

**WAC 197-11-535 Public hearings and meetings.** (1) If a public hearing on the proposal is held under some other requirement of law, such hearing shall be open to consideration of the environmental impact of the proposal, together with any environmental document that is available. This does not require extension of the comment periods for environmental documents.

(2) In all other cases a public hearing on the environmental impact of a proposal shall be held whenever one or more of the following situations occur:

(a) The lead agency determines, in its sole discretion, that a public hearing would assist it in meeting its responsibility to implement the purposes and policies of SEPA and these rules; or

(b) When fifty or more persons residing within the jurisdiction of the lead agency, or who would be adversely affected by the environmental impact of the proposal, make written request to the lead agency within thirty days of issuance of the draft EIS; or

(c) When two or more agencies with jurisdiction over a proposal make written request to the lead agency within thirty days of the issuance of the draft EIS.

(3) Whenever a public hearing is held under subsection (2) of this section, it shall occur no earlier than fifteen days from the date the draft EIS is issued, nor later than fifty days from its issuance. Notice shall be given under WAC 197-11-502(6) and 197-11-510 and may be combined with other agency notice.

(4) If a public hearing is required under this chapter, it shall be open to discussion of all environmental documents and any written comments that have been received by the lead agency prior to the hearing. A copy of the environmental document shall be available at the public hearing.

(5) Comments at public hearings should be as specific as possible (see WAC 197-11-550).

(6) Agencies and their designees may hold informal public meetings or workshops. Such gatherings may be more flexible than public hearings and are not subject to the above notice and similar requirements for public hearings.

(7) Public meetings held by local governments under chapter 36.70B RCW may be used to meet SEPA public hearing requirements as long as the requirements for public hearing in this section are met. A public hearing under this section need not be an open record hearing as defined in RCW 36.70B.020(3).

[Statutory Authority: 1995 c 347 (ESHB 1724) and RCW 43.21C.110. WSR 97-21-030 (Order 95-16), § 197-11-535, filed 10/10/97, effective 11/10/97. Statutory Authority: RCW 43.21C.110. WSR 84-05-020 (Order DE 83-39), § 197-11-535, filed 2/10/84, effective 4/4/84.]