

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



RECIPIENT: AccuSolar

STATE: FL

PROJECT TITLE: U.S. Floating Solar Manufacturing Innovations for Improved Cost and Performance

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002437	DE-EE0009641	GFO-0009641-002	GO9641

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:

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.)

B5.15 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 (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to AccuSolar in support of a project intended to finalize and validate a new design concept for floating solar photovoltaic (FSPV) systems to reduce costs during manufacturing as well as installation and anchoring.

The project is comprised of three Budget Periods (BPs). A previous NEPA Determination was completed for Budget Period (BP) 1 activities (GFO-0009641-001; CXs A9 and B5.15; 11/12/21). During BP1 the project focused on system and component design exploration and finalization, modeling and analysis of fabrication, installation, and operational costs and value, and identifying test sites for the deployment and validation activities proposed to occur during BP2 and BP3. BP1 has since concluded, and information on four potential test sites has been provided to DOE for review. This NEPA Determination applies to BP2 activities at three of these locations; project work at the fourth proposed test site is conditioned upon further review of additional site-specific details, as described below. BP3 remains restricted pending completion of DOE's NEPA review for all BP2 activities/locations.

BP2 activities would include the fabrication, installation, and commissioning of test sites in addition to continued outreach, design, engineering, modeling, and analysis work conducted by subrecipients Floating Solar Energy, LLC (Lake Mary, FL), Hypower Electrical Services (Fort Lauderdale, FL), Lakeland Electric (Lakeland, FL), Nhu Energy (Tallahassee, FL), DNV (Long Beach, CA), and Seaflex (Huntington Beach, CA).

Fabrication of the small-scale (< 50 kilowatt (kW)) FSPV systems, including hardware, floats, mounting features, and anchors, would be conducted by AccuSolar (Pompano Beach, FL). Deployment of the systems is proposed to take place at the following four outdoor testing sites:

1. Gainesville Regional Utilities (GRU) (Gainesville, FL) – up to 50 kW of FSPV would be installed on a four-acre fenced pond with a depth of 8-10 feet (ft.) on the main GRU property.
2. Tallahassee Utilities (Tallahassee, FL) – up to 50 kW of FSPV would be installed on four lined holding ponds for water treatment, approximately two acres each, located at the City of Tallahassee's southeast farm.
3. Lake Parker ash pond (Lakeland, FL) – two rows of up to 50 kW total of FSPV would be installed in an ash pond to the northeast of Lake Parker, adjacent to the Lake Parker Electric power plant on land owned by the City of Lakeland, Florida.
4. TECO Big Bend Powerplant Cooling Canal (Gibsonton, FL) – up to 50 kW of FSPV would be installed on floats along the north berm of an industrial shipping and cooling canal in an area operated by the Tampa Electric Company.

Due to the manmade, industrial and/or commercial nature of the GRU, Tallahassee Utilities, and Lake Parker ash pond sites, all of which have undergone extensive past and ongoing disturbance affecting the ecological setting, DOE has determined that no adverse impacts to species of concern, critical habitat, or wetlands are to be expected as a result of BP2 activities at these locations. DOE also conducted a review of potential issues related to other resources of concern and found no effects that would be expected to result from the proposed project activities.

There is currently not sufficient information available to review the TECO site because it is located in a potentially ecologically sensitive area and may be subject to review and permitting by cognizant federal and state agencies. Until such time as regulatory requirements and detailed anchoring engineering plans are fully defined and submitted to the DOE Project Officer for further NEPA review, proposed project work at this location is restricted.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

The NEPA Determination applies to the following Topic Areas, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Budget Period 2 Subtask 4.1
Budget Period 2 Subtasks 4.2 and 4.3 at Tallahassee Utilities, Lakeland Electric, and Gainesville Regional Utilities
Budget Period 2 Task 5
Budget Period 2 Task 6

The NEPA Determination does not apply to the following Topic Area, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Budget Period 2 Subtasks 4.2 and 4.3 at the TECO Big Bend Powerplant Cooling Canal
Budget Period 3

Notes:

Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO)
NEPA review completed by Alex Colling on 6/15/2023.
This NEPA determination requires legal review of the tailored NEPA provision.

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:



Andrew Montano

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 6/20/2023

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: _____