



California  
**Department of  
Conservation**  
Division of Land Resource  
Protection

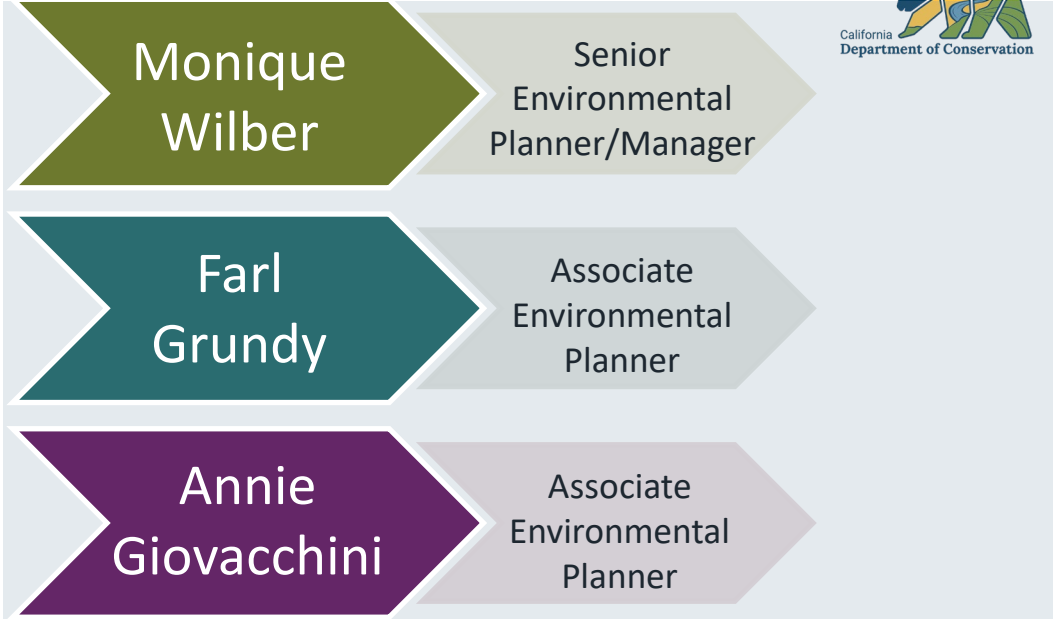
# Williamson Act / CEQA & Farmland Mitigation

Land Conservation Act of 1965

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# Williamson Act & CEQA Program



# Team WA/CEQA!





# History and Purpose of CEQA



California statute passed in 1970, in response to the first Federally passed environmental protection statute the National Environmental Policy Act

Purpose:

- Prevent significant, avoidable damage to the environment
- Encourage public participation
- Foster informed public decision making
- Ensure transparency in governmental decision-making process



## What is CEQA and Why Does it Matter?

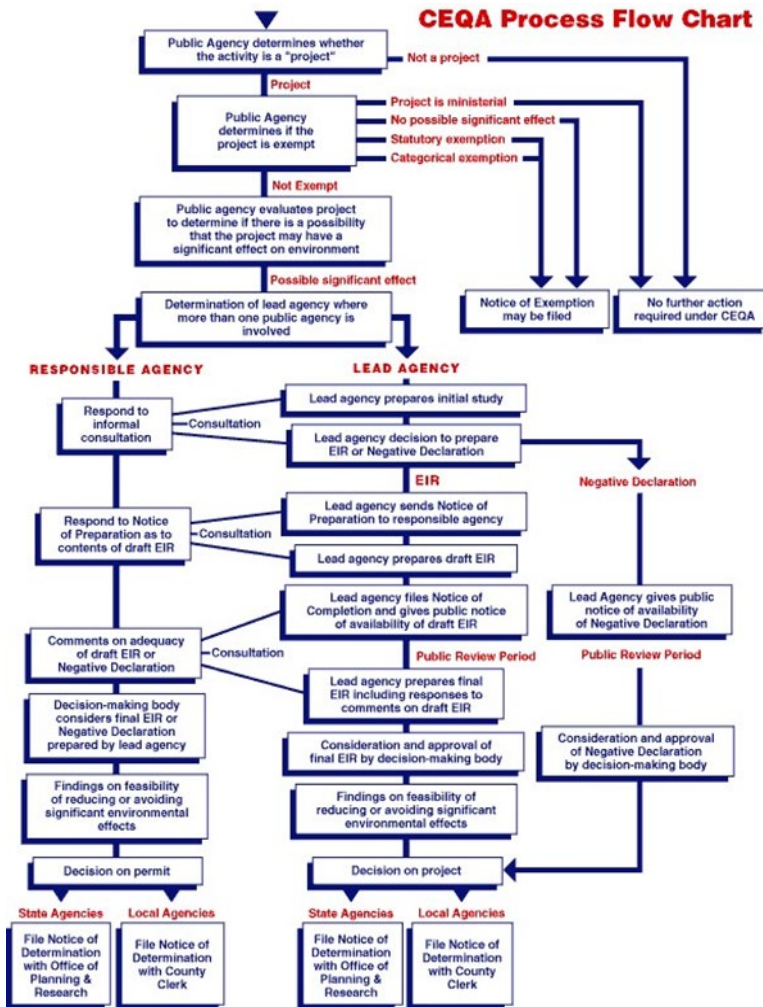
- State and Local agencies
- Consideration of environmental effects
- Disclosure of effects
- Reduction of effects
- Mitigation measures
- Project alternatives





