

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: SafeConnect Solar

STATE: HI

**PROJECT TITLE :** Reducing Soft Costs Through Hardware Innovation

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0000923	DE-EE0006689	GFO-0006689-001	

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:

**B3.6 Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects**

Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of facilities for smallscale research and development projects; conventional laboratory operations (such as preparation of chemical standards and sample analysis); and small-scale pilot projects (generally less than 2 years) frequently conducted to verify a concept before demonstration actions, provided that construction or modification would be within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Not included in this category are demonstration actions, meaning actions that are undertaken at a scale to show whether a technology would be viable on a larger scale and suitable for commercial deployment.

## Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to SafeConnect Solar to build and test prototypes of hardware components that would reduce the cost of photovoltaic (PV) solar installations.

The proposed project would design, fabricate and test electrical connection hardware for PV systems. Other activities would include product certification and stakeholder engagement. Fabrication and testing of the hardware would occur at the SafeConnect property located in Wilbraham, MA. Third party laboratory testing would occur at a Department of Energy (DOE) laboratory designated by DOE. Field testing would involve PV system installation at up to ten residences using the prototype connection hardware. The field testing sites are currently unknown. Additional NEPA review of field testing sites is required before outdoor testing activities can be conducted. Solid wastes generated by this project would be small scrap quantities of wire, cabling, plastic, and some small electronics. All waste that can be recycled (e.g., some of the wire) would be recycled. Other waste would be disposed of in municipal landfills/waste management facilities as appropriate. For all work conducted at DOE laboratories, project activities may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant NEPA Compliance Officer for the lab and will be required to meet the labs health and safety requirements.

Based on review of the project information and the above analysis, DOE has determined that the proposed project, with the exception of Task 4 - Subtask 4.3 which requires additional NEPA review when the demonstration sites are selected, would not have a significant individual or cumulative impact to human health and/or environment. DOE has determined that this project, with the exception of Task 4 - Subtask 4.3, is consistent with actions outlined in DOE categorical exclusion B3.6 "Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects" and is therefore categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination for this award, and funding for certain tasks under this award is contingent upon the final NEPA determination.

Insert the following language in the award:

You are restricted from taking any action using federal funds, which would have an adverse affect on the environment or limit the choice of reasonable alternatives prior to DOE/NSA providing either a NEPA clearance or a final NEPA decision regarding the project.

Prohibited actions include:

**Task 4 Subtask 4.3 - Installation and Monitoring of Prototypes**

This restriction does not preclude you from:

All other Tasks and Subtasks as described in the approved SOPO.

If you move forward with activities that are not authorized for federal funding by the DOE Contracting Officer in advance of the final NEPA decision, you are doing so at risk of not receiving federal funding and such costs may not be recognized as allowable cost share.

Note to Specialist :

Review completed by Logan Sholar on 09/03/14.

This NEPA determination requires a tailored NEPA provision.

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

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

9/4/2014

**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: \_\_\_\_\_

Field Office Manager

Date: \_\_\_\_\_