

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



**RECIPIENT:** Department of Energy Via National Renewable Energy Laboratory

**STATE:** CO

**PROJECT TITLE :** GHP PATHs Prize

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Number**  
GHP PATHs Prize

**Procurement Instrument Number**

**NEPA Control Number**  
GFO-GHP-PATHsPrize-001

**CID Number**

**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.)

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to authorize the administration of a three-phase prize competition, known as the "Partnerships to Accelerate Training and Hiring for Geothermal Heat Pumps (GHP PATHs) Prize." The prize initiative seeks to address key workforce barriers in the industry and to promote the growth and sustainability of the GHP industry. The intent of the prize is to support partnerships formed by organizations actively involved in workforce development, such as workers, certification and training providers, industry associations, employers, nonprofits, unions, accelerators, municipalities, utility companies, etc. The prize would acknowledge and award efforts aimed at training and hiring the current and next generation GHP workers in all communities.

Phase 1 (Connect) of the prize competition would include competitors submitting a narrative describing their vision for building sustainable pathway to training and hiring in their defined region. Up to 20 winning teams would be eligible to compete in Phase 2.

Phase 2 (Engage) of the prize competition would include competitors formalizing commitments between engaged partners, analyze the needs of the GHP workforce in their defined region and propose a workforce development program containing a realistic training plan and hiring strategy. Up to eight winning teams would be eligible to compete in Phase 2.

Phase 3 (Execute) of the prize competition would include competitors executing their proposed workforce development program and submit results, including the number of workers trained and new hires. They would also describe their planned long-term commitment to GHP industry development in the defined region. Winners of Phase 3 would receive a portion of the remaining prize pool.

The Prize Administrator screens all completed submissions and ensures that the teams are eligible. Then the Prize Administrator, in consultation with DOE, assigns subject matter expert reviewers who would independently score the content of each submission. The reviewers would be composed of federal and nonfederal subject matter experts and representatives with expertise in areas relevant to the competition.

Prize competition activities would include only intellectual, academic, or analytical activities such as administrative and educational activities. Based on the types of activities occurring as part of the prize competition, DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

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.

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: Andrew Montano Date: 12/5/2024  
NEPA Compliance Officer

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Field Office Manager