

# Public Participation and the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion: NEPA and NRDA

## NEPA

### What is NEPA?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) is a law that requires federal agencies to examine the environmental impacts of their proposed activities. Under NEPA, if a federal action is likely to “significantly affect” the environment, the agency must prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) before taking action.

An EIS must explain the action’s purpose and need and anticipated environmental impacts, look at alternatives and the impacts of those alternatives, identify ways in which impacts can be reduced, and give the public a chance to comment.

## NRDA

### What is NRDA?

A Natural Resource Damage Assessment (or “NRDA”) is a process to figure out injuries to natural resources, come up with a plan to fix those injuries, and then fix them through restoration plans (RPs).

The NRDA program in Louisiana is managed by the Louisiana Trustee Implementation Group (TIG), a group of federal and state agency representatives.

In the case of the Mid-Barataria Sediment Diversion (MBSD), the NRDA process is a direct response to the *Deepwater Horizon* oil spill.

To date, \$5 billion has been allocated to Louisiana through NRDA to use for restoration projects like the MBSD.

## MBSD Timeline for NEPA and NRDA: Where are we now?

### NEPA



### NRDA

### How can I participate in the NEPA process?

Even after the formal public comment period is closed, you can share information and opinions with the agency preparing the EIS at any time. The Final EIS report will be available for public review for at least 30 days before the decision is signed and finalized by the agency.

### How can I participate in the NRDA process?

Attend public meetings—The Louisiana TIG hosts a meeting for the public at least once a year.

Suggest project ideas—The public can suggest project ideas (e.g., on the trustees’ website).

Comment on draft Restoration Plans (RP).

### Will I get a response to my comment?

For both **NEPA** and **NRDA**, if you submit a comment during the public comment period following the release of the draft document, the **agency preparing an EIS** and the **TIG** are required to respond. The agency is not required to respond to comments or information received outside the official comment period, or to comments received in response to the Final EIS.