

**NATIONWIDE PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT FOR REVIEW OF  
EFFECTS ON HISTORIC PROPERTIES FOR  
CERTAIN UNDERTAKINGS APPROVED BY THE FEDERAL  
COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION**

September 2004

INTRODUCTION

WHEREAS, Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (“NHPA”) (codified at 16 U.S.C. § 470f), requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of certain of their Undertakings on Historic Properties (see Section II, below), included in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (“National Register”), and to afford the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (“Council”) a reasonable opportunity to comment with regard to such Undertakings; and

WHEREAS, under the authority granted by Congress in the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (47 U.S.C. § 151 *et seq.*), the Federal Communications Commission (“Commission”) establishes rules and procedures for the licensing of non-federal government communications services, and the registration of certain antenna structures in the United States and its Possessions and Territories; and

WHEREAS, Congress and the Commission have deregulated or streamlined the application process regarding the construction of individual Facilities in many of the Commission’s licensed services; and

WHEREAS, under the framework established in the Commission’s environmental rules, 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1301-1.1319, Commission licensees and applicants for authorizations and antenna structure registrations are required to prepare, and the Commission is required to independently review and approve, a pre-construction Environmental Assessment (“EA”) in cases where a proposed tower or antenna may significantly affect the environment, including situations where a proposed tower or antenna may affect Historic Properties that are either listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register, including properties of religious and cultural importance to an Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization (“NHO”) that meet the National Register criteria; and

WHEREAS, the Council has adopted rules implementing Section 106 of the NHPA (codified at 36 C.F.R. Part 800) and setting forth the process, called the “Section 106 process,” for complying with the NHPA; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Commission’s rules and the terms of this Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for Review of Effects on Historic Properties for Certain Undertakings Approved by the Federal Communications Commission (“Nationwide Agreement”), Applicants (*see* Section II.A.2) have been authorized, consistent with the terms of the memorandum from the Council to the Commission, titled “Delegation of Authority for

the Section 106 Review of Telecommunications Projects,” dated September 21, 2000, to initiate, coordinate, and assist the Commission with compliance with many aspects of the Section 106 review process for their Facilities; and

WHEREAS, in August 2000, the Council established a Telecommunications Working Group (the “Working Group”) to provide a forum for the Commission, the Council, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers (“Conference”), individual State Historic Preservation Officers (“SHPOs”), Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (“THPOs”), other tribal representatives, communications industry representatives, and other interested members of the public to discuss improved Section 106 compliance and to develop methods of streamlining the Section 106 review process; and

WHEREAS, Section 214 of the NHPA (16 U.S.C. § 470v) authorizes the Council to promulgate regulations implementing exclusions from Section 106 review, and Section 800.14(b) of the Council’s regulations (36 C.F.R § 800.14(b)) allows for programmatic agreements to streamline and tailor the Section 106 review process to particular federal programs, if they are consistent with the Council’s regulations; and

WHEREAS, the Commission, the Council, and the Conference executed on March 16, 2001, the Nationwide Programmatic Agreement for the Collocation of Wireless Antennas (the “Collocation Agreement”), in order to streamline review for the collocation of antennas on existing towers and other structures and thereby reduce the need for the construction of new towers (Attachment 1 to this Nationwide Agreement); and

WHEREAS, the Council, the Conference, and the Commission now agree it is desirable to further streamline and tailor the Section 106 review process for Facilities that are not excluded from Section 106 review under the Collocation Agreement while protecting Historic Properties that are either listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register; and

WHEREAS, the Working Group agrees that a nationwide programmatic agreement is a desirable and effective way to further streamline and tailor the Section 106 review process as it applies to Facilities; and

WHEREAS, this Nationwide Agreement will, upon its execution by the Council, the Conference, and the Commission, constitute a substitute for the Council’s rules with respect to certain Commission Undertakings; and

WHEREAS, the Commission sought public comment on a draft of this Nationwide Agreement through a *Notice of Proposed Rulemaking* released on June 9, 2003;

WHEREAS, the Commission has actively sought and received participation and comment from Indian tribes and NHOs regarding this Nationwide Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has consulted with federally recognized Indian tribes regarding this Nationwide Agreement (*see Report and Order*, FCC 04-222, at ¶ 31); and

