Decision Notice and Finding of No Significant Impact For the Los Alamos National Laboratory's Electrical Power Capacity Upgrade (EPCU) Project

U.S. Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Los Alamos Field Office
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Introduction

The United States (U.S.) Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) is proposing to upgrade and operate the electrical power supply system for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). LANL requires a reliable and redundant electrical power supply to support mission programs and other activities conducted at LANL facilities. Electrical power supply forecasts project that existing transmission lines that serve LANL and Los Alamos County will reach capacity before 2027, and DOE/NNSA will not have the electrical power supply to meet mission requirements.

DOE/NNSA is seeking a special use permit (SUP) from the U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service (Forest Service) and a right-of-way (ROW) grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the construction and continued operation of a 115-kilovolt (kV) electrical line across National Forest System lands of the Forest Service and BLM-administered lands. DOE/NNSA prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) of the Electrical Power Capacity Upgrade (EPCU) Project in coordination with the Forest Service, Santa Fe National Forest (SFNF), as a cooperating agency[1], and the BLM, as a participating agency, to:

- analyze the potential environmental impacts associated with constructing and operating an additional 115 kV electrical transmission line from the Public Service Company of New Mexico–owned Norton Substation to LANL.
- upgrade the existing LANL electrical infrastructure to accommodate the additional transmission line and associated electrical upgrades across the LANL campus, and
- propose amendments to the Santa Fe National Forest Land Management Plan[2] that would allow for the designation of a utility corridor specific to this proposed transmission line on National Forest System lands.

The potential direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the No Action and Proposed Action alternatives were analyzed in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations at 40 Code of Federal Regulations

[1] NEPA (42 USC § 4336e(2)), defines "cooperating agency" as any Federal, State, Tribal, or local agency that has been designated as a cooperating agency under section 42 USC § 4336a(a)(3). Under 42 USC 4336a(a)(3), a lead agency may designate a federal, state, tribal, or local agency that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved with a proposal.

[2] U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2022). Santa Fe National Forest Land Management Plan, Final Environmental Impact Statement. (MB-R3-10-30).

(CFR) Parts 1500–1508 and Department of Energy's NEPA regulations at 10 CFR Part 1021.[3] This Decision Notice conforms with the DOE NEPA Implementing Regulations that were issued on June 30, 2025.

The Proposed Action occurs within the U.S. Department of Agriculture Santa Fe National Forest and U.S. DOE NNSA lands, as well as a small portion of U.S. Department of Interior (USDOI) BLM lands. Each agency is preparing their own Decision Notice (DN) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) related to this project for their respective jurisdictional decisions.

Decision and Reasons for the Decision

Based upon my review of all alternatives, I have decided to implement the Proposed Action, with associated mitigation measures and best management practices as described in Appendix C of the EA.

The EA analyzes one action alternative, the Proposed Action, that would provide reliable and redundant power to LANL along a route that mitigates potential environmental impacts and allows DOE/NNSA to meet existing mission requirements.

The Proposed Action includes construction of a new transmission line, continued maintenance outside of the LANL property boundary and both transmission and distribution improvements and continued maintenance within the LANL property boundary. The Proposed Action would allow for a three-phase, overhead, 115 kV electric power transmission line approximately 14 miles long, which would originate at the Norton Substation and cross approximately 2.5 miles on BLM-administered land, then cross approximately 8.6 miles on National Forest System lands, and ultimately span White Rock Canyon onto DOE/NNSA lands at LANL for approximately 4 miles. The transmission line can transport energy from different sources, including from renewable energy, to allow LANL to obtain the redundancy needed for mission success. The entire transmission line would require a perpetual ROW of 50 feet from center line (100 feet total width). The project would have continued operation and maintenance activities within that ROW, such as structure maintenance. Construction activities would have a temporary construction ROW total width of 200 feet.

The new line would begin at the Norton Substation and continue south along the road within the existing Norton utility corridor. Once atop the plateau, the proposed transmission line would then parallel Forest System Road 24 until it reaches the existing Reeves Line. The proposed transmission line would then parallel the Reeves Line toward White Rock Canyon, cross the Rio Grande, and terminate at the LANL Southern Technical Area Southern Switching Station. The new line would parallel the existing Reeves Line to the extent possible to minimize disturbance in new locations.

