

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: MN Department of Commerce

STATE: MN

PROJECT TITLE : SPPA- TBTU-ARRA- Panel 27049C0529E #1

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
SEP-ALRD-2017	DE-EE0007479	GFO-0007479-001	

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:

- B5.16 Solar photovoltaic systems** The installation, modification, operation, and removal of commercially available solar photovoltaic systems located on a building or other structure (such as rooftop, parking lot or facility, and mounted to signage, lighting, gates, or fences), or if located on land, generally comprising less than 10 acres 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.
- A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination** Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.)

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Minnesota Department of Commerce for the design and construction of a 20kW solar photovoltaic (PV) at a farm site in Goodhue County, MN to provide power for the energy needs of the farm.

The proposed project activities for the PV installation would include the installation of three dual-axis solar trackers, 60 solar panels, three power inverters, approximately 600 feet of underground cable, and minor electrical improvements required for the installation. Three helical piers would be drilled eight feet into the ground to mount the PV panels. A trench for the underground cable would be dug to a depth of four feet for the burial of cable from the solar panels, connect to the inverter on an outbuilding and then continue on to the connection point at the meter pole.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) Endangered Species Program website (iPac) identifies three endangered or threatened species and 19 migratory birds that are listed as Birds of Conservation Concern that are known to, or are believed to occur near the project site. However, due to the lack of habitat for federally listed species at the site from the ongoing disturbance of the farmland and the limited size of the proposed solar array, DOE has determined the proposed project would have no effect on threatened or endangered species in the area. For the same reasons, DOE has determined that this proposed project is not likely to adversely impact migratory birds. Further, DOE does not anticipate impacts to ground nesting birds during construction because the proposed project site is an actively operating farm where ground nesting birds would not be able to establish nests.

A portion of the underground cable may be near, or in the designated floodplain Zone AE. The PV panel installation would not be in floodplain. After evaluation of the potential impacts, DOE has determined that the buried electrical lines would not have short-term or long-term adverse impacts to the floodplain. Additionally, DOE has determined that the project activities are not subject to the preparation and distribution of a notice of floodplain action as required under Subpart B of 10 CFR 1022 "Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements", as the project is a minor modification of an existing facility to improve environmental conditions and the requirement is not applicable (10 CFR 1022.5(3)). No impacts to wetlands are anticipated as they are not known to occur at the project site.

No prime farmland would be impacted.

State and local permits have already been approved.

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 :

Weatherization & Intergovernmental Programs Office - SEP
This NEPA Determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.
NEPA review completed by Diana Heyder, 1/26/18

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

 Electronically Signed By: Kristin Kerwin
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 1/31/2018

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: _____