# When Does CEQA Apply?

- Public and private projects
- Direct or indirect environmental change
- Discretionary rather than ministerial





## What does CEQA Actually Entail?

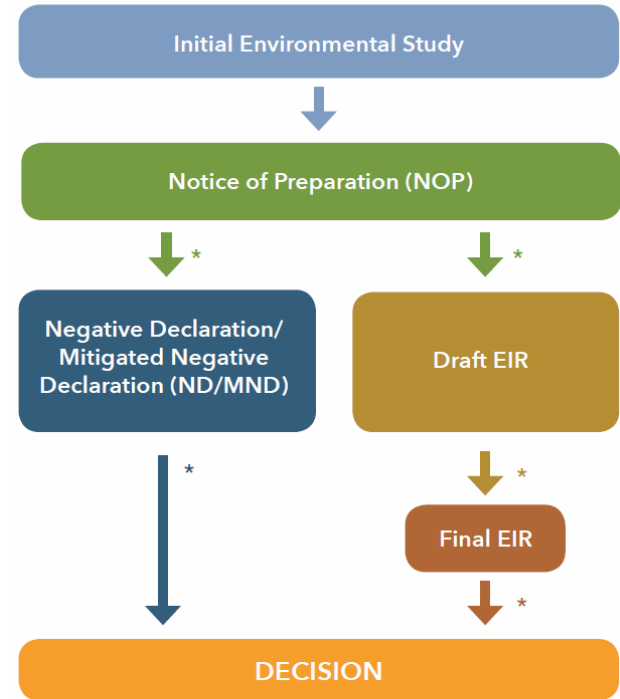
- Lead Agency
- Agency coordination
- Documentation
- Appendix G checklist
  - Aesthetics
  - Agriculture and Forestry Resources
  - Air Quality
  - Biological Resources
  - Cultural Resources
  - Geology / Soils
  - Greenhouse Gas Emissions
  - Hydrology / Water Quality
  - Noise
  - Population / Housing
  - Transportation
  - Utilities / Service Systems
  - Wildfire



# Levels of CEQA Documentation

- Initial Study
- Negative Declaration
- Mitigated Negative Declaration
- Environmental Impact Report

