

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



RECIPIENT: Community Power / Cooperative Energy Futures

STATE: MN

PROJECT TITLE : Community Power / Cooperative Energy Futures – Buildings Up Prize

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
Buildings Upgrade Prize

Procurement Instrument Number

NEPA Control Number
GFO-BuildingsUp-010

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.)

B5.1 Actions to conserve energy or water

(a) Actions to conserve energy or water, demonstrate potential energy or water conservation, and promote energy efficiency that would not have the potential to cause significant changes in the indoor or outdoor concentrations of potentially harmful substances. These actions may involve financial and technical assistance to individuals (such as builders, owners, consultants, manufacturers, and designers), organizations (such as utilities), and governments (such as state, local, and tribal). Covered actions include, but are not limited to weatherization (such as insulation and replacing windows and doors); programmed lowering of thermostat settings; placement of timers on hot water heaters; installation or replacement of energy efficient lighting, low-flow plumbing fixtures (such as faucets, toilets, and showerheads), heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, and appliances; installation of drip-irrigation systems; improvements in generator efficiency and appliance efficiency ratings; efficiency improvements for vehicles and transportation (such as fleet changeout); power storage (such as flywheels and batteries, generally less than 10 megawatt equivalent); transportation management systems (such as traffic signal control systems, car navigation, speed cameras, and automatic plate number recognition); development of energy-efficient manufacturing, industrial, or building practices; and small-scale energy efficiency and conservation research and development and small-scale pilot projects. Covered actions include building renovations or new structures, provided that they occur in a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions could involve commercial, residential, agricultural, academic, institutional, or industrial sectors. Covered actions do not include rulemakings, standard-settings, or proposed DOE legislation, except for those actions listed in B5.1(b) of this appendix. (b) Covered actions include rulemakings that establish energy conservation standards for consumer products and industrial equipment, provided that the actions would not: (1) have the potential to cause a significant change in manufacturing infrastructure (such as construction of new manufacturing plants with considerable associated ground disturbance); (2) involve significant unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (such as rare or limited raw materials); (3) have the potential to result in a significant increase in the disposal of materials posing significant risks to human health and the environment (such as RCRA hazardous wastes); or (4) have the potential to cause a significant increase in energy consumption in a state or region.

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 funds to Community Power/Cooperative Energy Futures through the third phase of a four-phase prize competition known as the “National Building Upgrade Prize” (Prize). The Prize would provide cash and technical assistance toward the development of innovative program models to accelerate building upgrades.

DOE previously completed three NEPA Determinations (ND) for this prize (GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-001; A9; 11/23/2022; GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-002; A9; 06/12/2023; GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-

003; A9, A11, B2.2, B5.1, B5.14, B5.16, B5.17, B5.18, B5.19, B5.20, B5.23; 03/13/2024). These previous NDs covered the development of concept plans (phase 1s and 1) and further development of concept and implementation plans (phase 2) of the prize. ND GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-003 outlines Prize activities that would be covered under this ND and are therefore excluded from further NEPA review for buildings that are both younger than 45 years old and older than 45 years old (potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places). Future phases of the prize would be dependent on the outcome of phase 3 and would require additional NEPA review.

Activities in Phase 3 of the Community Power/Cooperative Energy Futures prize would potentially include:

1. Energy assessments
2. Installation of air source heat pumps
3. Installation of heat pump water heaters
4. Weatherization (insulation)
5. Weatherization (air sealing)
6. Weatherization (spray foam insulation)
7. Installation of rooftop solar

Based on previous ND GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-003, DOE has determined categories 1 through 7, for homes newer than 45 years, and activities 1 through 5 for homes older than 45 years are categorically excluded from further NEPA review. However, categories 6 and 7, for homes older than 45 years, do not meet the criteria and would require further NEPA review.

The Recipient shall provide a list of potential homes older than 45 years, with activities clearly outlined. The Recipient would not initiate any activities without approval from their DOE Contracting Officer. Refer to the Buildings Up NEPA Guide for step-by-step instructions

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of the proposed activities to determine potential impacts on sensitive resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature, and found no effects that would be expected to result from the proposed project activities.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

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

1. Activities 1 through 7 (as outlined in the rationale), for homes newer than 45 years.
2. Activities 1 through 5 for homes older than 45 years.

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

1. Activities 6 and 7 (as outlined in the rationale), for homes older than 45 years.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Activities 6 and 7 (as outlined in the rationale), for homes older than 45 years are prohibited unless and until the following conditions have been met:

- a) The Recipient provides the location, age, and description of activities planned to the DOE at gonepa@ee.doe.gov.
- b) The DOE completes NEPA review for tasks and selected locations
- c) The Recipient receives written authorization from the DOE Contracting Officer to move forward with the activities stated above.

Notes:

Building Technologies Office (BTO)

This NEPA determination requires legal review of the tailored NEPA provision

NEPA review completed by Dustin Hill, 12/13/2024

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: _____



Matthew Blevins

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 12/13/2024

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: _____