A total of 14 staging areas are proposed for the project. Nine staging areas are proposed on LANL property, four staging areas are proposed on National Forest System lands, and one staging area is proposed on BLM-administered lands. Staging areas on LANL and BLM-administered lands would be approximately 2 to 5 acres depending on the material and size of equipment needed for the section of line being constructed. Staging areas on National Forest System lands would comprise 3 acres. Every effort would be made to site all staging areas within previously disturbed areas.

Existing roads would be used for both construction and maintenance access. New proposed temporary roads would be composed of native surface similar to existing roads already on the landscape. No new

[3] The EA was completed under NEPA regulations and DOE requirements in place at the time the analysis was initiated. The final EA was published by Forest Service in September 2024 as part of their procedures to revise the Forest Service Management Plan for the Caja del Rio. On April 11, 2025, CEQ removed the NEPA regulations. On June 30, 2025, DOE issued the DOE NEPA Implementation Procedure, replacing the rescinded CEQ NEPA regulations. The EA contains references to previous regulations and vacated Executive Orders (EOs). These are retained for historical documentation purposes, reflecting the requirements in place at the time the analysis was completed. However, the analysis and references to those vacated or rescinded EOs are no longer being used to inform the decision to be made.

paved roads are proposed for the project.

The Proposed Action would require two new temporary, continuous, native-surface road segments for a total of approximately 2.63 miles on BLM and National Forest System lands. These roads would facilitate the construction of the utility line. The new, temporary, native-surface road segment on National Forest System lands would be approximately 1.44 miles long and have two gates installed to control access. The new, temporary, native road segment on BLM-administered lands would be approximately 1.19 miles long and have one gate installed to control access to the escarpment. In addition, portions of the powerline located on National Forest System lands would use the existing access route for construction and would require up to 3 miles of new temporary, non-continuous roads referred to as spur roads. Temporary roads would utilize existing accessible corridors to minimize impacts to the landscape. All temporary roads would be decommissioned following the completion of the line construction and follow mitigations described in Appendix C of the EA. Section 2.3 of the EA describes the Proposed Action in further detail. A helicopter would be used for material and supply delivery to minimize ground disturbance where needed. A helicopter would also be used to string overhead lines up the escarpment west of the BLM and National Forest System lands boundary, across the Rio Grande, across Mortandad Canyon at LANL, and across other areas with limited access.

Activities associated with upgrading existing LANL electrical infrastructure on DOE/NNSA lands would include approximately 3 miles of overhead transmission line construction, approximately 8 miles of overhead distribution line construction, and 3 miles of underground distribution line. System upgrades and electrical construction activities are described in Section 2.3 of the EA.

In addition, optical ground wire installation along the route would be incorporated into the overhead transmission lines, along with an optical fiber splice box mounted to a pole structure at an accessible location for future connection by others between the Norton Substation and the Rio Grande crossing.

Based upon my review of the Alternatives, I chose the Proposed Action and proposed design features, mitigation measures and best management practices over the No Action Alternative. My decision meets the project's purpose and need, to provide a reliable and redundant electrical power transmission supply to support mission requirements conducted at LANL facilities and local community power supply needs.

Other Alternatives Considered

The EA describes the No Action, Proposed Action, and several alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study. No specific number of alternatives is required or prescribed. NEPA requires that the agency study, develop, and describe appropriate alternatives to recommend courses of action in any proposal which involves unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (42 USC § 4332(H)). Section 2.4 of the EA describes other alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study.

No Action

Under the No Action alternative, current management plans would continue to guide management of the project area. The No Action Alternative describes existing conditions and serves as a baseline for comparing the potential environmental effects of the Proposed Action. Under the No Action Alternative, a new transmission line that originates at the Norton Substation and terminates at LANL would not be constructed. Any potential environmental effects along the proposed transmission line route would not occur. The benefit of reliability in electrical power supply from a new transmission line would not be created.

LANL would not have an additional reliable or redundant transmission line for their respective operations. More frequent and longer duration of outages would be expected due to extensive

maintenance problems with existing lines and shortages in the regional power supply. Load shedding could occur until additional power could be returned to LANL for normal operations.

Public Involvement and Scoping

The EA contains analyses consistent with NEPA regulations; CEQ regulations; DOE, Forest Service and BLM statutory and regulatory requirements; and other relevant policies. Specific resource issues analyzed were identified through internal agency and inter-agency coordination and external public scoping, including tribal consultation (see Chapter 1, Section 1.4, Public and Tribal Involvement and Identification of Issues and Chapter 4, Consultation and Coordination of the EA for more detailed information and a complete list of the agencies, organizations, and tribal governments that were consulted with for this project).

Finding of No Significant Impact

42 USC §4336e(7) defines a FONSI as a document produced by a federal agency briefly presenting the reasons why an action, not otherwise excluded, will not have a significant effect on the human environment, and therefore, would not require preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS).

The FONSI considers all information included in the environmental assessment and in the project record. For the EPCU, the interdisciplinary team (IDT) reviewed the proposal and provided input to the responsible official. The responsible official made the following determination regarding the affected environment and potential degree of effects considered for a FONSI. Based on the analysis of the affected environment, degree of effects and proposed design features, and best management practices, as described below, the effects of the proposed action are not considered to be significant; therefore, an environmental impact statement will not be prepared. Findings required by other laws, regulations, and policies applicable to the proposal can be found throughout the environmental assessment and within the supporting documentation.

Context

For the proposed action and alternatives, the context of the environmental effects is based on the environmental analysis in the environmental assessment.

Based on analysis of existing data and issues raised during scoping, the following resources were considered in detail in EA analysis: geology and soils; water resources; vegetation; wildlife; cultural resources; recreation and trails; visual resources; land tenure and use; inventoried roadless areas; livestock grazing; environmental justice; climate; greenhouse gases, and social cost of carbon; public and worker health and safety/accidents; White Rock Canyon Recommended Wilderness Area; and the South Technical Area Substation-Norton Substation (S/N) Transmission Line Utility Corridor Management Area (SNTUC MA).

The primary resource impact resulting from the Proposed Action would be the introduction of a new visual element into the landscape. The proposed transmission line would be sited near or within existing roadways and utility ROWs and, consequently, visual impacts should be minimized. Through the establishment of the SNTUC MA, the guideline for Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) would be changed from semi primitive nonmotorized to semi primitive motorized, consistent with the desired ROS outside of the SNTUC MA. Activities should be consistent with the scenic integrity objective of "high" in the inventoried roadless area (IRA), except within the SNTUC MA. Within the IRA, the ROS would change from "semi-primitive, non-motorized" to "semi-primitive, motorized" within the boundary of the SNTUC MA.

Potential short-term impacts to vegetation, soils, and biological resources resulting from the Proposed

Action would be direct (e.g., ground disturbance). The construction and operation of the new transmission line would include ground disturbance to install new power poles, establish a 100-foot-wide utility ROW, and create temporary staging areas for construction equipment. Additional mitigation measures and best management practices (BMPs), such as the use of biological monitoring staff, revegetating disturbed area, and installation of erosion-control devices, would be implemented to minimize the effects to soil, water, vegetation, and wildlife (see Appendix C of the EA) as operation and maintenance needs continue throughout the life of the project.

Both beneficial and adverse impacts were considered, and I have determined the project will not cause a significant effect to the quality of the human environment.

Intensity

Intensity is a measure of the severity, extent, or quantity of effects, and is based on information from the effects analysis of this EA and the references in the project record. The effects of this project have been appropriately and thoroughly considered with an analysis that is responsive to concerns and issues raised by the public and Tribal entities. The agency has taken a hard look at the environmental effects using relevant scientific information and knowledge of site-specific conditions gained from field visits and data collection and evaluation. My finding of no significant impact is based on the context of the project and intensity of effects using the factors contained in the NEPA implementing regulations.

1) Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse. A significant effect may exist even if the Federal agency believes that on the balance the effects will be beneficial.

The EA analyzed potential impacts of the Proposed Action on all resources identified during internal review and public scoping and will result in short-term adverse impacts to several resources that should be reduced or mitigated by mitigation measures and BMPs as described in Appendix C. Establishment of the SNTUC MA, through a Forest Plan amendment, would allow for the implementation of the project and would specify desired conditions and guidelines for the newly created management area. The SNTUC MA is proposed to be the length of the project area on National Forest System lands, approximately 8.6 miles long, 50 feet wide from centerline, and encompass approximately 104 total acres.

