

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT:Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs

STATE: AL

PROJECT TITLE : APEL Steel Corporation

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0000643	DE-EE0004122	GFO-0004122-004	

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.
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Rationale for determination:

The Alabama SAVES Program (the "Program") was initiated with funding from a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant. The Program established a Revolving Loan Fund with DOE ARRA funding. This fund is now managed under Alabama's Annual SEP grant, DE-EE0004122. Alabama is proposing to provide a \$1,434,358.68 "buy-down" loan to the Apel Steel Corporation (Apel Steel) to partially fund the purchase and installation of a 340 kW solar photovoltaic (PV) system with 200 AGM batteries serving Apel Steel in Cullman, Alabama. The system would feed two Apel Steel facilities located on an adjacent lot, and offset the annual electricity used at the Apel Steel facilities. The system will not be connected to the grid but directly connected behind the service meter for use in the existing buildings. The batteries will be stored in a container on sight. Apel Steel is located at 2345 Second Ave NW, Cullman, Alabama. Apel Steel is a steel fabrication corporation.

A total of 1,128 solar PV panels would be installed for the entire system. The proposed site is an adjacent lot next to Apel Steel's facility. The 340 kW PV array would be constructed entirely on a previously disturbed grassy vacant lot. The structures would be braced with six inch galvanized schedule 80 pipe. This would require excavation of 131 holes that are two feet in diameter and five feet deep for a total footprint of 28,200 square feet. Underground trenching would occur to connect the array to the main service panel providing power to the buildings. All ground disturbances for the trenching (900 feet in length, three feet deep, and two feet wide), would occur on previously disturbed ground that is either asphalt, concrete or landscaping.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species Program website identifies six candidate, threatened or endangered species that are known to or are believed to occur in Cullman County, Alabama. However, due to the lack of potential habitat for any the species at the project site, lack of critical habitat in the vicinity of the site and the previously disturbed and developed condition of the site; DOE has determined the proposed project would not adversely affect threatened and endangered species in the area.

Prime farmland, wetlands, floodplains, and historical or cultural resources are not known to occur at the project site. Therefore, no impacts to these resources are anticipated.

Based on review of the project information and the above analysis, DOE has determined the purchase and installation of a 340 kW solar PV system and 200 AGM batteries on the Apel Steel facility would not have a significant individual or cumulative impact to human health and/or environment. DOE has determined the proposed project is consistent with actions contained in DOE categorical exclusion B5.16 "Solar Photovoltaic systems" and is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

