

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



RECIPIENT: Students

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE: Marine Energy Collegiate Competition (MECC) 2027

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
		GFO-MECCPrize-003	

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:

<b>B3.6 Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects</b>	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 provide federal funding for the Marine Energy Collegiate Competition (MECC), a prize competition designed to have post-secondary students engage with the marine energy industry. The competition would be administered by the National Laboratory of the Rockies (NLR). Up to thirty competing teams would be selected to participate in the competition.

Selected teams would design, fabricate, and test a marine energy-powered prototype device with blue economy applications. Teams would have the option to decide where to test their device, but such activities would only be completed in a laboratory and tank-based setting; open water testing would not be allowed. Additional activities would include development of a business plan, document preparation, presentations, and networking with students, industry professionals, and community stakeholders.

Although competitors and testing locations are unknown at this time, all facilities would be pre-existing purpose-built facilities for the type of work to be conducted for this competition. Each device would be subjected to a safety inspection by the respective testing facility and would be reviewed by the competition administrators. Testing activities for any device would not occur until a safety inspection yields satisfactory findings and all necessary approvals are issued.

Prize activities would involve typical hazards associated with device fabrication and testing, including handling and use of hazardous materials, operations 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.

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