## The CEQA process at a glance

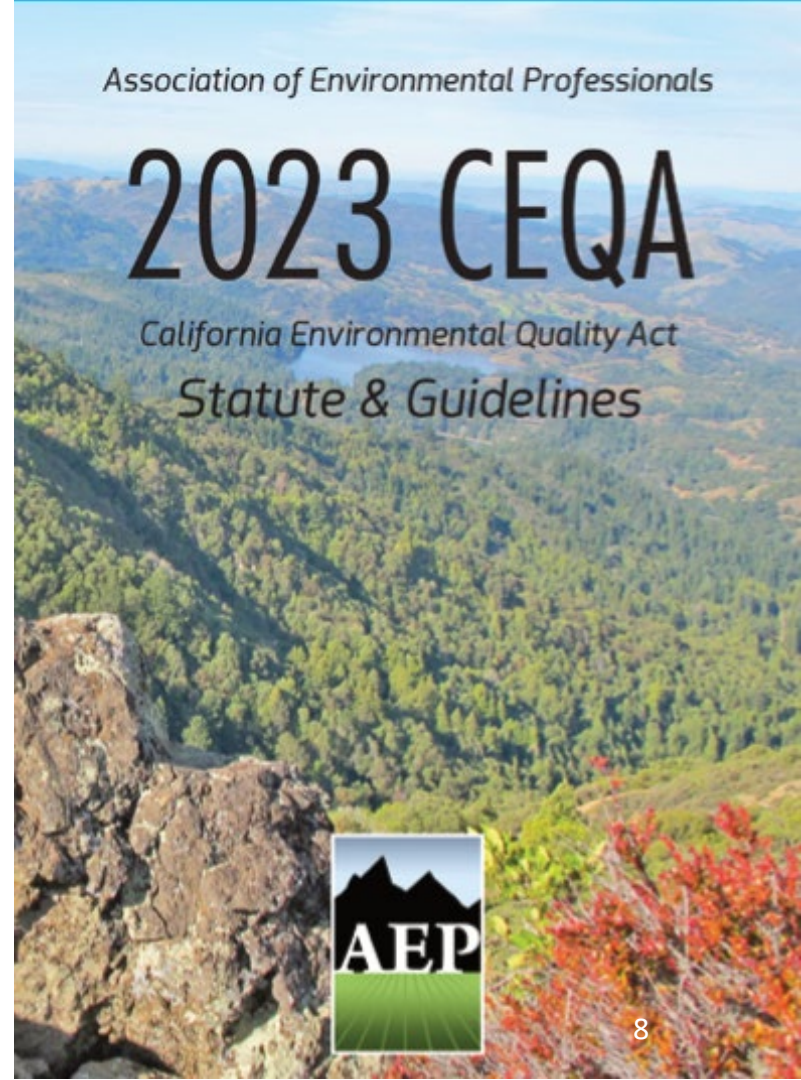


Each \* represents a place in the process where public comments on the proposal are accepted. Comments are important because only comments/concerns raised during the comment period are eligible for legal review. Only people or groups that have commented have legal standing.



## Division of Land Resource Protection's Role

- Commenting agency per California Public Resources Code Section 614(a)&(b)
- Review environmental documents related to the Department's areas of responsibility and expertise
- [CEQA \(Appendix G II. Agricultural Resources\)](#)
- [FMMP mapping data](#)
- [WA enrollment data](#)
- [LESA model](#)







# CEQA Appendix G:



**II. AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES.** In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# DLRP thresholds for comment



- Williamson Act contracted land
- State/Department funded easements
- Prime Farmland > 10 acres
- Statewide or Unique Farmland > 40 acres



# Possible Review Documents

## CEQA related:

- Early Consultation
- Public Scoping Hearing
- Initial Study
- Notice of Exemption
- Notice of Preparation
- Negative Declaration
- Mitigated Negative Declaration
- DEIR/EIR/SEIR/REIR

## Williamson Act related:

- Ag Preserve Boundary Adjustment
- Solar Use Permit
- Cancellation
- Public Acquisition
- Annexation
- New Contracts
- Contract Non-renewal

## County and City related:

- Lot Line Adjustments
- Subdivision Applications
- Tentative Subdivision Maps
- Rezone/Prezone Applications
- Coastal Zone Permit Applications
- General Plan Updates/Amendments
- Ordinance Amendments
- Site Plan Application
- Minor Use Permit
- Conditional Use Permit
- Special Use Permit
- Excavation Application
- Commission Hearings
- LAFCo Hearings

Year	Projects reviewed	Comment letters written
2020	1116	30
2021	1103	47
2022	975	36



## Typical DOC Comments

- Compliance with WA Government Code
- Compliance with City/County GP
- Compliance with Easement guidelines
- Mitigation for impact to farmland
- 1:1 Ag easements
- In-lieu of fees
- [California Council of Land Trusts](#)



## Potential WA Impacts

- Incompatibility with the Act
- Non-renewal of Contract
- Cancellation
- Partial Cancellation



# THANK YOU

Questions?

Williamson Act/CEQA Team  
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<https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/wa>