



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form



Categorical Exclusion ID#: NV-2025-007

Proposed Action Title: Weather Support for the NNSS

Program or Field Office: Nevada Field Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Nevada National Security Site, Nye County, NV

Proposed Action Description

The Air Resources Laboratory (ARL) Special Operations Research Division (SORD) provides a comprehensive meteorology program for NNSA/NFO on the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). This program includes the measurement of meteorological parameters near the surface (1 to 10 meters) and aloft (10 to 35,000 meters). Building 22-1, Desert Rock Meteorological Observatory, is the official weather station for the NNSS. Wind, temperature, relative humidity, pressure, precipitation, solar and terrestrial radiation measurements are taken at this facility, 37 other locations on the NNSS, and six locations outside the NNSS. These data are collected and analyzed in support of the health, safety, environmental compliance, and emergency response of the NNSS for NNSA/NFO. Weather towers and other equipment sites (e.g., radio repeater stations, lightning sensors) on the NNSS are visited to install/remove equipment and to perform regularly scheduled maintenance and repair work.

Upper-air weather balloons are released from the Observatory and other NNSS locations to gather meteorological data aloft in support of special projects and experiments. Weather balloons are released in accordance with Federal Aviation Regulations, FAR 101, Subpart A, Section 101.7, and are coordinated, in advance, with the Operations Command Center and Air and Ground Operations Support to ensure safety of aviation assets. Building 22-1, Desert Rock Meteorological Observatory, serves as the backup weather forecast and consequence assessment team location for ARL/SORD.

Office work at ARL/SORD facilities would include use of standard kitchen appliances, use of copiers, printers, office supply storage areas, computer rooms, equipment storage, and the storage and use of normal janitorial supplies. Minor work indoors and in associated yards and storage buildings would include but not be limited to electronics repair, minor fabrication, equipment storage and repair, driving/parking areas, and minor use of shop tools/equipment. Frequently unoccupied facilities would be utilized occasionally by workers to conduct minor work, take meteorological readings, adjust or repair equipment/instruments, and retrieve stored materials. There could be machinery and equipment in the facility, as well as storage of various materials.



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Routine grounds maintenance, general site cleanup, and ground-level repairs in the vicinity of the buildings occurring within existing disturbed ground, including but not limited to, parking lot grading or paving, rainwater damage mitigation, retaining wall maintenance, fencing repairs, spill cleanup and contamination removal, weed and vegetation abatement (including spraying) are included in this Checklist. However, all new subsurface work (e.g., underground utilities maintenance) and any work requiring new ground disturbance will require a separate review for biological and cultural resources.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied

10 CFR 1021: Appendix B, B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021.

To find that a proposal is categorically excluded, DOE shall determine the following:

- (1) The proposal fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D;
- (2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. The 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 classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, include the following conditions as integral elements of the classes of actions. To fit within the classes of actions in 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



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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 of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

NEPA Compliance Officer Determination

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under NNSA NAP 451.1 and DOE P 451.1), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action and I have reviewed the proposal for integral elements. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances present and that the proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Therefore, the application of a categorical exclusion is appropriate.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Patricia Gallo

Date Determined: March 3, 2025