WHEREAS, this Nationwide Agreement provides for appropriate public notification and participation in connection with the Section 106 process; and

WHEREAS, Section 101(d)(6) of the NHPA provides that federal agencies “shall consult with any Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization” that attaches religious and cultural significance to properties of traditional religious and cultural importance that may be determined to be eligible for inclusion in the National Register and that might be affected by a federal undertaking (16 U.S.C. § 470a(d)(6)); and

WHEREAS, the Commission has adopted a “Statement of Policy on Establishing a Government-to-Government Relationship with Indian Tribes” dated June 23, 2000, pursuant to which the Commission: recognizes the unique legal relationship that exists between the federal government and Indian tribal governments, as reflected in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, federal statutes, Executive orders, and numerous court decisions; affirms the federal trust relationship with Indian tribes, and recognizes that this historic trust relationship requires the federal government to adhere to certain fiduciary standards in its dealings with Indian tribes; commits to working with Indian tribes on a government-to-government basis consistent with the principles of tribal self-governance; commits, in accordance with the federal government’s trust responsibility, and to the extent practicable, to consult with tribal governments prior to implementing any regulatory action or policy that will significantly or uniquely affect tribal governments, their land and resources; strives to develop working relationships with tribal governments, and will endeavor to identify innovative mechanisms to facilitate tribal consultations in the Commission’s regulatory processes; and endeavors to streamline its administrative process and procedures to remove undue burdens that its decisions and actions place on Indian tribes; and

WHEREAS, the Commission does not delegate under this Programmatic Agreement any portion of its responsibilities to Indian tribes and NHOs, including its obligation to consult under Section 101(d)(6) of the NHPA; and

WHEREAS, the terms of this Nationwide Agreement are consistent with and do not attempt to abrogate the rights of Indian tribes or NHOs to consult directly with the Commission regarding the construction of Facilities; and

WHEREAS, the execution and implementation of this Nationwide Agreement will not preclude Indian tribes or NHOs, SHPO/THPOs, local governments, or members of the public from filing complaints with the Commission or the Council regarding effects on Historic Properties from any Facility or any activity covered under the terms of the Nationwide Agreement; and

WHEREAS, Indian tribes and NHOs may request Council involvement in Section 106 cases that present issues of concern to Indian tribes or NHOs (see 36 C.F.R. Part 800, Appendix A, Section (c)(4)); and

WHEREAS, the Commission, after consulting with federally recognized Indian tribes, has developed an electronic Tower Construction Notification System through which

Indian tribes and NHOs may voluntarily identify the geographic areas in which Historic Properties to which they attach religious and cultural significance may be located, Applicants may ascertain which participating Indian tribes and NHOs have identified such an interest in the geographic area in which they propose to construct Facilities, and Applicants may voluntarily provide electronic notification of proposed Facilities construction for the Commission to forward to participating Indian tribes, NHOs, and SHPOs/THPOs; and

WHEREAS, the Council, the Conference and the Commission recognize that Applicants' use of qualified professionals experienced with the NHPA and Section 106 can streamline the review process and minimize potential delays; and

WHEREAS, the Commission has created a position and hired a cultural resources professional to assist with the Section 106 process; and

WHEREAS, upon execution of this Nationwide Agreement, the Council may still provide advisory comments to the Commission regarding the coordination of Section 106 reviews; notify the Commission of concerns raised by consulting parties and the public regarding an Undertaking; and participate in the resolution of adverse effects for complex, controversial, or other non-routine projects;

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above provisions and of the covenants and agreements contained herein, the Council, the Conference and the Commission (the "Parties") agree as follows:

I. APPLICABILITY AND SCOPE OF THIS NATIONWIDE AGREEMENT

- A. This Nationwide Agreement (1) excludes from Section 106 review certain Undertakings involving the construction and modification of Facilities, and (2) streamlines and tailors the Section 106 review process for other Undertakings involving the construction and modification of Facilities. An illustrative list of Commission activities in relation to which Undertakings covered by this Agreement may occur is provided as Attachment 2 to this Agreement.
- B. This Nationwide Agreement applies only to federal Undertakings as determined by the Commission ("Undertakings"). The Commission has sole authority to determine what activities undertaken by the Commission or its Applicants constitute Undertakings within the meaning of the NHPA. Nothing in this Agreement shall preclude the Commission from revisiting or affect the existing ability of any person to challenge any prior determination of what does or does not constitute an Undertaking. Maintenance and servicing of Towers, Antennas, and associated equipment are not deemed to be Undertakings subject to Section 106 review.
- C. This Agreement does not apply to Antenna Collocations that are exempt from Section 106 review under the Collocation Agreement (see Attachment 1).

Pursuant to the terms of the Collocation Agreement, such Collocations shall not be subject to the Section 106 review process and shall not be submitted to the SHPO/THPO for review. This Agreement does apply to collocations that are not exempt from Section 106 review under the Collocation Agreement.

- D. This Agreement does not apply on “tribal lands” as defined under Section 800.16(x) of the Council’s regulations, 36 C.F.R. § 800.16(x) (“Tribal lands means all lands within the exterior boundaries of any Indian reservation and all dependent Indian communities.”). This Nationwide Agreement, however, will apply on tribal lands should a tribe, pursuant to appropriate tribal procedures and upon reasonable notice to the Council, Commission, and appropriate SHPO/THPO, elect to adopt the provisions of this Nationwide Agreement. Where a tribe that has assumed SHPO functions pursuant to Section 101(d)(2) of the NHPA (16 U.S.C. § 470(d)(2)) has agreed to application of this Nationwide Agreement on tribal lands, the term SHPO/THPO denotes the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer with respect to review of proposed Undertakings on those tribal lands. Where a tribe that has not assumed SHPO functions has agreed to application of this Nationwide Agreement on tribal lands, the tribe may notify the Commission of the tribe’s intention to perform the duties of a SHPO/THPO, as defined in this Nationwide Agreement, for proposed Undertakings on its tribal lands, and in such instances the term SHPO/THPO denotes both the State Historic Preservation Officer and the tribe’s authorized representative. In all other instances, the term SHPO/THPO denotes the State Historic Preservation Officer.
- E. This Nationwide Agreement governs only review of Undertakings under Section 106 of the NHPA. Applicants completing the Section 106 review process under the terms of this Nationwide Agreement may not initiate construction without completing any environmental review that is otherwise required for effects other than historic preservation under the Commission’s rules (*See* 47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1301-1.1319). Completion of the Section 106 review process under this Nationwide Agreement satisfies an Applicant’s obligations under the Commission’s rules with respect to Historic Properties, except for Undertakings that have been determined to have an adverse effect on Historic Properties and that therefore require preparation and filing of an Environmental Assessment (*See* 47 C.F.R. § 1.1307(a)(4)).
- F. This Nationwide Agreement does not govern any Section 106 responsibilities that agencies other than the Commission may have with respect to those agencies’ federal Undertakings.

## II. DEFINITIONS

- A. The following terms are used in this Nationwide Agreement as defined below:
1. **Antenna.** An apparatus designed for the purpose of emitting radio frequency (“RF”) radiation, to be operated or operating from a fixed location pursuant to Commission authorization, for the transmission of writing, signs, signals, data, images, pictures, and sounds of all kinds, including the transmitting device and any on-site equipment, switches, wiring, cabling, power sources, shelters or cabinets associated with that antenna and added to a Tower, structure, or building as part of the original installation of the antenna. For most services, an Antenna will be mounted on or in, and is distinct from, a supporting structure such as a Tower, structure or building. However, in the case of AM broadcast stations, the entire Tower or group of Towers constitutes the Antenna for that station. For purposes of this Nationwide Agreement, the term Antenna does not include unintentional radiators, mobile stations, or devices authorized under Part 15 of the Commission's rules.
  2. **Applicant.** A Commission licensee, permittee, or registration holder, or an applicant or prospective applicant for a wireless or broadcast license, authorization or antenna structure registration, and the duly authorized agents, employees, and contractors of any such person or entity.
  3. **Area of Potential Effects (“APE”).** The geographic area or areas within which an Undertaking may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of Historic Properties, if any such properties exist.
  4. **Collocation.** The mounting or installation of an Antenna on an existing Tower, building, or structure for the purpose of transmitting radio frequency signals for telecommunications or broadcast purposes.
  5. **Effect.** An alteration to the characteristics of a Historic Property qualifying it for inclusion in or eligibility for the National Register.
  6. **Experimental Authorization.** An authorization issued to conduct experimentation utilizing radio waves for gathering scientific or technical operation data directed toward the improvement or extension of an established service and not intended for reception and use by the general public. “Experimental Authorization” does not include an “Experimental Broadcast Station” authorized under Part 74 of the Commission's rules.
  7. **Facility.** A Tower or an Antenna. The term Facility may also refer to a Tower and its associated Antenna(s).

