



## **National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination Categorical Exclusion**

**Recipient:** Maine Community Power Cooperative

**State:** Maine

**Project Title:** Cost Effective and Equitable Cooperative Community Solar in Western Maine

**Funding Opportunity Announcement Number:** DE-FOA-0003045

**Award Number:** DE-CD0000137

**OCED NEPA Control Number:** OCED-0000137-CX-002

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:

### **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION APPENDIX, NUMBER, AND 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.)

**B5.16 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:**

DOE's Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED) is proposing to provide funding to Maine Community Power Cooperative (MCPC) in support of the Cost Effective and Equitable Cooperative Community Solar in Western Maine Project (the Project). MCPC is proposing to construct, install, commission, and operate a total of 1.188 megawatts of direct current nameplate photovoltaic (PV)

capacity distributed across six sites in Maine. Each site would consist of 20 dual axis PV trackers on approximately 2 acres of land. MCPC has identified two sites at 352 Bolsters Mill Road in Harrison, Maine to install 40 dual axis PV trackers on an approximately 4-acre parcel of previously disturbed land. The sites have been approved for interconnection by the public utility and would provide a total of 396 kilowatts of direct current or 304 kilowatts of alternating current power.

DOE would provide funding in support of all project activities at 352 Bolsters Mill Road, including planning, design, construction, installation, interconnection, and commissioning activities. MCPC is planning to secure an additional four sites (consisting of 20 dual axis PV trackers each) in Maine, however, the proposed site locations are still undergoing review and are not included in this NEPA determination. The Project components at 352 Bolsters Mill Road would have independent utility from the other Project site locations.

Ground disturbance for each dual axis tracker will consist of a 3-foot diameter hole 6-feet deep. A gravel access road would be constructed and some trees and shrubs bordering Bolsters Mill Road would be removed. The Project site at 352 Bolsters Mill Road qualifies as a categorical exclusion because it is on previously disturbed and developed land.

No additional DOE NEPA review is necessary to support the Project site at 352 Bolsters Mill Road so long as the conditions described herein are met. The potential effects of the total project at 352 Bolsters Mill Road are analyzed and the proposed action fulfills all the conditions, including integral elements, of each categorical exclusion applied.

**Consultations** (Section 106 NHPA, Section 7 ESA, etc.): DOE has met its Section 106 responsibilities to comply with the National Historic Preservation Act. The Project will have no effect on historic properties.

In addition, based on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) tool, no threatened or endangered species or plants are present with the exception of Northern long-eared bat. Based on use of the IPaC tool, DOE concluded that the Project would have no effect on the Northern long-eared bat.

☒ 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 1501.9(e)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.1(g)(3)) 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.

☐ DOE has determined that work to be carried out outside of the United States, its territories and possessions is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 5.1.1 of the DOE Final Guidelines for Implementation of Executive Order 12114; "Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions."

☒ The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

☐ A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**Notes:**

This categorical exclusion applies to the activities described above. 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 on those additions or modifications.

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

OCED NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

Date: