

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



RECIPIENT: County of Chester

STATE: PA

PROJECT TITLE : Rooftop solar on 313 W. Market St. office building

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002882		GFO-ChesterPA-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:

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 Chester County to install a +/- 190-kilowatt (kW) direct current (DC) rooftop solar array at Chester County's main office building located at 313 W. Market St., West Chester, PA 19380-2804. This project would be funded under the Administrative and Legal Requirements Document (ALRD) for the DOE's Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant (EECBG) Program Formula Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (EECBG Formula - IJJA) Equipment Rebate Voucher Program.

Award activities would involve the design and installation a 190-kW solar rooftop array on top of Chester County's main office building. The project would involve the handling of solar panels, working on a flat roof, electrical work, and working around heavy machinery (crane). Panels would be delivered on a truck and the crane would be used to lift the panels onto the roof of the 6-story building. The crane would likely access the building via a rear alley to minimize traffic obstruction. Project materials include approximately 16,300 square feet of solar panels, racking/mounting, and inverters. All project activities would be conducted on the roof and they would not result in any ground disturbance. The panels would generate an annual generation amount used to offset grid-purchased energy of 244,500 kWh per year.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies four special status species (Indiana bat [endangered], northern long-eared bat [endangered], tricolored bat [proposed endangered], and monarch butterfly [candidate]), which may occur in the project site. No critical or suitable habitats are identified within the project site. Since no ground disturbance or tree trimming would occur and the project site is fully developed, effects to the above-listed special status species are not anticipated.

The County would work directly with their State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) in accordance with the historic preservation programmatic agreement between the Pennsylvania SHPO and DOE as the project building is a non-contributing resource to a historic district. This project meets the exemption for solar projects in the Pennsylvania programmatic agreement as it a newer structure (built within the past 15 years), it would not require structural reinforcement, and it would not be visible from the public right-of-way.

The nearest airport to the project site, Brandywine Regional Airport, is located approximately 2.65 miles away. The project recipient coordinated with personnel from the Brandywine Airport to conduct a site visit for glare analysis. The recipient indicated that the project site could not be seen from the highest point on the airport. Staff from the flight school confirmed that there are solar panels all around, which are only visible from the air, and they have never encountered any issues with glare.

Chester County is located within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's non-attainment zone for ozone. However, potential air emissions would be limited to minimal emissions from delivery trucks and possible generator-produced power from the installation crew, and would not exceed the de minimis threshold for Chester County's ozone emissions.

Although unlikely, the only hazardous wastes that could possibly be generated during project activities are broken solar panels, which would only pose a hazard in the case of accidental breakages. Other than accidental panel breakages during construction, non-hazardous wastes such as general shipping wastes (cardboard, cellophane, plastics, metallic bands, wood from pellets, etc.) would likely be generated during project activities.

Chester County would observe all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations and requirements. 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.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

1. Chester County must adhere to the terms and restrictions of the DOE executed Historic Preservation Programmatic Agreement with the State of Pennsylvania, available at <https://www.energy.gov/node/812599>.
2. Chester County is responsible for reviewing the online NEPA and Historic preservation training at www.energy.gov/node/4816816 and contacting EECBG.NEPA@ee.doe.gov with any EECBG NEPA or historic preservation questions.
3. Chester County is required to submit an annual Historic Preservation Report at <https://forms.office.com/g/kAFs0N7CZH>.

Notes:

Office of State and Community Energy Programs - EECBG
NEPA review completed by Oshin Paranjape, 9/6/2024

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: **Matthew Blevins**

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: **9/6/2024**

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: _____