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Preserving America's Heritage

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ACHP ISSUES NEW PROCEDURES DESIGNED TO ACCELERATE APPROVAL OF COMMUNICATIONS PROJECTS

WASHINGTON, D.C. – As part of its efforts to expedite the regulatory approval of communications technologies, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) today announced new procedures for the review of next-generation broadband projects on federal lands as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

In a notice to be published in the *Federal Register*, the ACHP published a Program Comment on the permitting and approval of next-generation technology, or 5G, projects proposed on federal lands and properties. Program Comments, once issued by the ACHP under the Section 106 regulations at 36 CFR § 800.14(e) [<http://www.achp.gov/regs-rev04.pdf>], establish tailored procedures that a federal agency can use for reviewing an entire category of “undertakings” rather than conducting separate Section 106 reviews for each individual undertaking.

Communications activities covered by the accelerated review processes outlined in the Program Comment include the collocation of antennae on existing wireless towers; installation of aerial communications cable; burying communications cable in existing road, railroad, and utility rights-of-way; construction of new communications towers; and removal of obsolete communications equipment and towers. Recognizing that many telecommunications projects present limited or no impacts to historic properties, the Program Comment works to simplify and speed up Section 106 reviews for these projects.

“These new procedures will facilitate speedier telecommunications project approvals across the nation,” said ACHP Chairman Milford Wayne Donaldson, FAIA. “Furthermore, the new process is in keeping with the Administration’s goals to expedite the approval of high-priority infrastructure projects with maximum efficiency and effectiveness.”

Today’s announcement extends process efficiencies that have been used on private property to projects that include federal lands and properties. In 2001 and 2005, the Federal Communications Commission, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers and the ACHP executed two Nationwide Programmatic Agreements (NPAs) to accelerate the siting of towers and the collocation of antennae on existing towers. The Program Comment builds on the success of the NPAs and will enable federal land and property managing agencies to deploy communications projects, especially broadband activities, more rapidly.

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The ACHP will be conducting webinars to explain how federal land and property managers should carry out the terms of the Program Comment. They will also address how project proponents can improve the coordination of private-public communications projects using new these efficiencies. Information regarding the dates and times for the Program Comment webinars will be posted on the ACHP's website.

About the ACHP: An independent federal agency, the ACHP promotes the economic, educational, environmental, sustainability and cultural values of historic preservation and advises the President and Congress on national historic preservation policy. It also influences federal activities, programs, and policies that affect historic and cultural properties. See www.achp.gov for more information.