

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY
NEPA DETERMINATION



RECIPIENT: [Ventura Energy Partners](#)

STATE: [CA](#)

PROJECT TITLE: [Forks of Butte Co-Located Battery Energy Storage System](#)

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
[3103](#)

Procurement Instrument Number
[DE-EE0011651](#)

NEPA Control Number
[GFO-0011651-001](#)

CID Number
[GO11651](#)

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

[B1.11 Fencing](#)

Installation of fencing, including, but not limited to border marking, that would not have the potential to significantly impede wildlife population movement (including migration) or surface water flow.

[B4.12 Construction of powerlines](#)

Construction of electric powerlines approximately 10 miles in length or less, or approximately 20 miles in length or less within previously disturbed or developed powerline or pipeline rights-of-way.

[B4.14 Construction and operation of electrochemical-battery or flywheel energy storage systems](#)

Construction, operation, upgrade, or decommissioning of an electrochemical-battery or flywheel energy storage system within a previously disturbed or developed area or within a small (as discussed at 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(2)) area contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and the integral elements listed at the start of appendix B of this part, and would incorporate appropriate safety standards (including the current National Fire Protection Association 855, Standard for the Installation of Energy Storage Systems), design and construction standards, control technologies, and best management practices.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to [Ventura Energy Partners](#) for the design and installation of a battery energy storage system (BESS) at the [Forks of Butte Hydroelectric Generating Facility](#) in [Magalia, California](#).

The BESS would be installed immediately adjacent to the hydroelectric facility on previously disturbed ground. Installation would require approximately 10,000 square feet of ground disturbance at three to five feet of depth, as well as the installation of 4 power line poles placed alongside an existing roadway. These power line poles would each be sunk to a maximum depth of ten feet and connect to existing utility lines. After installation, a fence would be installed to enclose the BESS within a total area of 40 feet by 40 feet.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies ten species of concern ([Gray Wolf](#), [California Condor](#), [California Spotted Owl](#), [Northwestern Pond Turtle](#), [California Red-legged Frog](#), [Foothill Yellow-legged Frog](#), [Western Spadefoot](#), [Monarch Butterfly](#), [Conservancy Fairy Shrimp](#), and [Vernal Pool Tadpole Shrimp](#)) which may occur in the proposed project area. Project activities would occur in previously disturbed areas where there is ongoing human activity; therefore, species of concern are not likely to be present. Critical habitat for the [Foothill Yellow-legged Frog](#) occurs in the project area; however, this frog inhabits streams and is rarely observed far from the water's edge, and thus would not likely be impacted by proposed activities. DOE has determined no effect on special status species.

All necessary permits would be obtained prior to commencing activities. Potential hazards include typical hazards associated with construction, mechanical, and electrical work. Award recipients would adhere to established health and safety policies and procedures when performing project work, and would observe all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations.

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of proposed activities to determine potential impacts on

resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature. DOE does not anticipate impacts on these resources which would be considered significant or require DOE to consult with other agencies or stakeholders.

For Categorical Exclusion Determinations:

- The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B and C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025). To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures.
- There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.
- The proposed action has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.
- The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Should archaeological materials be observed during project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity shall stop, and the area shall be secured. The appropriate State and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Office and the DOE Project Officer shall be contacted immediately in order to help assess the situation and determine how to preserve the resource(s). Compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to archaeological resources is required.

Notes:

Water Power Technologies Office
NEPA review completed by Andrew McClellan, 1 October 2025

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

 Electronically
Signed By: Nicole Serio
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 10/3/2025

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- ☒ Field Office Manager review not required
☐ Field Office Manager review required

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature:

Field Office Manager

Date: _____