

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



RECIPIENT: The Navajo Nation Tribal Government-Kayenta Chapter

STATE: AZ

PROJECT TITLE : Electrifying and Broadbanding the Comb Ridge/EI Capitan Community in Kayenta

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002317	DE-IE0000167	GFO-0000167-001	

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

- | | |
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| 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.) |
| 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. |

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Kayenta Chapter of the Navajo Nation Tribal Government to design, build, test, and commission a series of self-contained, solar power-generating units (known as MiniBoxes or SolarContainers). The units would provide electricity and satellite internet connection to 25 homes in the Comb Ridge/ EI Capitan community of the Navajo Nation. The award would also provide workshops and training opportunities to local Navajo residents.

Fourteen MiniBoxes and four SolarContainers would be distributed across the community. Each Minibox is a 4' x 8' container with a 3.5 kW solar panel mounted on top, and a 15.2 kW lithium-ion battery and a 7 kW backup propane generator housed within. Each Solar Container is a 20' x 8' shipping container with either an 11 or 25 kW solar panel mounted on top, and either a 27 or 59.2 kW lithium-ion battery, and a 14 or 20 kW backup propane generator housed within. Internet connections would be distributed throughout the community via satellite modules, which would be housed within the units.

The participating 25 homes do not currently have access to grid power, so each home would require minor electric modifications to connect to the new system. Prior to installation, a community survey would be completed to determine energy needs of each home. Each home site was archaeologically cleared by the Navajo Historical Survey Department prior to home construction. The proposed solar units would only be installed within existing, archeologically-cleared home sites. Solar units would be connected to homes via trenched power lines.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies one non-essential proposed experimental population (Gray Wolf), one non-essential experimental population (California Condor), one candidate species (Monarch Butterfly), three threatened species (Yellow-billed Cuckoo, Northern Mexican Gartersnake, and Welsh's Milkweed), and one endangered species (California Condor) which may occur in the proposed project area. No USFWS designated critical habitats are present in the area. The proposed units would be installed within 25 feet of existing homes. Due to proximity to existing structures with frequent pedestrian and vehicular traffic, DOE has determined the proposed project would have no effect to threatened, endangered, candidate species, or experimental populations in the area.

Minimal air emissions would occur during construction from the use of small-scale construction equipment and vehicles. Significant air impacts are not anticipated as construction equipment and vehicle use would be temporary and intermittent during installation, and propane generators would only be used intermittently as backup during operations. Project activities would involve hazards associated with routine construction activities, working with

electricity, propane, and Lithium-ion batteries. Any risks from working with hazards would be mitigated through established government safety and construction protocols. The Kayenta Chapter of the Navajo Nation Tribal Government would observe all applicable health, safety, and environmental regulations. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed activities of the project.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs (OIE)
NEPA review completed by Amy Lukens, 8/23/2022

FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D. To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposed action has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:



Electronically Signed By: Casey Strickland

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 8/24/2022

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- ☒ Field Office Manager review not required
☐ Field Office Manager review required

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature:

Field Office Manager

Date: