

Study Process



This study follows multiple approved processes:

- Ontario Ministry of Transportation Class Environmental Assessment for Provincial Transportation Facilities (MTO Class EA)
- U.S. National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA)

The MTO Class Environmental Assessment Process

The MTO Class EA process is an approved process for highway planning, design, and construction projects. The study is following a Group 'B' process which is completed for major improvements to existing provincial transportation facilities.

A *Transportation Environmental Study Report* (TESR) will be filed for a 30-day public review period at the end of the study. During the 30-day public review period all comments are recorded and responded to and the public has an opportunity to request a Bump-Up / Part II Order from the Minister of the Environment and Climate Change. The TESR will summarize the study process, including a description of the project and its purpose, the consultation process, specific environmental effects and mitigation measures, the generation and evaluation of alternatives, and the selection of the Preferred Plan.

As part of this project and under the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act, 2012* (CEAA 2012), a project description will be submitted to the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (the Agency) to determine whether a federal environmental assessment of the designated project is required. Following the submission of the project description, the Agency will have 45 days, including a 20-day public comment period, to conduct a screening of the designated project and determine whether a federal environmental assessment is required.

The MnDOT Environmental Review Process and NEPA

Minnesota Department of Transportation's (MnDOT's) environmental review will follow Minnesota's environmental review process set by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), and Minnesota Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), to fulfill requirements at both the state and federal level. A combined Environmental Assessment / Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EA/EAW) will be prepared. The EA/EAW uses public input and technical analysis to determine the needs, deficiencies, impacts, mitigation and design of the proposed project.

The Draft EA/EAW will be distributed for public comment over a 30-day public review period. At the federal level, the EA is used to provide sufficient environmental documentation to determine the need for an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or that a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate. At the state level, the EAW is used to provide sufficient environmental documentation to determine the need for an EIS or that a Negative Declaration is appropriate.

Coordinated Environmental Assessment Process

