

EPA Explains...

The Regulatory Process

Writing regulations is one important way EPA makes a big impact in protecting the environment. Federal agencies must set regulations to put the laws passed by Congress into practice on a day-to-day basis.

Congress passes a bill and the President signs it into law.



Think Clean Air Act or the Clean Water Act

EPA researches the new law

Consult scientific studies and receive input from local governments, scientists, and businesses



EPA proposes a regulation and requests public comment*

*Comment periods are at least 30 days long!



The proposal is listed in the Federal Register (FR) (think of it as a large interactive library of regulations)

EPA reviews public input and revises the proposed regulation accordingly. The final rule is published in the FR and in EPA's official docket on Regulations.gov.

EPA considers comments and issues a final rule



The regulation is codified



When a regulation is "codified" it means that it is printed in the Federal Register and then added to the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

EPA begins to enforce the regulation and will take civil or criminal enforcement action against violators of environmental laws. Enforcing environmental laws is a central part of how we protect human health and the environment

The regulation goes into effect



To learn more and get involved in the regulatory process, visit <https://www.epa.gov/laws-regulations/basics-regulatory-process>.

