

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



RECIPIENT: National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR)

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE: Hydropower Collegiate Competition (HCC) 2027

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
		GFO-HCCPrize-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:

B3.6 Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects	Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of facilities for smallscale research and development projects; conventional laboratory operations (such as preparation of chemical standards and sample analysis); and small-scale pilot projects (generally less than 2 years) frequently conducted to verify a concept before demonstration actions, provided that construction or modification would be within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Not included in this category are demonstration actions, meaning actions that are undertaken at a scale to show whether a technology would be viable on a larger scale and suitable for commercial deployment.
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Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to authorize federal funding for the Hydropower Collegiate Competition, a prize competition that challenges students to solve complex hydropower challenge. The competition would be administered by the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR). Up to fifteen competing teams would be selected to participate in the competition.

Teams selected to participate would compete in up to six challenges. Activities would include document preparation, giving presentations, and networking with students, industry professionals, and community stakeholders. One optional challenge is for teams to fabricate and test a small-scale prototype of their design in a laboratory or tank setting, and test plans would be reviewed by competition administrator prior to testing.

Although competitors and facility locations are unknown at this time, all facilities would be preexisting purpose-built facilities for the type of work to be conducted for this competition. Prize activities could involve typical hazards associated with fabrication and testing activities, including handling and use of hazardous materials, operation of potentially hazardous equipment, and site-specific environmental hazards. Existing health, safety, and environmental policies and procedures would be followed to mitigate hazards to acceptable levels. Mitigated hazards would pose negligible risks to the public and environment. Any hazardous and non-hazardous waste that is produced would be managed in accordance with applicable requirements.

All activities would comply with existing federal, state, and local laws and 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.

Any work proposed to be conducted at a federal facility may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant federal official and must meet the applicable health and safety requirements of the facility.

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 10CFR 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:

Any work proposed to be conducted at a federal facility may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant federal official and must meet the applicable health and safety requirements of the facility.

Notes:

Water Power Technologies Office (WPTO)
 NEPA review completed by Brandon Bammel, 02/17/2026

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  **Electronically Signed By: Nicole Serio** Date: 2/17/2026

 NEPA Compliance Officer

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: _____ Date: _____
 Field Office Manager