

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



RECIPIENT: Recipients of FY25 Renew America's Schools - Prize Competition

STATE: DC

PROJECT TITLE : 2025 RENEW AMERICA'S SCHOOLS PRIZE TO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number **Procurement Instrument Number** **NEPA Control Number** **CID Number**
GFO-FY25 Renew Schools-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.)

A11 Technical advice and assistance to organizations

Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to authorize the administration of a prize competition known as the FY25 Renew America's Schools - Prize to Cooperative Agreement. DOE's Renew America's Schools Program funds eligible energy efficiency and renewable energy projects at public K-12 schools, prioritizing schools serving high-need communities. The 2025 Renew America's Schools Prize competition would select up to fourteen (14) winners to fund portfolios of schools and school facilities demonstrating a need for energy improvements, including energy efficiency cost-saving measures, and financing for renewable energy projects. There are three proposed phases for this effort.

The prize competition would be limited to Phase 1 where schools would identify their project team, assemble their portfolio of school facilities, and demonstrate the need for energy improvements at schools and school facilities. Schools selected during Phase 1 would be eligible to participate in the second phase to develop a strategic plan and complete energy audits of identified buildings. Schools would implement their proposed energy improvements in Phase 3. Phase 2 and Phase 3 funds would be awarded under a cooperative agreement. This NEPA review is for only Phase 1 and Phase 2. Additional NEPA review will be required once Phase 3 submissions are received.

Activities in Phase 1 and Phase 2 would include only intellectual, academic, or analytical activities (e.g., data analysis, feasibility studies, conceptual design, energy audits, etc.). Based on the types of activities occurring in Phase 1 and Phase 2, DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern.

EERE is aware of the November 12, 2024, decision in *Marin Audubon Society v. FAA*, No. 23-1067 (D.C. Cir. Nov. 12, 2024). To the extent that a court may conclude that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA are not judicially enforceable or binding on this agency action, EERE has nonetheless elected to follow those regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508, in addition to DOE's procedures/regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet the agency's obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 et seq.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

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

Phase 1 and Phase 2 activities

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

Phase 3 activities

Notes:

Office of State and Community Energy Programs – Community Energy Programs
(Public Schools and Non-Profits Programs)

NEPA review completed by Diana Heyder, 12/10/2024

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.

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:



Matthew Blevins

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date:

12/10/2024

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: