

PMC-EF2a

(2010)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
EERE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER  
NEPA DETERMINATION**



**RECIPIENT:**Ormat Technologies, Inc.

**STATE:** NV

**PROJECT TITLE :** RECOVERY ACT: CONDUCTING A 3D CONVERTED SHEAR WAVE PROJECT TO REDUCE EXPLORATION RISK AT WISTER, CA

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0000109	DE-EE0002838	GFO-0002838-003	GO2838

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

**CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:**

**Description:**

- B3.7** Siting, construction, and operation of new infill exploratory and experimental (test) oil, gas, and geothermal wells, which are to be drilled in a geological formation that has existing operating wells.
- A9** Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, audits), data analysis (including computer modeling), document preparation (such as conceptual design or feasibility studies, analytical energy supply and demand studies), and dissemination (including, but not limited to, document mailings, publication, and distribution; and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring.
- B3.1** Onsite and offsite site characterization and environmental monitoring, including siting, construction (or modification), operation, and dismantlement or closing (abandonment) of characterization and monitoring devices and siting, construction, and associated operation of a small-scale laboratory building or renovation of a room in an existing building for sample analysis. Activities covered include, but are not limited to, site characterization and environmental monitoring under CERCLA and RCRA. Specific activities include, but are not limited to:

**Rational for determination:**

Ormat Nevada, Inc. (Ormat) proposes to use DOE and cost share funding to develop and demonstrate a geothermal resource near Wister in Imperial County, California on private properties that are currently or formerly in agricultural production. This project was previously approved with GFO-0002838-002 on 10/18/2010 with a CX A9, B3.7, and B3.1. Phase 1 was approved on 4/23/2010 by GFO-10-138.002. However, a geothermal well was selected outside of the project area analyzed in GFO-0002838-002, therefore another NEPA review was needed. Ormat proposes to drill up to six exploratory geothermal wells with DOE funding only two of the wells.

The project is divided into eight tasks:

- Phase 1: Resource Evaluation (Tasks 1.0 through 4.0) – Approved 4/23/2010 by GFO-10-138.002
- Phase 2: Exploration Data Analysis & Drilling (Tasks 5.0 and 6.0) – Approved 10/18/2010 by GFO-0002838-002
- Phase 3: Well Testing (Tasks 7.0 and 8.0) – Approved 10/18/2010 by GFO-0002838-002

Imperial County has jurisdiction for the state on this project. Imperial County completed a State Environmental Review using an Environmental Checklist Form which included a Mitigated Negative Declaration (Project #G09-0001) signed April 2009 which analyzed the construction, drilling, testing, plugging and abandonment, and maintenance of the proposed exploratory geothermal wells mentioned above. It was determined that the project would have no significant effect on the environment because of the mitigation measures described in the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

Subsequent to the CEQA analysis mentioned above, Ormat submitted a request to Imperial County to relocate the drilling of the 85-20 well in lieu of the 56-20 geothermal well, which is 1600' to the east of 56-20. The property remains private with private minerals, which is an abandoned agricultural field. A surface owner's agreement was reached on January 21, 2011.

Imperial County Planning & Development Services approved the change in location of the well in a letter titled "Request for Re-location of Well #56-20 to New Location APN #003-200-045-00 to #003-200-011/Wister Area" on January 26, 2011 indicating, "After staff review, this letter is to advise that the well re-location is not expected to result in significant environmental impacts, and is hereby approved" with the understanding that a new Biological Survey would be completed for the new well location.

For geothermal well 85-20 a Biological Survey was completed in May, 2011 by Barrett's Biological Surveys. No burrowing owls or active burrows were found in the proposed project area. However, mitigation measures were identified on page 15 of the report. These mitigation measures are a condition of approval for this determination.

All biological reports that have been completed indicate that no threatened or endangered species were found in the

surveys for the proposed project sites. No candidate, sensitive, or special status species have been identified in the Project area that has the potential to be significantly impacted by the Project.

The DOE is in agreement with the findings of the original CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration and the Imperial County Planning & Development Services letter "Request for Re-location of Well #56-20 to New Location APN #003-200-045-00 to #003-200-011/Wister Area" that the project would have no significant effect on the environment with the implementation of required mitigation measures and that the change in well location would not result in any additional environmental impacts.

Condition of Approval: Mitigation measures identified in the Imperial County, California Mitigated Negative Declaration Project #G09-0001 and page 15 in the Ormat Pad 85-20 Burrowing Owl/Nesting Bird Preconstruction Survey dated May, 2011 by Barrett's Biological Surveys is applicable to this proposal.

This project is comprised of characterizing a geothermal resource using various techniques while collecting well data and construction of exploratory geothermal wells, making onsite characterizations, evaluations and required monitoring, therefore this project is categorized into CX A9, B3.1, and B3.7.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

Insert the following language in the award:

You are required to:

Condition of Approval: Mitigation measures identified in the Imperial County, California Mitigated Negative Declaration Project #G09-0001 and page 15 in the Ormat Pad 85-20 Burrowing Owl/Nesting Bird Preconstruction Survey dated May, 2011 by Barrett's Biological Surveys is applicable to this proposal.

Note to Specialist :

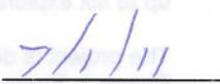
This EF2A was written by Christopher Carusona II/Casey Strickland

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date:



**FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION**

Field Office Manager review required

**NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:**

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

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

Field Office Manager's Signature:

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Field Office Manager

Date:

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