

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



**RECIPIENT:** National Renewable Energy Laboratory

**STATE:** DC

**PROJECT TITLE:** Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) Clean Energy Education Prize: Round 2 Inspire Track

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Number**   **Procurement Instrument Number**   **NEPA Control Number**   **CID Number**  
GFO-HBCUCleanEnergyPrize-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 Round 2 Inspire Track of a prize competition (The American-Made Challenge: Historically Black Colleges and Universities [HBCU] Clean Energy Education Prize, or Prize) to support the development and expansion of HBCU-hosted clean energy summer or academic programs for K-12 and community college students. The Prize would be comprised of two phases, Planning and Implementation, and cash prizes totaling approximately \$600,000 would be awarded to competitors. The Prize would be jointly administered by the Integrated Strategies Office in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Lab (NREL).

Round 1 of the Prize was launched in April of 2023 and helped in developing advanced clean energy programming opportunities and connections for HBCUs. Round 1 did not undergo a NEPA review and as such, this NEPA Determination (ND) is only applicable to Round 2.

Proposed activities would consist of, but is not limited to, improving learning opportunities for younger generations, building connections for educational opportunities with HBCUs, and building programming that provides higher-level educational opportunities for undergraduate and graduate students.

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of the proposed activities to determine potential impacts on resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature. DOE does not anticipate impacts on these resources which would be considered significant or require DOE to consult with other agencies or stakeholders. Any work proposed to be conducted at a federal facility may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant federal official and must meet the applicable health and safety requirements of the facility.

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 final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Integrated Strategies Office  
NEPA review completed by Brittany White, 1/2/2025

#### 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: \_\_\_\_\_



NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 1/2/2025

#### 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: \_\_\_\_\_