

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



**RECIPIENT:** 4 Communities

**STATE:** MN

**PROJECT TITLE :** Local Government Energy Program – C-SITE AWARD INITIAL NEPA REVIEW FOR INITIATION, PLANNING, AND DESIGN ACTIVITIES

<b>Notice of Funding Opportunity Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
		GFO-LGEP-MN-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 provide funding to three Community Sparking Investments in Transformative Energy (C-SITE) grantees to conduct outreach, education, training, feasibility studies, planning, design, and construction for multiple proposed energy projects. This funding opportunity would support high-impact municipally- or Tribal-led projects and is funded through the Office of State and Community Energy Programs' Local Government Energy Program. The proposed projects would be completed over two Budget Periods (BP). This NEPA Determination (ND) only applies to Budget Period One (BP1) activities.

Each community addressed in this ND is associated with a separate DOE-funded award as follows:

DE-SE0001522 – Orick Community Services District (OCSD) in Orick, CA

DE-SE0001529 – Hopi Utilities Corporation (HUC) in Hopi Reservation, AZ

DE-SE0001519 – Region Five Development Commission (R5DC) in Staples, MN

Award activities for the OCSD would include community engagement, microgrid design, energy load analysis, procurement, permitting, and regulatory approvals.

Award activities for the HUC would include conducting a feasibility study on current grid infrastructure and water security needs, site selection analysis, evaluating potential renewable energy sources, system design, and regulatory compliance.

Award activities for the R5DC would include planning, creating agreements, contracting, and communications.

The DOE will complete the NEPA review for BP2 when sufficient information is available to conduct a meaningful review. Sufficient information would include the engineering/design plans at each proposed award location as well as detailed information such as size, scale, and dimensions of activities and equipment.

Award activities associated with this ND involve information gathering and dissemination, data analysis, document preparation, technical advice and assistance, preliminary engineering, and design. There would be no anticipated hazards associated with this award, all activities would take place at existing, purpose-built facilities that are currently used for the type and scale of activities proposed. No physical modifications to existing facilities, ground disturbance, or changes to the use, mission, or operations of facilities would occur. As such, DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed BP1 activities. Any changes to project activities are subject to additional NEPA review by DOE and are not authorized for federal funding unless and until the DOE Contracting Officer provides written authorization on those modifications.

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 conditional NEPA determination.

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

### Budget Period 1

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

### Budget Period 2

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Notes:

Office of State and Community Energy Programs (SCEP) – Local Government Energy Program  
Review completed by Brittany White on 3/31/2025

## 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.

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:

4/4/2025

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