

FACT SHEET

What is the California Environmental Quality Act or CEQA?

- ◆ State law implemented in 1970
- ◆ One of California's most important environmental laws, requiring consideration of environmental consequences of proposed projects
- ◆ Applies to projects subject to discretionary approval by a California state or local government agency

What is the Purpose of CEQA?

- ◆ Inform government agency decisionmakers and the public of potential environmental consequences of a project, and disclose reasons for approval if adverse impacts may occur
- ◆ Identify ways to avoid, minimize, and prevent environmental impacts of projects through alternatives or mitigation
- ◆ Encourage public and agency participation and feedback on proposed projects, potential impacts, and avoidance or mitigation measures

What is the Role of the Public?

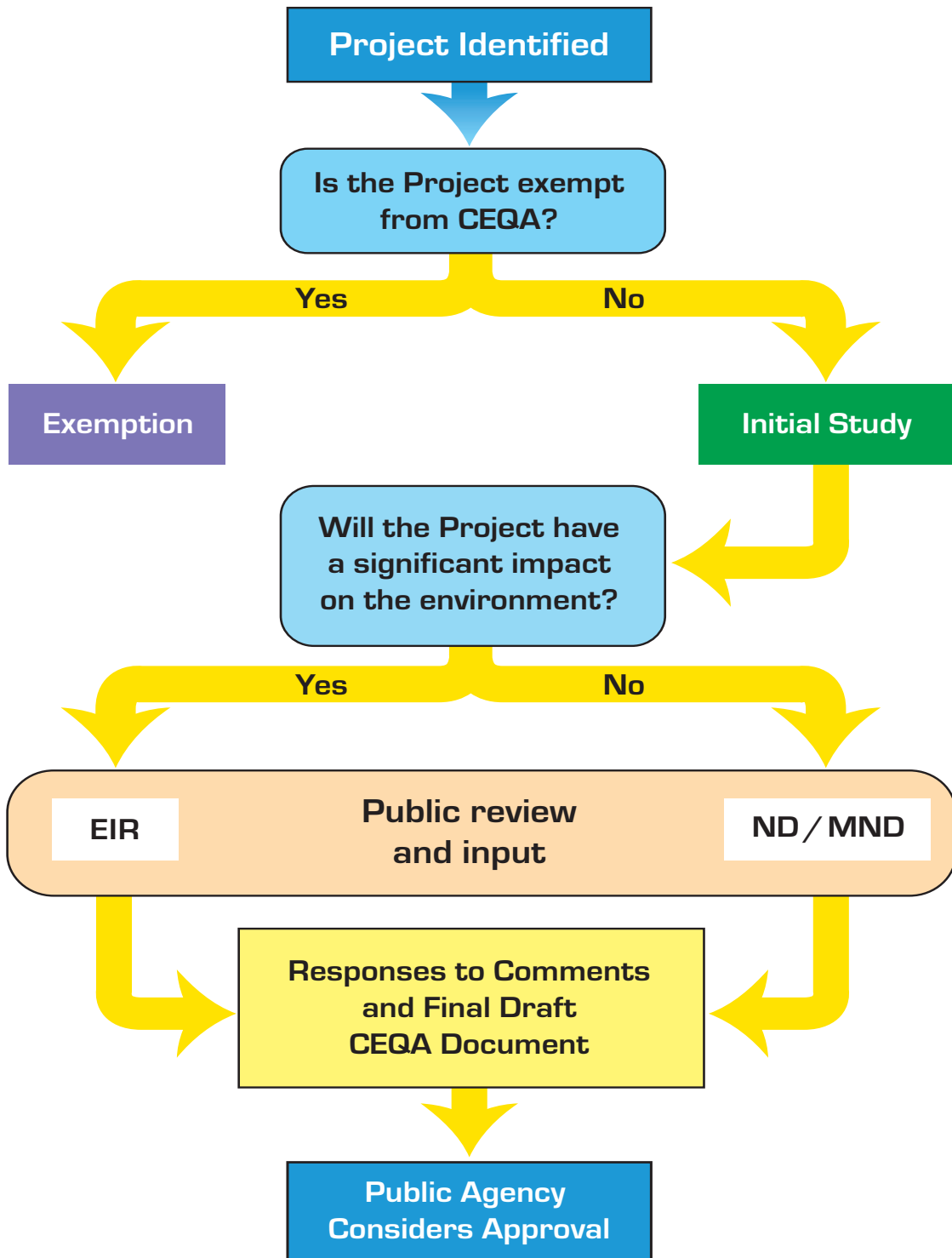
- ◆ Public involvement is key to the CEQA process
- ◆ The public is encouraged to:
 - Participate during the public review period to provide feedback on the proposed project
 - Comment on the adequacy of environmental documents
 - Inform project design, alternatives, and avoidance and mitigation measures

Key CEQA Terms

- ◆ **Project** = an activity with the potential to result in a direct or indirect change in the environment
- ◆ **Lead Agency** = public agency that has principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project
- ◆ **Discretionary Action** = actions that require judgement or consideration prior to approval by a public agency
- ◆ **Exemption** = types of projects determined to be exempt from CEQA
 - **Categorical Exemption** = applicable to classes of projects determined not have an impact on the environment
 - **Statutory Exemption** = applicable to projects that are exempted from CEQA by the State Legislature
- ◆ **Initial Study** = analysis by a Lead Agency to determine what level of review will be required based on potential environmental impacts associated with a proposed project
- ◆ **Mitigation** = requirement(s) placed on a project to reduce or eliminate environmental impacts
- ◆ **Negative Declaration (ND)** = a document describing the reasons a project will not result in significant effects on the environment
- ◆ **Mitigated ND (MND)** = same as ND, but includes measures for avoiding or mitigating otherwise significant effects on the environment
- ◆ **Environmental Impact Report (EIR)** = a document informing public and policymakers of significant environmental effects of a proposed project and ways to minimize those effects, and to evaluate project alternatives



PROCESS FLOW CHART



For more information on the CEQA process, visit the Governor's Office of Planning and Research at www.opr.ca.gov/CEQA