



## **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination**

### **Categorical Exclusion**

**Recipient:** Northwest Arctic Borough

**State:** Alaska

**Project Title:** Solar PV, Battery Storage and Heat Pumps for Northwest Arctic Alaska – Kotzebue

**Funding Opportunity Announcement Number:** DE-FOA-0002970

**Award Number:** DE-CD0000070

**OCED NEPA Control Number:** OCED-00070-002-CX

**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:**

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION APPENDIX, NUMBER, AND DESCRIPTION: B4.14 Construction and operation of electrochemical-battery or flywheel energy storage systems** Construction, operation, upgrade, or decommissioning of an electrochemical-battery or flywheel energy storage system within a previously disturbed or developed area or within a small (as discussed at 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(2)) area contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and the integral elements listed at the start of appendix B of this part, and would incorporate appropriate safety standards (including the current National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 855, Standard for the Installation of Energy Storage Systems), design and construction standards, control technologies, and best management practices.

#### **Rationale for Determination:**

DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) is proposing to provide funding to Northwest Arctic Borough (NAB) in support of their project to execute 11 subprojects under this award. These subprojects are generally classified as Solar Photovoltaic (PV), Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), powerplant upgrades, transmission line upgrades and installation of heat pumps into residential dwellings. The following subproject would be a BESS installation in the Native Village of Kotzebue, Alaska.

At this time, DOE is proposing to provide funding in support of NAB planning, design, construction and installation for the BESS activities only; those activities are described below.

NAB project activities would include engineering study, design, planning, administrative activities, long lead procurement, site clearing, construction, and installation of the BESS. The BESS would be located on previously disturbed lands which is currently being used for storage. Site clearing activities would include removal and proper disposal of materials. The BESS would be located on approximately 0.26 acres of zoned industrial lands by the City of Kotzebue and owned by Kotzebue Electric Association (KEA). Construction activities may include geotechnical investigations, soil removal, leveling, grading, and laying foundation. The BESS would be interconnected to the power plant with via underground conductor in conduit in shallow trenching following the routing in blue (215 feet) on the above map. The interconnection will tie into the existing 5 kV power generation bus in the KEA power plant.

NAB has confirmed that the selected BESS will comply with all state and federal fire standards, including NFPA and all relevant fire codes.

DOE does not anticipate adverse impacts to sensitive resources as a result of the proposed activities.

**Consultations (Section 106 NHPA, Section 7 ESA, etc.):** DOE consulted with the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office and made a determination of no historic properties affected. DOE completed our consultation on November 19, 2024. DOE received assumed concurrence with AK SHPO after the 30-day consultation period closed.

☒ 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 1501.9(e)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.1(g)(3)) 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.

☐ DOE has determined that work to be carried out outside of the United States, its territories and possessions is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 5.1.1 of the DOE Final Guidelines for Implementation of Executive Order 12114; "Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions."

☒ The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

☐ A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**Notes:** This categorical exclusion applies to those activities listed above. Any changes to the project activities or location are subject to additional NEPA review by DOE and are not authorized for federal funding unless and until the Contracting Officer provides written authorization on those additions or modifications.

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

OCED NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

Date: