

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



RECIPIENT: GFO-0010151-002

STATE: AK

PROJECT TITLE : MGP Workforce Development and Community Education Outreach Project

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-EE0010151	GFO-0010151-002	GO10151

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:

B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring

Site characterization and environmental monitoring (including, but not limited to, siting, construction, modification, operation, and dismantlement and removal or otherwise proper closure (such as of a well) of characterization and monitoring devices, and siting, construction, and associated operation of a small-scale laboratory building or renovation of a room in an existing building for sample analysis). Such activities would be designed in conformance with applicable requirements and use best management practices to limit the potential effects of any resultant ground disturbance. Covered activities include, but are not limited to, site characterization and environmental monitoring under CERCLA and RCRA. (This class of actions excludes activities in aquatic environments. See B3.16 of this appendix for such activities.) Specific activities include, but are not limited to: (a) Geological, geophysical (such as gravity, magnetic, electrical, seismic, radar, and temperature gradient), geochemical, and engineering surveys and mapping, and the establishment of survey marks. Seismic techniques would not include large-scale reflection or refraction testing; (b) Installation and operation of field instruments (such as stream-gauging stations or flow-measuring devices, telemetry systems, geochemical monitoring tools, and geophysical exploration tools); (c) Drilling of wells for sampling or monitoring of groundwater or the vadose (unsaturated) zone, well logging, and installation of water-level recording devices in wells; (d) Aquifer and underground reservoir response testing; (e) Installation and operation of ambient air monitoring equipment; (f) Sampling and characterization of water, soil, rock, or contaminants (such as drilling using truck- or mobile-scale equipment, and modification, use, and plugging of boreholes); (g) Sampling and characterization of water effluents, air emissions, or solid waste streams; (h) Installation and operation of meteorological towers and associated activities (such as assessment of potential wind energy resources); (i) Sampling of flora or fauna; and (j) Archeological, historic, and cultural resource identification in compliance with 36 CFR part 800 and 43 CFR part 7.

B3.2 Aviation activities

Aviation activities for survey, monitoring, or security purposes that comply with Federal Aviation Administration regulations.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska (QTU) to conduct geothermal research to assist in the identification of a viable geothermal energy source in Unalaska Island, Alaska.

Project activities would include utilizing remote sensing, analytical magnetic detection techniques, and methane detection imaging efforts to locate 90 – 120 Magnetotelluric (MT) stations within remote land along the northern portions of Makushin Volcano, which occurs entirely on land owned by the Ounalaska Corporation. Three holes would be drilled to no greater than one-foot below ground surface at each of the MT stations. The stations would capture electromagnetic measurements passively with no energy entering the ground through this surveying technique.

The deployment of the MT stations would involve travel by helicopter and would include standing up temporary field camps (2-3 days efforts for each 5-10 stations). Helicopter flights would follow established pre-approved flight plans, would adhere to established flight corridors, and maintain a minimum safe altitude of 500 feet to minimize impacts to resident wildlife and avoid sensitive habitats. A risk assessment would be completed for each flight-day considering mission intent and current/forecast weather conditions, and operational parameters would be identified and set forth in a Safe Work Permit.

Drone flights would be flown in the same areas as the MT stations and would include line of sight transects to collect magnetometer readings. This effort would be managed by an FAA-licensed pilot. The Qawalangin Tribe of Unalaska is responsible for ensuring that all activities involving small UASs are compliant with 14 CFR Part 107 or an applicable

Certificate of Waiver or Authorization. This includes, but is not limited to, aircraft requirements such as remote pilot-in-command certification, authorities and responsibilities; ensuring the small UAS is in a condition for safe operation; registration; understanding airspace classifications and requirements; and accident reporting (if applicable).

Aviation activities shall not commence until program requirements are met.

The USFWS IPaC outlined one federally listed species that may occur with the project area. The Stellar's eider (federally threatened) is a bird species that occurs in shallow marine waters in the vicinity of bays, reefs, inlets and lagoons. Terrestrial habitats they occupy include beaches, sandbars and flat rocks exposed during low tide. Breeding areas include grassy edges of tundra lakes and ponds, as well as lake basins, barren rocky areas in tundra, and grassy hummock depressions. An IPaC evaluation of potential impacts to this species led to a no effect finding, which was based on the proposed project being outside the scope of the ESA Section 7 Standing Analysis for projects in Alaska. The proposed project site is also outside of the critical habitat of this species. Accordingly, DOE has determined there would be no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species. Further, DOE does not anticipate adverse impacts to migratory bird species.

Formal consultation with the Alaska SHPO was initiated on November 25th, 2025. The SHPO responded on January 8th, 2026 stating that they concur that no historic resources would be affected by the proposed project. The SHPO deemed no eligible properties would be affected as a result of the proposed project activities and that the recipient has fulfilled section 106 consultation. Should unidentified cultural resources be discovered during the course of project field activities, work must be interrupted until the resources have been evaluated in terms of the National Register of Historic Places eligibility criteria (36 CFR 60.4), in consultation with the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology.

Wetland and waterway areas would be avoided during field activities and no impacts to aquatic resources, including floodplains, are expected through project implementation.

Existing institutional health and safety policies, including mandatory employee training, use of appropriate personal protective equipment, engineering controls and adherence to standard safety procedures would be followed. Compliance with federal, state, and local health and safety regulations would be maintained throughout the project to ensure the safety of all personnel. Additional policies and procedures would be implemented as new health and safety risks are identified.

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.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

1. Should unidentified cultural resources be discovered during the course of project field activities, work must be interrupted until the resources have been evaluated in terms of the National Register of Historic Places eligibility criteria (36 CFR 60.4), in consultation with the Alaska Office of History and Archaeology.
2. Aviation activities shall not commence until program requirements are met.

Notes:

Geothermal Technologies Office
NEPA review completed by Chris Akios, 4/10/2026

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.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Electronically Signed By: Nicole Serio Date: 4/10/2026
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