

PMC-ND  
(1.08.09.13)

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



**RECIPIENT:** Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (Joint Venture with Bethel Native Corporation)    **STATE:** AK

**PROJECT TITLE :** Bethel Wind Energy Construction Project

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0001660	DE-IE-00000084	GFO-00000084-002	

**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:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination</b> | 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.)   |
| <b>B5.18 Wind turbines</b>                                   | The installation, modification, operation, and removal of a small number (generally not more than 2) of commercially available wind turbines, with a total height generally less than 200 feet (measured from the ground to the maximum height of blade rotation) that (1) are located within a previously disturbed or developed area; (2) are located more than 10 nautical miles (about 11.5 miles) from an airport or aviation navigation aid; (3) are located more than 1.5 nautical miles (about 1.7 miles) from National Weather Service or Federal Aviation Administration Doppler weather radar; (4) would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on bird or bat populations; and (5) are sited or designed such that the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts to persons (such as from shadow flicker and other visual effects, and noise). 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. Covered actions include only those related to wind turbines to be installed on land. |

**Rationale for determination:**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC) for the installation of a 900 kilowatt capacity direct-drive wind turbine with associated access road and wind turbine pad in Bethel, Alaska. The wind turbine would be installed and maintained on Bethel Native Corporation lands off the Old BIA Road west of the Bethel Airport. The turbine would connect to the existing power generation system serving the three intertied communities of Bethel, Oscarville, and Napakiak. A previous NEPA determination (GFO-0000084-001; A9; 08/18/17) was completed for Task 1 activities. This NEPA review is for all remaining tasks of the project.

Due to the height of the proposed turbine (263 feet above ground level) and the proximity to the Bethel airport (approximately one mile west of the proposed approach end of Runway 12), AVEC submitted project information to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for an Obstruction Evaluation/Airport Airspace Analysis. The FAA completed an aeronautical study of the wind turbine on a negotiated location that was approximately 87 feet from the submitted coordinates and a reduced height of 260 feet above ground level. Based on the completed aeronautical study for the negotiated location and height, the FAA determined that the proposed construction would not have a substantial adverse effect on the safe and efficient utilization of the navigable airspace by aircraft or any air navigation facility and would not be a hazard to air navigation provided the structure is marked/lighted and the turbine is painted alternating bands of white and orange on the support structure (mast) in accordance with FAA Advisory Circular 70/7460-1L with Change 1. FAA issued a Determination of No Hazard (2017-WTW-380-OE) on September 29, 2017.

There are no threatened, endangered, or candidate species occurring within or near the project area. Thirteen migratory bird species (including bald eagle) could occur within the area of the project. In accordance with the 2013 Memorandum of Understanding between DOE and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), AVEC has been notified that they should contact the FWS to discuss compliance with laws protecting migratory birds and bald eagles during the operational lifespan of the turbine. Other than wetlands (see below), there were no other resources of concern found during review of the project.

Project work required the placement of approximately 3000 cubic yards of fill into approximately 0.70 acres of jurisdictional wetlands for an access road and a turbine pad so AVEC obtained a Section 404 permit (POA-2017-403) from the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) for the anticipated project work on October 17, 2017. After receiving the approved Section 404 permit, AVEC began construction of the access road and turbine pad. One of the Section 404 permit conditions of approval required AVEC to stop work and notify the ACOE if any previously unknown historic or archeological remains were discovered while completing the proposed project activities so that the ACOE could initiate the Federal and State coordination required to determine if the remains warranted a recovery effort or if the site was eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This condition was not triggered during construction of the access road and turbine pad. Construction within the wetland occurred prior to DOE completing this NEPA determination.

Based on the review of the proposal, DOE has determined that 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. The 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.

Insert the following language in the award:

You are required to:

The Recipient must follow all requirements and conditions of approval found in the Determination of No Hazard (2017-WTW-380-OE) issued by the Federal Aviation Administration on September 29, 2017 for the proposed structure.

Note to Specialist :

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs  
This NEPA determination requires a tailored NEPA provision.

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

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Casey Strickland Date: 1/9/2018  
NEPA Compliance Officer

**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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Field Office Manager