8. Field Survey. A research strategy that utilizes one or more visits to the area where construction is proposed as a means of identifying Historic Properties.
  9. Historic Property. Any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure, or object included in, or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register maintained by the Secretary of the Interior. This term includes artifacts, records, and remains that are related to and located within such properties. The term includes properties of traditional religious and cultural importance to an Indian tribe or NHO that meet the National Register criteria.
  10. National Register. The National Register of Historic Places, maintained by the Secretary of the Interior's office of the Keeper of the National Register.
  11. SHPO/THPO Inventory. A set of records of previously gathered information, authorized by state or tribal law, on the absence, presence and significance of historic and archeological resources within the state or tribal land.
  12. Special Temporary Authorization. Authorization granted to a permittee or licensee to allow the operation of a station for a limited period at a specified variance from the terms of the station's permanent authorization or requirements of the Commission's rules applicable to the particular class or type of station.
  13. Submission Packet. The document to be submitted initially to the SHPO/THPO to facilitate review of the Applicant's findings and any determinations with regard to the potential impact of the proposed Undertaking on Historic Properties in the APE. There are two Submission Packets: (a) The New Tower Submission Packet (FCC Form 620) (See Attachment 3) and (b) The Collocation Submission Packet (FCC Form 621) (See Attachment 4). Any documents required to be submitted along with a Form are part of the Submission Packet.
  14. Tower. Any structure built for the sole or primary purpose of supporting Commission-licensed or authorized Antennas, including the on-site fencing, equipment, switches, wiring, cabling, power sources, shelters, or cabinets associated with that Tower but not installed as part of an Antenna as defined herein.
- B. All other terms not defined above or elsewhere in this Nationwide Agreement shall have the same meaning as set forth in the Council's rules section on Definitions (36 C.F.R. § 800.16) or the Commission's rules (47 C.F.R. Chapter I).

- C. For the calculation of time periods under this Agreement, “days” mean “calendar days.” Any time period specified in the Agreement that ends on a weekend or a Federal or State holiday is extended until the close of the following business day.
- D. Written communications include communications by e-mail or facsimile.

### III. UNDERTAKINGS EXCLUDED FROM SECTION 106 REVIEW

Undertakings that fall within the provisions listed in the following sections III.A. through III.F. are excluded from Section 106 review by the SHPO/THPO, the Commission, and the Council, and, accordingly, shall not be submitted to the SHPO/THPO for review. The determination that an exclusion applies to an Undertaking should be made by an authorized individual within the Applicant’s organization, and Applicants should retain documentation of their determination that an exclusion applies. Concerns regarding the application of these exclusions from Section 106 review may be presented to and considered by the Commission pursuant to Section XI.

- A. Enhancement of a tower and any associated excavation that does not involve a collocation and does not substantially increase the size of the existing tower, as defined in the Collocation Agreement. For towers constructed after March 16, 2001, this exclusion applies only if the tower has completed the Section 106 review process and any associated environmental reviews required by the Commission.
- B. Construction of a replacement for an existing communications tower and any associated excavation that does not substantially increase the size of the existing tower under elements 1-3 of the definition as defined in the Collocation Agreement (see Attachment 1 to this Agreement, Stipulation 1.c.1-3) and that does not expand the boundaries of the leased or owned property surrounding the tower by more than 30 feet in any direction or involve excavation outside these expanded boundaries or outside any existing access or utility easement related to the site. For towers constructed after March 16, 2001, this exclusion applies only if the tower has completed the Section 106 review process and any associated environmental reviews required by the Commission’s rules.
- C. Construction of any temporary communications Tower, Antenna structure, or related Facility that involves no excavation or where all areas to be excavated will be located in areas described in Section VI.D.2.c.i below, including but not limited to the following:
  - 1. A Tower or Antenna authorized by the Commission for a temporary period, such as any Facility authorized by a Commission grant of Special Temporary Authority (“STA”) or emergency authorization;

2. A cell on wheels (COW) transmission Facility;
3. A broadcast auxiliary services truck, TV pickup station, remote pickup broadcast station (e.g., electronic newsgathering vehicle) authorized under Part 74 or temporary fixed or transportable earth station in the fixed satellite service (e.g., satellite newsgathering vehicle) authorized under Part 25;
4. A temporary ballast mount Tower;
5. Any Facility authorized by a Commission grant of an experimental authorization.

