

Flowchart for Processing Categorical Exclusion Actions

The Agency's categorical exclusions (CE) are listed in § 1970.53 (Categorical Exclusions Involving No or Minimal Disturbance) and § 1970.54 (Categorical Exclusions Involving Small-Scale Development). For CE actions listed in either section, Agency staff must verify that there are no extraordinary circumstances (as defined in § 1970.52). Because the CE actions listed in § 1970.54 can involve alteration of the physical environment, applicants for financial assistance for those actions must provide some documentation (an Environmental Report) to enable Agency staff to determine there are no extraordinary circumstances that would warrant a higher level of NEPA review (Exhibit C, Guidance for Preparing the Environmental Report, provides the format for applicants to follow in order to provide RD with documentation). This flowchart describes how Agency staff will process CE actions (see also § 1970.51). The following definitions apply to the flowchart:

Processing official: For Water and Waste, CF and Housing Programs, this would typically be the State Office loan specialist. For Electric and Telecoms Programs, this would be an individual in the NES or Program Office of Loan Origination and Approval.

Approval official: For Water and Waste, CF and Housing Programs, this would be the community programs director. For Electric and Telecoms Programs, this would be an individual in the Program Office of Loan Origination and Approval.

SEC: State Environmental Coordinator

NES: National Office Environmental Staff

GFR: Electric or Telecommunications Program General Field Representative

