

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



RECIPIENT: City of Duluth

STATE: MN

PROJECT TITLE: LNPk 156 Geothermal Coalition: Designing and Deploying Clean Energy in a Justice40 Cold Climate Community

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|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Funding Opportunity Announcement Number | Procurement Instrument Number | NEPA Control Number | CID Number |
| DE-FOA-0002632 | DE-EE0010666 | GFO-0010666-001 | |

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.) |
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Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the City of Duluth, MN, for the development of a geothermal heating and cooling system and an associated career pathways plan. This award would be executed over two Budget Periods (BPs). This NEPA review applies exclusively to BP1.

The proposed project was selected under the first phase of DOE's Community Geothermal Heating and Cooling Design and Deployment Funding Opportunity Announcement (DE-FOA-0002632), during which awardees are to design their systems, finalize project sites and use, assess the geothermal resource, analyze environmental and permitting needs, conduct feasibility analysis and local engagement, and identify workforce and training needs. DOE intends to conduct a competitive down-selection process upon the completion of an initial 12-month Budget Period (BP1). If the proposed project is selected to advance to the second phase, additional NEPA review will be required.

For BP 1, the City of Duluth would create a comprehensive plan for the design, development, and installation of a geothermal heating and cooling system in the Lincoln Park neighborhood of Duluth. Design preparations would include non-invasive site assessments and data collection at buildings in Lincoln Park and at the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District in Duluth. Additionally, the City would create a career pathways plan to fulfill workforce needs associated with geothermal heating and cooling systems, district energy systems, heat pump designs and deployment, building electrification, and efficiency improvements.

All project activities would be completed in existing, purpose-built facilities. No physical modifications to existing facilities, ground disturbance, or changes to the use, mission, or operations of existing facilities would be required. No additional permits or authorizations would be required. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed BP1 activities of the project.

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 1

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

Budget Period 2

Notes:

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.

A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. The NEPA Provision identifies Topic Areas, Budget Periods, tasks, and/or subtasks that are subject to additional NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____



Casey Strickland

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 6/22/2023

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: _____