For purposes of this Section III.C, the term “temporary” means “for no more than twenty-four months duration except in the case of those Facilities associated with national security.”

- D. Construction of a Facility less than 200 feet in overall height above ground level in an existing industrial park,<sup>1</sup> commercial strip mall,<sup>2</sup> or shopping center<sup>3</sup> that occupies a total land area of 100,000 square feet or more, provided that the industrial park, strip mall, or shopping center is not located within the boundaries of or within 500 feet of a Historic Property, as identified by the Applicant after a preliminary search of relevant records. Proposed Facilities within this exclusion must complete the process of participation of Indian tribes and NHOs pursuant to Section IV of this Agreement. If as a result of this process the Applicant or the Commission identifies a Historic Property that may be affected, the Applicant must complete the Section 106 review process pursuant to this Agreement notwithstanding the exclusion.
- E. Construction of a Facility in or within 50 feet of the outer boundary of a right-of-way designated by a Federal, State, local, or Tribal government for the location of communications Towers or above-ground utility transmission or

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<sup>1</sup> A tract of land that is planned, developed, and operated as an integrated facility for a number of individual industrial uses, with consideration to transportation facilities, circulation, parking, utility needs, aesthetics and compatibility.

<sup>2</sup> A structure or grouping of structures, housing retail business, set back far enough from the street to permit parking spaces to be placed between the building entrances and the public right of way.

<sup>3</sup> A group of commercial establishments planned, constructed, and managed as a total entity, with customer and employee parking provided on-site, provision for goods delivery separated from customer access, aesthetic considerations and protection from the elements, and landscaping and signage in accordance with an approved plan.

distribution lines and associated structures and equipment and in active use for such purposes, provided:

1. The proposed Facility would not constitute a substantial increase in size, under elements 1-3 of the definition in the Collocation Agreement, over existing structures located in the right-of-way within the vicinity of the proposed Facility, and;
2. The proposed Facility would not be located within the boundaries of a Historic Property, as identified by the Applicant after a preliminary search of relevant records.

Proposed Facilities within this exclusion must complete the process of participation of Indian tribes and NHOs pursuant to Section IV of this Agreement. If as a result of this process the Applicant or the Commission identifies a Historic Property that may be affected, the Applicant must complete the Section 106 review process pursuant to this Agreement notwithstanding the exclusion.

- F. Construction of a Facility in any area previously designated by the SHPO/THPO at its discretion, following consultation with appropriate Indian tribes and NHOs, as having limited potential to affect Historic Properties. Such designation shall be documented by the SHPO/THPO and made available for public review.

#### IV. PARTICIPATION OF INDIAN TRIBES AND NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATIONS IN UNDERTAKINGS OFF TRIBAL LANDS

- A. The Commission recognizes its responsibility to carry out consultation with any Indian tribe or NHO that attaches religious and cultural significance to a Historic Property if the property may be affected by a Commission undertaking. This responsibility is founded in Sections 101(d)(6)(a-b) and 106 of the NHPA (16 U.S.C. §§ 470a(d)(6)(a-b) and 470f), the regulations of the Council (36 C.F.R. Part 800), the Commission's environmental regulations (47 C.F.R. §§ 1.1301-1.1319), and the unique legal relationship that exists between the federal government and Indian Tribal governments, as reflected in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, federal statutes, Executive orders, and numerous court decisions. This historic trust relationship requires the federal government to adhere to certain fiduciary standards in its dealings with Indian Tribes. (*Commission Statement of Policy on Establishing a Government-to-Government Relationship with Indian Tribes*).
- B. As an initial step to enable the Commission to fulfill its duty of consultation, Applicants shall use reasonable and good faith efforts to identify any Indian tribe or NHO that may attach religious and cultural significance to Historic

Properties that may be affected by an Undertaking. Applicants should be aware that frequently, Historic Properties of religious and cultural significance to Indian tribes and NHOs are located on ancestral, aboriginal, or ceded lands of such tribes and organizations and Applicants should take this into account when complying with their responsibilities. Where an Indian tribe or NHO has voluntarily provided information to the Commission's Tower Construction Notification System regarding the geographic areas in which Historic Properties of religious and cultural significance to that Indian tribe or NHO may be located, reference to the Tower Construction Notification System shall constitute a reasonable and good faith effort at identification with respect to that Indian tribe or NHO. In addition, such reasonable and good faith efforts may include, but are not limited to, seeking relevant information from the relevant SHPO/THPO, Indian tribes, state agencies, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs ("BIA"), or, where applicable, any federal agency with land holdings within the state (e.g., the U.S. Bureau of Land Management). Although these agencies can provide useful information in identifying potentially affected Indian tribes, contacting BIA, the SHPO or other federal and state agencies is not a substitute for seeking information directly from Indian tribes that may attach religious and cultural significance to a potentially affected Historic Property, as described below.

- C. After the Applicant has identified Indian tribes and NHOs that may attach religious and cultural significance to potentially affected Historic Properties, the Commission has the responsibility, and the Commission imposes on the Applicant the obligation, to ensure that contact is made at an early stage in the planning process with such Indian tribes and NHOs in order to begin the process of ascertaining whether such Historic Properties may be affected. This initial contact shall be made by the Commission or the Applicant, in accordance with the wishes of the Indian tribe or NHO. This contact shall constitute only an initial effort to contact the Indian tribe or NHO, and does not in itself fully satisfy the Applicant's obligations or substitute for government-to-government consultation unless the Indian tribe or NHO affirmatively disclaims further interest or the Indian tribe or NHO has otherwise agreed that such contact is sufficient. Depending on the preference of the Indian tribe or NHO, the means of initial contact may include, without limitation:
1. Electronic notification through the Commission's Tower Construction Notification System;
  2. Written communication from the Commission at the request of the Applicant;
  3. Written, e-mail, or telephonic notification directly from the Applicant to the Indian tribe or NHO;

4. Any other means that the Indian Tribe or NHO has informed the Commission are acceptable, including through the adoption of best practices pursuant to Section IV.J, below; or
  5. Any other means to which an Indian tribe or NHO and an Applicant have agreed pursuant to Section IV.K, below.
- D. The Commission will use its best efforts to ascertain the preferences of each Indian tribe and NHO for initial contact, and to make these preferences available to Applicants in a readily accessible format. In addition, the Commission will use its best efforts to ascertain, and to make available to Applicants, any locations or types of construction projects, within the broad geographic areas in which Historic Properties of religious and cultural significance to an Indian tribe or NHO may be located, for which the Indian tribe or NHO does not expect notification. To the extent they are comfortable doing so, the Commission encourages Indian tribes and NHOs to accept the Tower Construction Notification System as an efficient and thorough means of making initial contact.
- E. In the absence of any contrary indication of an Indian tribe's or NHO's preference, where an Applicant does not have a pre-existing relationship with an Indian tribe or NHO, initial contact with the Indian tribe or NHO shall be made through the Commission. Unless the Indian tribe or NHO has indicated otherwise, the Commission may make this initial contact through the Tower Construction Notification System. An Applicant that has a pre-existing relationship with an Indian tribe or NHO shall make initial contact in the manner that is customary to that relationship or in such other manner as may be accepted by the Indian tribe or NHO. An Applicant shall copy the Commission on any initial written or electronic direct contact with an Indian tribe or NHO, unless the Indian tribe or NHO has agreed through a best practices agreement or otherwise that such copying is not necessary.
- F. Applicants' direct contacts with Indian tribes and NHOs, where accepted by the Indian tribe or NHO, shall be made in a sensitive manner that is consistent with the reasonable wishes of the Indian tribe or NHO, where such wishes are known or can be reasonably ascertained. In general, unless an Indian tribe or NHO has provided guidance to the contrary, Applicants shall follow the following guidelines:
1. All communications with Indian tribes shall be respectful of tribal sovereignty;
  2. Communications shall be directed to the appropriate representative designated or identified by the tribal government or other governing body;

