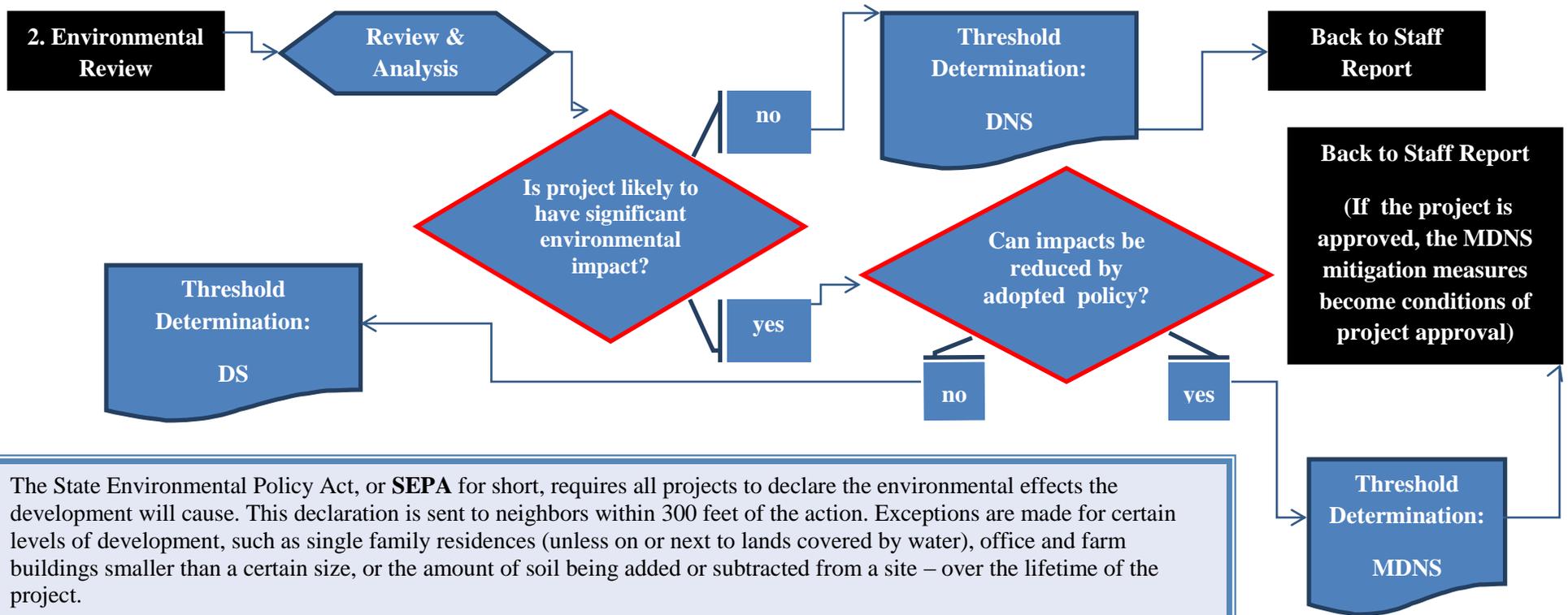


## Current Planning Procedures for SEPA determinations



The State Environmental Policy Act, or **SEPA** for short, requires all projects to declare the environmental effects the development will cause. This declaration is sent to neighbors within 300 feet of the action. Exceptions are made for certain levels of development, such as single family residences (unless on or next to lands covered by water), office and farm buildings smaller than a certain size, or the amount of soil being added or subtracted from a site – over the lifetime of the project.

**After any application is submitted...**the environmental checklist submitted with the application is reviewed by the jurisdiction’s Responsible Official. If the project is not exempt from SEPA review, the Responsible Official reviews the project, the environmental checklist, the land, the jurisdiction’s policies and regulations, and issues one of three determinations:

- A **DNS** states that the project as submitted will likely have no significant detrimental environmental impact.
- An **MDNS** states that the project likely will have detrimental environmental impacts unless specific mitigation measures are used to lessen the effects. The measures can be based on adopted policies rather than regulations. If mitigation measures rely solely on regulations, a DNS can be issued and the regulations used to condition the project permit.
- A **DS** states that the project as submitted likely will have significant detrimental environmental impacts and no mitigation measure that the jurisdiction can require based on current policies and regulations will sufficiently reduce the measures to an acceptable level. When issued, the applicant must prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS).

The **DS** creates a review loop that is complex and covers more area than this page. It begins with a scoping hearing that sets the topics the EIS will address, which leads to a Draft EIS, and then a Final EIS. Comment periods abound through all portions of this process. The issuance of a DS will place a project on “hold” until the FEIS is circulated and adopted.

For more information, read:

**BMC 12.04 & 12.06**

**RCW 43.21C**

**WAC 197-11**

SEPA web page at  
Department of Ecology:  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/sepa/e-review.html>