FOCUS
DEP

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New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

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Is Your Project Ready for DEP?
Use DEP's Readiness Checklist for Your Next Project

The DEP has created a system to take out the challenge of determining what permits and information are necessary for applicants with major projects. The DEP Project Readiness Checklist offers applicants an overview of the information needed for processing and takes advantage of DEP's enhanced data access for businesses and the public.

Use of the Readiness Checklist will encourage a more visible, comprehensive and progressive approach to environmental protection, without reducing environmental standards.

Saving Time and Resources
Shepherding a major project through DEP's diverse permitting programs can be time consuming for both DEP and the applicant. In light of the need to make efficient use of limited resources, using the readiness checklist before the start of the regulatory process will help identify if a proposed project is ready for a pre-application meeting or for detailed review by the Department. Use of the simple checklist will identify for applicants if there are regulatory issues that need to be addressed before beginning the DEP review process. This may save both the applicant's and the DEP's time and resources.
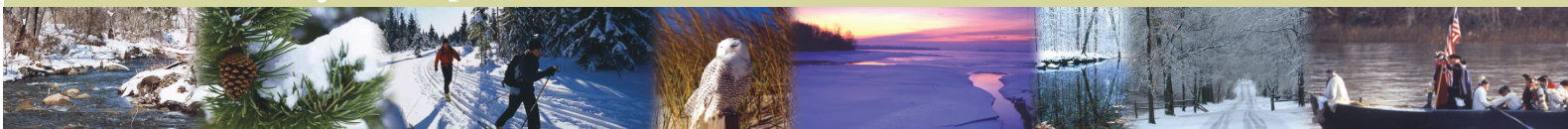
The checklist is organized into a series of questions to identify project readiness and to highlight environmentally sustainable projects. Applicants are also asked to voluntarily identify and propose innovative environmental enhancements that go beyond compliance. Examples include high performance and/or green building design, open space preservation and restoration of natural resources.

Looking at the Whole Project
"By looking at the proposed project holistically, environmentally sustainable projects in locations with existing or readily available infrastructure and no natural resource constraints can be identified upfront. Redevelop-

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ment and brownfield projects are also great examples of sustainable development that would be highlighted through the use of the checklist," said Liz Semple, DEP Manager for the Office of Planning and Sustainable Communities.

DEP recommends that the Readiness Checklist be completed prior to pre-application meetings for large projects. Once the checklist is finalized, it is envisioned that all major projects that need DEP approvals will voluntarily complete the Readiness Checklist. Then the applicant will be prepared with a proposal that will enhance the environment and a coordinated pre-application meeting can be scheduled.

Using New Information Technology
Full implementation of the Readiness Checklist will also integrate the application's information with DEP's data systems by providing a tool that "automates" project information for the applicant and informs DEP regulatory programs. The Department's advancements in information technology systems, such as NJEMS, i-MapNJ, Data Miner, ENDEX and GIS, will provide unprecedented opportunities to share information and review it in an integrated and strategic manner. Constant improvements in electronic data gives DEP managers, regulated entities, local governments, and the public the ability to combine environmental data layers for better decision making and better communication.

Sharing Your Comments
The Readiness Checklist is currently posted online at **www.nj.gov/dep/readiness**. Please provide your comments and suggestions on the checklist. The Readiness Checklist is being sent to all state and local agencies for their use in screening projects from a comprehensive environmental perspective.