3. Applicants shall provide all information reasonably necessary for the Indian tribe or NHO to evaluate whether Historic Properties of religious and cultural significance may be affected. The parties recognize that it may be neither feasible nor desirable to provide complete information about the project at the time of initial contact, particularly when initial contact is made early in the process. Unless the Indian tribe or NHO affirmatively disclaims interest, however, it shall be provided with complete information within the earliest reasonable time frame;
  4. The Applicant must ensure that Indian tribes and NHOs have a reasonable opportunity to respond to all communications. Ordinarily, 30 days from the time the relevant tribal or NHO representative may reasonably be expected to have received an inquiry shall be considered a reasonable time. Should a tribe or NHO request additional time to respond, the Applicant shall afford additional time as reasonable under the circumstances. However, where initial contact is made automatically through the Tower Construction Notification System, and where an Indian tribe or NHO has stated that it is not interested in reviewing proposed construction of certain types or in certain locations, the Applicant need not await a response to contact regarding proposed construction meeting that description;
  5. Applicants should not assume that failure to respond to a single communication establishes that an Indian tribe or NHO is not interested in participating, but should make a reasonable effort to follow up.
- G. The purposes of communications between the Applicant and Indian tribes or NHOs are: (1) to ascertain whether Historic Properties of religious and cultural significance to the Indian tribe or NHO may be affected by the undertaking and consultation is therefore necessary, and (2) where possible, with the concurrence of the Indian tribe or NHO, to reach an agreement on the presence or absence of effects that may obviate the need for consultation. Accordingly, the Applicant shall promptly refer to the Commission any request from a federally recognized Indian tribe for government-to-government consultation. The Commission will then carry out government-to-government consultation with the Indian tribe. Applicants shall also seek guidance from the Commission in the event of any substantive or procedural disagreement with an Indian tribe or NHO, or if the Indian tribe or NHO does not respond to the Applicant's inquiries. Applicants are strongly advised to seek guidance from the Commission in cases of doubt.
- H. If an Indian tribe or NHO indicates that a Historic Property of religious and cultural significance to it may be affected, the Applicant shall invite the

commenting tribe or organization to become a consulting party. If the Indian tribe or NHO agrees to become a consulting party, it shall be afforded that status and shall be provided with all of the information, copies of submissions, and other prerogatives of a consulting party as provided for in 36 C.F.R. § 800.2.

- I. Information regarding Historic Properties to which Indian tribes or NHOs attach religious and cultural significance may be highly confidential, private, and sensitive. If an Indian tribe or NHO requests confidentiality from the Applicant, the Applicant shall honor this request and shall, in turn, request confidential treatment of such materials or information in accordance with the Commission's rules and Section 304 of the NHPA (16 U.S.C. § 470w-3(a)) in the event they are submitted to the Commission. The Commission shall provide such confidential treatment consistent with its rules and applicable federal laws. Although the Commission will strive to protect the privacy interests of all parties, the Commission cannot guarantee its own ability or the ability of Applicants to protect confidential, private, and sensitive information from disclosure under all circumstances.
- J. In order to promote efficiency, minimize misunderstandings, and ensure that communications among the parties are made in accordance with each Indian tribe or NHO's reasonable preferences, the Commission will use its best efforts to arrive at agreements regarding best practices with Indian tribes and NHOs and their representatives. Such best practices may include means of making initial contacts with Indian tribes and NHOs as well as guidelines for subsequent discussions between Applicants and Indian tribes or NHOs in fulfillment of the requirements of the Section 106 process. To the extent possible, the Commission will strive to achieve consistency among best practice agreements with Indian tribes and NHOs. Where best practices exist, the Commission encourages Applicants to follow those best practices.
- K. Nothing in this Section shall be construed to prohibit or limit Applicants and Indian tribes or NHOs from entering into or continuing pre-existing arrangements or agreements governing their contacts, provided such arrangements or agreements are otherwise consistent with federal law and no modification is made in the roles of other parties to the process under this Nationwide Agreement without their consent. Documentation of such alternative arrangements or agreements should be filed with the Commission.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND CONSULTING PARTIES

- A. On or before the date an Applicant submits the appropriate Submission Packet to the SHPO/THPO, as prescribed by Section VII, below, the Applicant shall provide the local government that has primary land use jurisdiction over the