Although there will be every attempt made to avoid direct impacts to historic properties, the involved agencies were unable to establish a route that avoids all visual, atmospheric, and auditory impacts to cultural resources. Consequently, the agencies determined that implementation of the proposed action would result in an adverse effect to historic properties and Traditional Cultural Places (TCP) determination under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) due to potential visual, atmospheric, and audible effects on some historic properties and TCPs within the Area of Potential Effects (APE). The agencies have engaged in official government-to-government consultation with impacted tribes and pueblos, as well as with State of New Mexico Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) and have developed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to resolve adverse effects to historic properties. The MOA addresses measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to historic properties as a result of the project. These mitigations and BMPs are separate from and in addition to the BMPs and mitigations outlined in Appendix C of the EA.

As documented in resource analyses in the environmental assessment, with the implementation of all mitigation measures and BMPs, including those that are determined through the MOA process, there are not any potentially significant short-term or long-term adverse effects associated with implementing the proposed action.

2) The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.

The entire proposed transmission line and upgrades to LANL electrical infrastructure would be designed and maintained to minimize hazards. The proposed transmission line would be maintained to the highest standard for electrical power infrastructures managed on federal and other public lands. Along the utility

ROW, access for emergency service providers would be maintained.

Broader concerns of public interest, such as the potential for triggering wildland fires, have also been considered. Proactive design and planning efforts have been incorporated into the proposed project design to prevent a transmission-line-initiated wildland fire.

The proposed project is not expected to result in an adverse effect on the health and safety of the public nor the workers actively involved in potentially hazardous activities, such as heavy equipment operations, inspections, maintenance, decommissioning, and demolition of supporting infrastructure. Potential exposures to various hazards or injuries are possible during the construction of the proposed project.

See Section 3.15 of the EA for more information on public health and safety.

3) Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, prime farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.

As part of the Proposed Action, a plan amendment for the 2022 Forest Plan would be required for the Caja del Rio Wildlife and Cultural Interpretive MA (Caja MA). Effects relevant to the establishment of the SNTUC MA within the Caja MA are described in Section 3.2 of the EA. To maintain the unique characteristics of the Caja MA, proposed construction activities would be designed to minimize the impact to such characteristics.

To maintain biodiversity, existing roads and ROWs would be used to the extent possible to preserve vegetation and wildlife habitat. Recommendations and required mitigations and BMPs to protect vegetation and wildlife were included in the Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plant Species Report (Appendix F of the EA).

In an effort to maintain and protect historic properties, the proposed route would avoid known archaeological, cultural, and TCP sites as much as possible. Further mitigations and BMPs to resolve adverse effects to cultural properties have been developed through the MOA process and are provided in the MOA.

The proposed route is situated adjacent and close to the existing Reeves Line within the Caja MA in an effort to minimize impacts and to maintain the characteristics of the remote setting and continuity with the adjacent White Rock Canyon Recommended Wilderness Management Area, through the Arroyo Montoso IRA, the Rio Grande corridor, and habitat connectivity. The proposed route minimizes the impact to the El Camino Real National Historic Trail by avoiding running parallel to the trail to the extent possible. However, the proposed route would run perpendicularly across the trail outside of the Caja MA.

As a result of the proposed amendments, BMPs and mitigations outlined in the MOA, no significant effects are expected to unique characteristics of the geographic area.

4) The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.

Three public meetings were held for the project.

A virtual public scoping meeting was held May 6, 2021, using an online platform due to state-imposed COVID-19 restrictions. During the public scoping process for the project from April 19, 2021, through May 21, 2021, the NNSA received 670 public scoping emails, letters or comments from the public webpage. Of those, 642 came in the form of a campaign letter from an unknown source. NNSA considered all comments received.

On November 16, 2023, NNSA notified the public of the Draft EA for public review and made the Draft EA publicly available. The Draft EA was available for public comment starting December 19, 2023, through January 17, 2024. During the comment period, NNSA accepted comments from all interested agencies (Federal, State, and local), Native American Tribes, public interest groups, businesses, and members of the public. Due to high public interest, a second comment period was provided from January

22, 2024, through February 20, 2024.

Another public meeting was held on January 11, 2024, during the first public comment period for the draft EA. The last public meeting was held on February 15, 2024, during the second public comment period for the draft EA. NNSA received 7,234 total comments including both written comments and oral comments provided during both public meetings. Of those, a total of 19 comments were from federal and state government entities and federally recognized tribes. A total of 6,743 comments were received via e-mail from an unknown on-line source in the form of a campaign.

