

Memorandum

Subject: Coast Guard - Environmental Clearance of
Historic Bridges

From: Director, Office of Environmental Policy
Washington, D.C. 20590

To: Regional Federal Highway Administrators
Regions 1-10, and
Direct Federal Program Administrator

Date: January 14, 1985

Reply to
Attn. of: HEV-11

On July 10, 1984, the Coast Guard issued "Guidance for Determining the Proper Environmental Document When Assessing the Impacts on Historic Bridges." This policy was issued based on the June 18, 1984, memorandum signed by Mr. Jeffrey N. Shone, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs (copy attached). Since the Coast Guard and the Federal Highway Administration (CHIN) are frequently and jointly involved in the consideration of environmental processing of historic bridges, a decision was made to issue joint guidance to assure consistency in the administration of policy on historic bridges.

The attached revised guidance supersedes the July 10, 1984, guidance. The Coast Guard has also notified its field offices of such and will include the revised guidance in its "Bridge Administration Manual." Special note is given to paragraph 2a(3). The Coast Guard will perform the evaluation on non-Federal aid highway projects. The CHIN will perform the evaluation on Federal-aid highway projects.

This joint guidance is consistent with the philosophy and intent of the Coast Guard/CHIN memorandum of understanding of coordinating the preparation and processing of environmental documents, dated July 17, 1981. The purpose of that memorandum of understanding is to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort and complements ongoing CHIN efforts on project streamlining and one-stop environmental processing.

Please take the necessary steps to inform the Division Offices and State highway agencies that this guidance is applicable to all Federal-aid highway projects.

A copy of this guidance should be placed in Section 1 of the Environmental Guidebook until the guidebook is updated on December 1985.

/Original Signed By/
Ali F. Sevin

GUIDANCE FOR DETERMINING THE PROPER ENVIRONMENTAL
DOCUMENT WHEN ASSESSING THE IMPACTS ON HISTORIC BRIDGES

1. On March 21, 1984, the Coast Guard requested policy guidance from the Secretary's office regarding the proper level of environmental documentation required for the various degree of impacts on historic bridges. The enclosed memorandum from the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and International Affairs, dated June 18, 1964, is a response to that request.
2. The subject guidance memorandum affirms that, ordinarily, if a proposed action is determined to have a "significant effect" on an historic resource, the proper National Environmental Policy Act document is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The following guidance is provided for determining whether removal of an historic bridge will cause a significant effect and require preparation of an EIS.
 - a. Demolition of an Historic Bridge. In order to assess the) significance of the impacts associated with the demolition of an historic bridge (listed or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places), for the purpose of determining the appropriate level of the environmental documentation required, the following procedure is applicable.

Demolition of an historic bridge will require the preparation of an EIS unless the bridge is not considered important for preservation. Acceptable documentation to show importance could include any of the following:

- (1) The bridge is not identified on a completed historic bridge inventory approved by the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO)-as a bridge important for preservation, or
- (2) The bridge is not identified as important for preservation in a State historic bridge preservation plan approved by the SHPO, or
- (3) An evaluation is performed by the Coast Guard or the Federal Highway Administration (CHIN), as appropriate, in consultation with the SHPO. The CHIN shall coordinate this evaluation with the Coastal Guard on projects requiring bridge permits pursuant to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated 1981. This evaluation should identify similar types of historic bridges and conclude that demolition of the bridge in question will not cause

a substantial depletion of the resource.

If the Coast Guard or the CHIN, as appropriate, in consultation with the SHPO judges that an historic bridge is not important for preservation for reasons of its relationship to other similar bridge resources, then the proper PA documentation for the demolition of the bridge could be other than an EIS. The supporting environmental documentation would then refer to the appropriate category of information listed above.

- b. Alteration and Modification of Historic Bridges. The responsible official should make a case-by-case decision as to whether an EIS is required for alteration or modification of an historic bridge based on whether the action constitutes a "significant effect" on the property or its surroundings.
3. Other environmental factors could require an EIS in individual cases. Therefore, each case must be assessed on an individual basis with proper weight given to particular circumstances.
 4. For all projects which affect historic bridges, Section 4(f) and Section 106 procedures must be followed.
 5. Consultation with Headquarters staff is recommended when field offices cannot reach agreement.

/Original Signed by/

J. M. Seabrooke
Captain, U.S. Coast Guard
Programs
Chief, Bridge Administration Division
By direction of the Commandant
Administration

January 7, 1985

/Original Signed by/

Eugene W. Cleckely
Chief, Environmental
Division
Federal Highway

January 7, 1985