

## Environmental Department - Overview

The Virgin Islands Housing Finance Authority serves as the Responsible Entity (RE) for the territory. **As the RE, VIHFA's Environmental Department conducts Environmental Reviews for all projects and programs funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).** As defined by HUD, the RE must be a unit of general local government, such as a town, city, county, state or tribe, and must comply with the procedures outlined in 24 CFR Part 58. The RE is responsible for the scope and content of the review and making all findings. **The Environmental Review process involves analyzing a project and its potential environmental impacts, and it must be conducted before funds are committed.** The environmental review process is required for all HUD-assisted projects to ensure that the proposed project does not negatively impact the surrounding environment and that the property site itself will not have adverse environmental or health effects on the public.



The Environmental Review is conducted following rules and regulation in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Under this act, there are 15 compliance factors the project must be compliant to:

### 24 CFR Part §58.6

- ❖ Airport Hazards
- ❖ Flood Insurance
- ❖ Coastal Barrier Resources

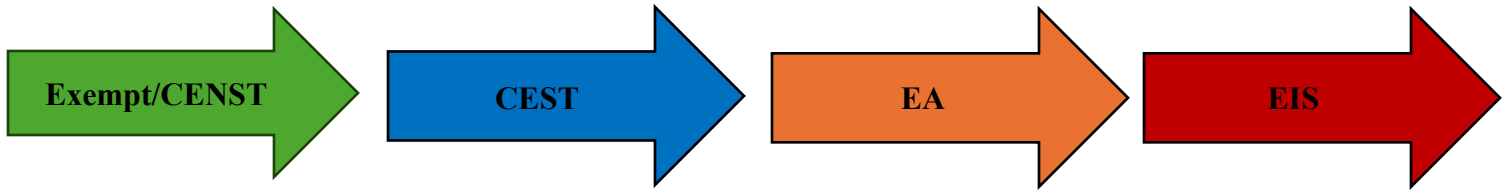


### 24 CFR Part §58.5

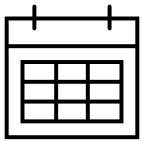
- ❖ Clean Air
- ❖ Coastal Zone Management
- ❖ Contamination and Toxic Substances
- ❖ Endangered Species
- ❖ Explosives and Flammable Hazards
- ❖ Farmlands Protection
- ❖ Floodplain Management
- ❖ Historic Preservation
- ❖ Noise Abatement and Control
- ❖ Sole Source Aquifers
- ❖ Wetlands Protection
- ❖ Wild and Scenic Rivers



A project can be assessed at **four (4)** levels of Environmental Review



- ❖ **Exempt/Categorically Excluded, Not Subject to §58.5 (CENST) – Activities that will not have a physical impact on the environment.**
- ❖ **Categorically Excluded, Subject To §58.5 and §58.6 – Activities that will have a physical impact on the environment.**
- ❖ **Environmental Assessment (EA) – Determines whether a project will have significant impact on the environment. If there are no significant findings, the review will conclude as a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).**
- ❖ **Environmental Impact Statement – Required if there is a finding of significant impact during an Environmental Assessment (EA). It is a detailed written statement for a proposed major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.**



## Timeline

A project can take **60-90 days** to complete if it does not require additional tests and/or consultations. The process can take between **90-140 days** if it requires tests and/or consultations.

- ❖ VIHFA often collaborates with other Federal and local agencies to carry out investigations for Coastal Zone Management, Endangered Species, Historic Preservation and more.
- ❖ These agencies include, but are not limited to, The Department of Planning and Natural Resources (DPNR), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Services (USFWS), Virgin Islands Port Authority (VIPA) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).



*Together, these agencies protect our precious local habitats and resources while promoting and conducting positive and innovative recovery efforts.*