Appendix D of the EA provides a summary of the comments received during both 30-day comment periods and responses to those comments.

Through these comment periods there were some controversial themes identified. One controversial topic raised concerns tribal consultation and impacts to cultural resources and historic properties. The agencies engaged in official government-to-government consultation to develop an MOA pursuant to the NHPA to resolve adverse effects to historic properties through criteria to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to historic properties as a result of the project.

5) The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.

The expected risk to the quality of the human environment associated with the Proposed Action will be both adverse and beneficial. Planned projects pose some inherent risk to the human environment. All persons, regardless of race or income, present within the project area would experience the same potential impacts related to air emissions and noise and temporary restricted access for recreational use. These impacts would be considered low because construction is temporary and ambient air conditions and noise would return to pre-construction levels, and access to recreation areas would be restored once construction is complete. The proposed powerline is similar in nature and scope to other infrastructure projects already implemented within the project and surrounding areas. Proposed mitigations and BMPs identified in the EA have shown to be effective in reducing potential risks for similar projects.

It is not expected that the proposed project would affect, or potentially affect, elements of the human environment such as population, employment, income, cost of living, property values, or housing.

6) The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.

I have determined that the decision to implement the EPCU project does not establish precedent for future actions with significant risks to the environment. The decision to implement the Proposed Action does not establish any future precedent for other actions within or outside of the project area. Future actions that are not covered by the analysis in the EA would be evaluated through the NEPA process, including standalone decisions.

7) Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.

Cumulative effects were analyzed in the EA across resources and no significant cumulative impacts were identified (see Chapter 3 of the EA).

No future development is planned to occur within the proposed utility corridor. Existing motorized and nonmotorized recreation, livestock grazing, road maintenance, and continued operation of the Reeves Line in and near the project area represent cumulative effects to the proposed action. Implementation of the Proposed Action could contribute to short-term impacts by increasing motorized use within the area, disrupting planned livestock grazing operations, and increasing use of existing roads and temporary roads necessary for construction access. These activities could have short-term impacts to soil, vegetation, wildlife, recreational uses, and visual and scenic resources that are less than significant, as well as some long-term effects. Mitigation measures and BMPs (see Appendix C of the EA) would be used to mitigate

cumulative impacts.

Consequently, the Proposed Action is not expected to result in significant adverse cumulative impacts.

8) The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in the National Register of Historic Places or may cause loss or destruction of significant cultural or historical resources.

Although there will be every attempt made to avoid direct impacts to historic properties, the involved agencies were unable to establish a route that avoids all visual, atmospheric, and auditory impacts to cultural resources. Consequently, the agencies determined that implementation of the proposed action would result in an adverse effect to historic properties and TCPs determination under the NHPA due to potential visual, atmospheric, and audible effects on some historic properties and TCP within the APE.

On May 23, 2024, NNSA sent a letter to 27 Tribes and Pueblos in the region, inviting them to engage in official government-to-government consultation to discuss and develop an MOA. The agencies have engaged in official government-to-government consultation to develop the MOA to resolve adverse effects to historic properties through criteria to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to historic properties as a result of the project. These mitigations and BMPs are separate from and in addition to the BMPs and mitigations outlined in Appendix C of the EA.

9) The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened (T&E) species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The list of federally-listed T&E species having the potential to occur in the vicinity of the Project was developed based on review of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website for a list of federally-listed species and critical habitat (USFWS 2023a[4]). This list was supplemented with Santa Fe and Los Alamos Counties' USFWS Environmental Conservation Online System Threatened & Endangered Species lists (USFWS 2023b[5]). Based on the IPaC list (Appendix A of the EA), a total of six federally listed species potentially occur in the project vicinity.

Section 7 of the ESA requires federal agencies to ensure that any action authorized or carried out by the agency is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any T&E species, protected species habitat, or result in the destruction or adverse modification of designated critical habitat. Biologist review of the project determined that it did not require formal consultation with USFWS due to the lack of direct and indirect effects to species and their habitats. Recommendations and required mitigations and BMPs were included in the Wildlife, Fish, and Rare Plant Species Report (Appendix F of the EA). With the implementation of these mitigation measures and BMPs, potentially significant short-term or long-term adverse effects are not expected as a result of the Proposed Action.

10) Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.

The EA is consistent with NEPA implementing procedure; CEQ regulations; DOE, Forest Service and BLM statutory and regulatory requirements, and relevant policy. I have reviewed the EA and the project file to determine that no federal, state, or local laws, regulations, or requirements for protection of the environment will be violated with implementation of the Proposed Action. DOE considered the factors mandated by DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures[6]. The EPCU Final Environmental Assessment

[4] United States Fish and Wildlife Service. (2023). IPaC – Information for Planning and Consultation.

[5] United States Fish and Wildlife Service. (2023). Environmental Conservation Online System Threatened & Endangered Species [Los Alamos and Santa Fe Counties, NM 2022.]

[6] The page certification complies with the NEPA requirements in place at the time of completion, September 2004. At the time of publication, the EA conformed to the requirements in 40 CFR 1508(bb) to exclude appendices, references, pictures, tables, graphs, etc.

represents DOE's good-faith effort to prioritize documentation of the most important considerations required by the statue within the Congressionally mandated page limits, that this prioritization reflects DOE's expert judgement, and any considerations addressed briefly or left unaddressed were, in DOE's judgement, comparatively not of substantive nature that meaningfully informed the consideration of environmental effects and the resulting decision.

Conclusion

After considering the environmental effects described in the EA and associated documents, I have determined that the Proposed Action will not have significant effects on the quality of the human environment considering the context and intensity of impacts. Thus, an environmental impact statement is not required.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

Findings required by other laws, regulations, and policies applicable to the proposal can be found throughout the environmental assessment and within the supporting documentation. The DOE/NNSA prepared the EA in compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, Executive Orders (EO), and policies, Forest Service policy, and BLM policy.

As required by the National Forest Management Act, all projects and activities authorized by the SFNF must be consistent with the Santa Fe National Forest Land Management Plan (16 USC § 1605(I) as described at 36 CFR § 219.1). A programmatic plan amendment—focused on energy development and improvement needs—to the 2022 Santa Fe National Forest Land Management Plan, as amended, would be required for the SFNF to approve the proposed activities and authorize the SUP. The public was notified of these amendments as required at 36 CFR § 219.13. The Final EA was published by USFS and DOE in August 2024 is the basis of this determination. After publication of the final EA, additional time was needed to complete the Forest Service process for changes to the Santa Fe National Forest Land Management Plan and to develop and finalize a Memorandum of Agreement addressing how cultural and historical resources would be managed related to the project implementation under the NHPA. The last of these actions was completed in July 2025.

On January 21, 2025, President Trump issued (EO) 14173 titled "Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity," which revoked the 1994 EO "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations." The 1994 EO directed federal agencies to identify and develop strategies for implementing Environmental Justice (EJ).

On January 20, 2025, President Trump issued EO 14154 titled "Unleashing American Energy," which disbanded the Interagency Working Group (IWG) on the social cost of greenhouse gases and withdrew the IWG's guidance documents.

The EA for the EPCU project was finalized in August of 2024, before EO 14154 and EO 14173 were issued. Therefore, the EA will still contain the discussions related to EJ, Climate, Greenhouse Gases and Social Cost of Carbon. The EA includes references to other EOs vacated or rescinded by the new EO 14154 and they are retained for historical documentation purposes, reflecting the requirements in place at the time the analysis was completed. However, the analysis and references to those vacated or rescinded EOs are no longer being used to inform the decision to be made.

This decision and the proposed action are in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations including the ESA of 1973, the NHPA, and the Clean Water Act; has met obligations to consult with federally recognized tribes; and complies with the following pertinent EOs: EO 13007, Indian Sacred Sites – avoid adversely affecting the physical integrity of these sites, EO 13175, Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments - agencies consult with Indian tribes and respect tribal sovereignty as they develop policy on issues that impact Indian communities, EO 13112, Invasive Species

– prevent the introduction of invasive species and provide for their control and to minimize the economic, ecological, and human health impacts that invasive species cause and EO 13186, Migratory Birds – identify actions that may have a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations.

A floodplain assessment was completed in August 2025 for this project per 10 CFR Part 1022 requirements. Public comments were received on the floodplain assessment and considered by DOE/NNSA. Those comments do not change NNSA's Finding of No Significant Impact. A Statement of Finding on the floodplain assessment is forthcoming.
Approved by:

TL Wyka 08/12/2025

Ted Wyka
Manager
Los Alamos Field Office
National Nuclear Security Administration

Date