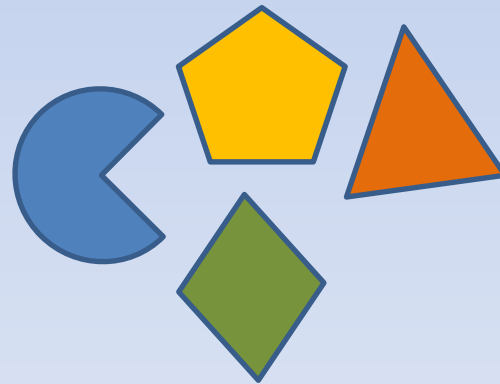
    Transportation Plan

    Yakima Integrated Plan

    Chehalis Basin Strategy

Project vs Programmatic EIS

Project EIS

- Considers impacts from a specific project proposal

- Evaluates site specific design and project specific impacts

- Includes analysis of alternatives, cumulative impacts, mitigation

- Provides relevant information for local and state permit decisions

Non Project / Programmatic EIS

- Considers and analyzes different alternatives

- Broad, "big picture" evaluation of impacts

- Includes analysis of alternatives, cumulative impacts, mitigation

- Typically informs later later SEPA review for specific projects

Thank you