

## Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of CEQA

#### California Environmental Quality Act

In 1970, the California legislature enacted the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which is codified in the Public Resources Code, starting at Section 21000 [http://www.ceres.ca.gov/topic/env\\_law/ceqa/stat](http://www.ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/stat). The Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (*CEQA Guidelines*) [http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env\\_law/ceqa/guidelines](http://ceres.ca.gov/topic/env_law/ceqa/guidelines), are in Title 14, Section 15000, of the California Code of Regulations. Hereinafter, references to the CEQA statutes in the Public Resources Code are shown as CEQA Statutes Section 21XXX, and references to the Guidelines in the California Code of Regulations are shown as CEQA Guidelines Section 15XXX. CEQA was closely modeled on the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Both acts were conceived as a means to require public agencies to consider and disclose to the public the environmental implications of their actions. Unlike NEPA, CEQA imposes an obligation to implement mitigation measures or project alternatives to mitigate significant adverse environmental effects, if these measures or alternatives are feasible. Thus, CEQA establishes both a procedural obligation to analyze and make public adverse physical environmental effects, and a substantive obligation to mitigate significant impacts.

#### Environmental Impact Report

Probably the best-known element of CEQA is its requirement that public agencies prepare an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) whenever a proposed project may cause significant effects on the environment. According to CEQA Statutes Section 21002.1(a) <http://ceres.ca.gov/ceqa/stat/chap1.html>: “The purpose of an environmental impact report is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided.”

In a practical sense, EIRs serve other important functions in addition to meeting the legal requirements of CEQA. EIRs, although largely technical documents focusing on the physical environment, are intended to provide an opportunity for public participation in the decision-making process for proposed projects and to provide the public and decision makers with full information about the impacts of a project. Thus, the EIR process serves as a framework for public dialogue about the adverse impacts, as well as the merits, of proposed projects.

#### UC CEQA Compliance

Successful CEQA compliance for the University of California (UC or University) requires not only the preparation of technically sufficient and legally adequate documents, but also the establishment and maintenance of a sound working relationship with the community. By using the CEQA process to ensure that EIRs address environmental impacts and take public concerns into account, the University can meet its legal requirements, as well as further the objective of being a good neighbor in the community.

CEQA Statutes Section 21080.09 specifies how CEQA applies to UC Long Range Development Plans, and other University planning activities. A “Long Range Development Plan” is defined as a physical development and land use plan to meet the academic and institutional objectives for a particular campus or medical center of public higher education. The selection of a location for a particular campus and the approval of a long range development plan are subject to CEQA and require the preparation of an environmental impact report. Environmental effects relating to changes in enrollment levels shall be considered for each campus or medical center of public higher education in the environmental impact report prepared for the long range development plan for the campus or medical center. Approval of a project on a campus or medical center may be addressed in a tiered environmental analysis based on a long range development plan environmental impact report. Compliance with Section 21080.09 satisfies the obligations of public higher education to consider the environmental impact of academic and enrollment plans as they affect campuses or medical centers, provided that any such plans shall become effective only after the environmental effects of those plans have been analyzed in a long range development plan environmental impact report or tiered analysis.