

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



RECIPIENT: Adams County Ohio Valley Schools

STATE: OH

PROJECT TITLE: From Coal to Clean Energy: ACOVSD's Net Zero Future

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number

Procurement Instrument Number
DE-EE0010093

NEPA Control Number
GFO-0010093-001

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.)

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); 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

(a) The installation, modification, operation, or decommissioning of commercially available solar photovoltaic systems:

1. Located on a building or other structure (such as rooftop, parking lot or facility, or mounted to signage, lighting, gates, or fences); or
2. Located within a previously disturbed or developed area.

(b) Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and the integral elements listed at the start of appendix B of this part, and would be consistent with applicable plans for the management of wildlife and habitat, including plans to maintain habitat connectivity, and incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to The Ohio Office of Energy and Environment (OH EEO) for the design and installation of a hybrid 75.6kWdc solar photovoltaic (PV) and 67.5kWac battery storage system. The proposed project would be constructed and operated at Adams County Ohio Valley School's (ACOV's) bus garage, located at 4595 Tri-County Road in Seaman, Ohio and would offset building energy consumption and new electric buses that will be put into service in 2025.

Pre-construction activities would include the completion of a building structural analysis, the replacement of a section of the bus garage roof, the submittal of an interconnection request through the utility, and local permitting. Construction activities would include the installation of a roof-mounted solar array that would include 140 PV modules and six power inverters. A lithium-ion battery storage system and demand shaving automation equipment would be installed inside the bus garage.

The US Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies one mammal and one insect that have home ranges that overlap the project site. The Indiana bat (federally endangered) is a species that requires trees with exfoliating bark for roosting during the activity season and caves or mines for hibernation during the inactivity season. No habitat for hibernating or critical habitat persists within the project area and no trees would be cleared as part of the project. While the monarch butterfly is proposed to be threatened, there are no protections in place for this species at this time and no impacts to suitable habitat for this species is expected as a result of project implementation or operation. Accordingly, DOE has determined there would be no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species. Further, DOE does not anticipate adverse impacts to migratory bird species.

According to the project recipient, the bus garage is less than 50 years old and does not meet the age statutes or exceptional importance to be considered a historical structure. The Ohio History Connection's National Register Searchable Database shows no properties listed on the National register of Historic Places within two miles of the project. Given the prevalence of mature trees that separates the project area from any properties in its vicinity, there would not be visual impacts associated with any nearby properties, to include any potentially eligible historic sites.

All required construction and operating permits (including zoning, building, structural, electrical, etc.) would be obtained and verified on site by DOE's Independent Engineer. Any and all permits required for the execution of the project at the above-referenced locations would be the responsibility of the recipient.

Installation of the proposed project may involve the use of heavy equipment and working with electricity. Potential hazards would be mitigated through adherence to established institutional health and safety policies and procedures. The recipient would adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations. Any changes to the project activities or locations are subject to additional NEPA review by DOE and are not authorized for federal funding unless and until the Contracting Officer provides written authorization on those additions or modifications.

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of 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 that would be considered significant or require DOE to further consult with agencies or

stakeholders.

Any changes to the project activities or location are subject to additional NEPA review by DOE and are not authorized for federal funding unless and until the Contracting Officer provides written authorization.

EERE is aware of the November 12, 2024, decision of *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:

Office of State and Community Energy Programs – State Energy Programs
(State Energy Program Transformation & Planning)
NEPA review completed by Chris Akios, 3/11/2025

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:



Matthew Blevins

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: **3/25/2025**

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: