

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



RECIPIENT: Alaska Village Electric Cooperative

STATE: AK

PROJECT TITLE : Goodnews Bay Renewable Energy

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
DE-FOA-0002975

Procurement Instrument Number
DE-IE0000187

NEPA Control Number
GFO-0000187-002

CID Number
G0187

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:

B1.7 Electronic equipment

Acquisition, installation, operation, modification, and removal of electricity transmission control and monitoring devices for grid demand and response, communication systems, data processing equipment, and similar electronic equipment.

B1.13 Pathways, short access roads, and rail lines

Construction, acquisition, and relocation, consistent with applicable right-of-way conditions and approved land use or transportation improvement plans, of pedestrian walkways and trails, bicycle paths, small outdoor fitness areas, and short access roads and rail lines (such as branch and spur lines).

B4.12 Construction of powerlines

Construction of electric powerlines approximately 10 miles in length or less, or approximately 20 miles in length or less within previously disturbed or developed powerline or pipeline rights-of-way.

B4.14 Construction and operation of electrochemical-battery or flywheel energy storage systems

Construction, operation, upgrade, or decommissioning of an electrochemical-battery or flywheel energy storage system within a previously disturbed or developed area or within a small (as discussed at 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(2)) area contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area. 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 incorporate appropriate safety standards (including the current National Fire Protection Association 855, Standard for the Installation of Energy Storage Systems), design and construction standards, control technologies, and best management practices.

B5.18 Wind turbines

The installation, modification, operation, and removal of a small number (generally not more than 2) of commercially available wind turbines, with a total height generally less than 200 feet (measured from the ground to the maximum height of blade rotation) that (1) are located within a previously disturbed or developed area; (2) are located more than 10 nautical miles (about 11.5 miles) from an airport or aviation navigation aid; (3) are located more than 1.5 nautical miles (about 1.7 miles) from National Weather Service or Federal Aviation Administration Doppler weather radar; (4) would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on bird or bat populations; and (5) are sited or designed such that the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts to persons (such as from shadow flicker and other visual effects, and noise). Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as local land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and would incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices. Covered actions include only those related to wind turbines to be installed on land.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative (AVEC) for the installation of wind turbines, powerlines, and a battery energy storage system (BESS). Project activities would take place in Goodnews Bay, Alaska.

DOE previously completed a NEPA Determination (ND) (GFO-0000187-001: exclusions A9, A11; signed 12/6/2024) for Tasks 0, 1, and 2: grant management, design and engineering, and construction bids. This ND applies to Tasks 3-8: materials purchasing and shipment, installation, commissioning, verification, and grant administration; i.e., all remaining activities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Proposed project activities would include the installation of two 100 kW wind turbines on a ridge just outside of town (GPS coordinates: 59.128750, -161.576517 and 59.128194, -161.577497). The turbines would each be placed on a 275 square foot concrete pad resting on a gravel overlay totaling 10,000 square feet. Excavation depth would

not exceed 5 feet. The turbines would have a maximum blade height of 114.49 feet, with a maximum blade radius of 34.4 feet. A 700-foot-long gravel road, with an average cut depth of two feet, would be constructed to access the site of the proposed turbines from an established gravel road that travels from the town to a quarry. The turbines and access road would be located on previously undisturbed ground.

A 3,537-foot power line extension would be installed to connect the turbines to the existing Goodnews Bay power grid. The line would require the installation of 25 poles and 15 guy anchors and follow the right-of-way of the existing quarry road. Each pole and anchor would require excavation depths of up to six feet.

At the existing Goodnews Bay power plant (59.117798, -161.588829), mechanical and electrical systems would be upgraded and a BESS installed. The BESS would be installed on a concrete pad approximately 200 square feet in size, with excavation depth limited to less than two feet. Electrical wiring and conduit would be installed to connect the BESS to the grid.

IMPACTS ANALYSIS

Per the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, on 13 July 2021, AVEC received concurrence on a finding of "no historic properties affected" from the Alaska State Historic Preservation Office (AK SHPO) for upgrades at the Goodnews Bay power plant. AVEC initiated further consultation on 2 August 2024 with AK SHPO, the Calista Tribe, the Kuitsarak Tribe, and the Native Village of Goodnews Bay for the above proposed activities, seeking concurrence with the same finding as before. No response was received from the AK SHPO or the Tribal entities; therefore, in accordance with 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1)(i), DOE has determined that project activities would result in no historic properties affected.

Due to the proximity of the proposed wind turbines to the Goodnews Bay airstrip, consultation was initiated with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). On 11 December 2024, FAA concluded that the proposed wind turbines would not be a hazard to air navigation, provided the following conditions are met:

1. The structure is outfitted with red obstruction lights and marked as noted in figure A-27, "Wind Turbine Lighting and Marking in Snow Prone Areas" of the Advisory Circular 70-7460-1.
2. Any failure or malfunction that lasts more than thirty (30) minutes and affects a top light or flashing obstruction light, regardless of its position, should be reported immediately to (800) 478-3576 so a Notice to Air Missions (NOTAM) can be issued. As soon as the normal operation is restored, notify the same number.
3. FAA Form 7460-2, Notice of Actual Construction or Alteration, be e-filed any time the project is abandoned or within 5 days after the construction reaches its greatest height.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies two species of concern (Short-tailed Albatross and Steller's Eider) which may occur in the proposed project area. The Short-tailed Albatross only comes to land to nest, and does not do so in the subarctic regions of the North Pacific. As for the Steller's Eider, less than 1% of the population breeds in North America. Alaska's breeding population occurs in two disjunct regions, neither of which are near the project area: the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta in western Alaska, where only a few birds may nest, and the Arctic Coastal Plain, primarily near Barrow. Furthermore, Steller's Eider nests on islands or peninsulas in tundra lakes and ponds, none of which occur in the project area. No critical habitats are identified within the proposed project area, and listed species are not likely to be present. For these reasons, DOE has determined that project would have no effect on these species.

IPaC identifies two migratory bird species that may be present in the project area: the Black Turnstone, which may be present during the third week of July, and the Bald Eagle, which may be present during the fourth week of July. Powerlines would be oriented to consider topography and prevailing winds in order to reduce impacts to migratory bird species. Nationwide avoidance and minimization measures for birds would be followed in all aspects of the project.

All required permits, authorizations, and approvals shall be obtained prior to commencing work. Potential work hazards include typical hazards associated with construction, mechanical, and electrical work, as well as working from heights. Award recipients would adhere to established health and safety policies and procedures when performing project work, and would observe all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations.

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 which would be considered significant or require DOE to consult with other agencies or stakeholders.

For Categorical Exclusion Determinations:

- The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B and C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025). To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that

are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures.

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

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Should archaeological materials be observed during project activities, all work in the immediate vicinity must stop, and the area must be secured. The appropriate State and/or Tribal Historic Preservation Office and the DOE Project Officer shall be contacted immediately in order to help assess the situation and determine how to preserve the resource(s). Compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to archaeological resources is required.

All required permits, authorizations, and approvals shall be obtained prior to commencing work.

FAA conditions provided in their 11 December 2024 determination must be adhered to, specifically:

1. The structure is outfitted with red obstruction lights and marked as noted in figure A-27, "Wind Turbine Lighting and Marking in Snow Prone Areas" of the Advisory Circular 70-7460-1.
2. Any failure or malfunction that lasts more than thirty (30) minutes and affects a top light or flashing obstruction light, regardless of its position, should be reported immediately to (800) 478-3576 so a Notice to Air Missions (NOTAM) can be issued. As soon as the normal operation is restored, notify the same number.
3. FAA Form 7460-2, Notice of Actual Construction or Alteration, be e-filed any time the project is abandoned or within 5 days after the construction reaches its greatest height.

This ND requires legal review of the tailored NEPA Provision.

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs
NEPA review completed by Andrew McClellan, 20 August 2025

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

 Electronically Signed By: Nicole Serio

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date:

8/25/2025

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: