

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



RECIPIENT: College of the Atlantic

STATE: ME

PROJECT TITLE : Maine Community-wide Comprehensive Energy Upgrades

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
Buildings Upgrade Prize

Procurement Instrument Number

NEPA Control Number
GFO-BuildingsUp3-008

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.)

B1.16 Asbestos removal

Removal of asbestos-containing materials from buildings in accordance with applicable requirements (such as 40 CFR part 61, "National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants"; 40 CFR part 763, "Asbestos"; 29 CFR part 1910, subpart I, "Personal Protective Equipment"; and 29 CFR part 1926, "Safety and Health Regulations for Construction"; and appropriate state and local requirements, including certification of removal contractors and technicians).

B1.34 Lead-based paint containment, removal, and disposal

Containment, removal, and disposal of lead-based paint in accordance with applicable requirements (such as provisions relating to the certification of removal contractors and technicians at 40 CFR part 745, "Lead-Based Paint Poisoning Prevention In Certain Residential Structures").

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.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to authorize the administration of a four-phase prize competition, known as the "National Buildings Upgrade Prize." As part of the third phase of this competition, federal funding would be provided to the College of the Atlantic for the implementation of planned upgrades to homes on the island of Great

Cranberry Island, in the town of Cranberry Isles, ME.

DOE previously completed two NEPA Determinations (ND) for the prize (GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-001; A9; 11/23/2022, and GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-002; A9; 06/12/2023). Those NDs covered the development of concept plans (phase 1s and 1) and further development of concept and implementation plans (phase 2). DOE subsequently reviewed a comprehensive list of upgrades that may be implemented by teams during phase 3 (GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-003); CXs A9, B5.1; 07/10/2024). This ND categorically excluded certain activities from further NEPA review and covered other listed activities provided the proposed work meets specific eligibility criteria outlined in the determination. Future phases of the prize would be dependent on the outcome of phase 3 and would require additional NEPA review.

Subsequent updates to the official NEPA Guidelines for Buildings UP Teams included additional review criteria to those set forth in GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-003, including: "Teams may request a NEPA review of planned upgrades to multiple buildings within a common geographic area for which similar upgrade measures are planned. To be eligible for a NEPA Determination that covers many locations in a common geographic area, buildings must be of similar type (e.g. all are single family row homes, all are manufactured homes, etc.) and vintage (e.g. all were built in the same year, or close to the same year) with similar upgrade measures planned. Teams do not need to wait for signed contracts or confirmed subscribers to submit a request for NEPA review. Obtaining a NEPA Determination proactively allows teams to perform upgrades within a covered location without delay once a subscriber is confirmed or a contract for an upgrade is signed."

College of the Atlantic submitted a request seeking DOE's authorization to provide energy efficiency and clean energy upgrades in 17 single-family homes, including installation of high efficiency showerheads, LED lightbulbs, air sealing and cellulose insulation for attics and walls, attic ventilation, vapor barrier and closed-cell spray foam insulation in basement or crawlspace, bathroom/kitchen ventilation fan, removable insulating window inserts, induction stove, heat pump dryer, health and safety improvements, electrical panel upgrade, air source heat pumps, heat pump water heaters, insulating hot water pipes, whole-home surge protection, high-efficiency wood stove. Home upgrades would occur at multiple locations within Cranberry Isles. DOE has determined that the proposal meets the provisions outlined above based on the following:

- Community residents have been, and would remain, engaged for the prize's minimum technology requirements.
- A National Register of Historic Places Preliminary Questionnaire Historic District Form was submitted to the Maine State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). SHPO staff reviewed the materials provided and went to the proposed historic district to assess the historic integrity. On November 20, 2024, the cognizant College of the Atlantic representative received a letter from the SHPO with the assessment that the majority of the homes do not qualify for nomination to the National Register. However for the home that is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the SHPO found that the proposed work would have no adverse effect on the historic property. The locations and exceptions are listed below:

- 199 Cranberry Road is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The proposed work would have no adverse effect upon this eligible historic property; however, this finding is conditional upon the following:
 - a. Spray foam is only used in the basement/crawl space of the building
 - b. Any heat pumps are installed on secondary elevations or in places that are not visible from the public right-of-way and are installed in a manner that does not damage the historic fabric. If a heat pump needs to be installed where it is visible, please provide a vegetative buffer or other type of screening

No other properties were eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. The properties deemed ineligible are listed below:

1. 68 Cranberry Road
2. 177 Cranberry Road
3. 178 Cranberry Road
4. 300 Cranberry Road
5. 443 Cranberry Road
6. 447 Cranberry Road
7. 609 Cranberry Road
8. 11 Dog Point Road
9. 5 Elmwood Spurling Lane
10. 207 Harding Point Road
11. 254 Harding Point Road
12. 2 Heliker Road
13. 58 Heliker Road
14. 26 The Lane
15. 51 The Lane
16. 71 The Lane

Hazardous activity for this project may involve discovery and remediation of mold, exposure to lead-based paint in

homes, and potential uncovering of asbestos. Existing government health, safety, and environmental policies and procedures would be followed at all facilities, including personnel training, proper personal protective equipment (PPE), engineering controls, monitoring, and internal assessments. Qualified contractors would be used as needed to remediate mold and/or lead. Local permits would be needed for replacing hot water heaters with heat pump water heaters.

Some ground disturbing activities may take place if underground propane or heating oil storage tanks are replaced by fuel systems with electrical components. Ground disturbing activities would not affect any resources of concern at the 16 sites that were deemed ineligible for the National Register of Historic Places. If any ground disturbing activities would occur at 199 Cranberry Road, the conditions set forth by the SHPO would need to be followed.

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.

This ND does not supersede GFO-National Building Upgrade Prize-003, which still applies to any other activity proposed to be conducted by the College of the Atlantic during phase 3.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

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

[Phase 3 of the National Building Upgrade Prize.](#)

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

[Phase 4 of the National Building Upgrade Prize.](#)

Notes:

[Building Technologies Office \(BTO\)](#)
[NEPA review completed by Alex Colling on 12/5/2024.](#)

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: _____



Electronically
Signed By: Matthew Blevins

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 12/16/2024

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: _____