

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: National Renewable Energy Laboratory

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE : AES Distributed Energy Test Bed Installation at the NWTC

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-AC36-08GO28308	NREL-18-002	GO28308

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:

B5.15 Small-scale renewable energy research and development and pilot projects	Small-scale renewable energy research and development projects and small-scale pilot projects, provided that the projects are located within a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as local land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and would incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices.
---	--

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is proposing to collaborate with AES Distribution Energy, Inc. to install and conduct research on a 1.1 acre 250kWDC pilot-scale PV array.

The solar array would be installed at NREL's National Wind Technology Center (NWTC), located southeast of the intersection of Colorado Highway (CO) 93 and CO-128, in Jefferson County, Colorado. The NWTC is a federally-owned facility that consists of 305 acres and is primarily utilized for wind and grid energy research, development, and testing.

The solar array would be located south of the NWTC CoMET facility, west of the Row 3 access road. The project area, including the panels, access road, laydown area, and trenching would take up less than 2 acres. Installation of the array is anticipated to start in late November 2017 and operate for a period of approximately two years.

The solar array would consist of six variable tilt module trackers laid out in three rows. Each tracker panel would comprise 90 Sunpower E20 PV modules, which would each individually track with the sun. To install the array about 140 support columns would be needed. AES personnel would install the variable tilt PV array by driving the support columns into the ground to the desired depth - no drilling required. Once installed, the solar panels would be placed onto the support structure. The array would be connected to Test Pad 3 via underground electrical cabling requiring approximately 400 feet of trenching. A small met station would also be installed adjacent to the array on a small concrete pad (1 or 2 sq. ft.).

After the two year research period the entire solar array would be dismantled and underground cabling would be abandoned in place. The research partner, AES, Inc, would remove all materials from the site.

All ground disturbing activities would be conducted in accordance with NREL Lab Level Procedure 6-1.29: Stormwater Pollution Prevention for Construction Activities: National Wind Technology Center. Existing NREL health and safety policies and procedures would be followed including employee training, proper protective equipment, engineering controls, monitoring, and internal assessments.

There are no known cultural resources, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands at the NWTC, therefore this project would not adversely affect these resources. The site has designated critical habitat for the Preble's meadow jumping mouse at the southeast corner of the NWTC, however, the proposed activities would take place in the northeastern portion of the site, and would not affect this habitat. DOE does not anticipate adverse impacts to wildlife, including migratory birds.

Based on the review of the proposal, DOE has determined the proposal fits within the class of action(s) and the integral elements of Appendix B to Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021 outlined in the DOE categorical exclusion(s) selected above. DOE has also determined that: (1) there are no extraordinary circumstances (as defined by 10 CFR 1021.410(2)) related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; (2) the proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and (3) the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, related to other proposals with cumulatively significant actions, or an improper interim action. This proposal is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If the Recipient intends to make changes to the scope or objective of this project, the Recipient is required to contact the Project Officer, identified in Block 15 of the Assistance Agreement before proceeding. The Recipient must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved. If the Recipient moves forward with activities that are not authorized for Federal funding by the DOE Contracting Officer in advance of a final NEPA decision, the Recipient is doing so at risk of not receiving Federal funding and such costs may not be recognized as allowable cost share.

Note to Specialist :

NEPA review completed by Laura Margason on November 15, 2017

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____

Electronically
Signed By: Kristin Kerwin

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 11/16/2017

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: _____