

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



RECIPIENT: Jefferson County Board of Education

STATE: AL

PROJECT TITLE : Jefferson County Energy & Health Improvements

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
DE-FOA-002756

Procurement Instrument Number
DE-SE0000706

NEPA Control Number
GFO-SE0000706-001

CID Number
GO706

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:

B2.1 Workplace enhancements

Modifications within or contiguous to an existing structure, in a previously disturbed or developed area, to enhance workplace habitability (including, but not limited to, installation or improvements to lighting, radiation shielding, or heating/ventilating/air conditioning and its instrumentation, and noise reduction).

B5.1 Actions to conserve energy or water

(a) Actions to conserve energy or water, demonstrate potential energy or water conservation, and promote energy efficiency that would not have the potential to cause significant changes in the indoor or outdoor concentrations of potentially harmful substances. These actions may involve financial and technical assistance to individuals (such as builders, owners, consultants, manufacturers, and designers), organizations (such as utilities), and governments (such as state, local, and tribal). Covered actions include, but are not limited to weatherization (such as insulation and replacing windows and doors); programmed lowering of thermostat settings; placement of timers on hot water heaters; installation or replacement of energy efficient lighting, low-flow plumbing fixtures (such as faucets, toilets, and showerheads), heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, and appliances; installation of drip-irrigation systems; improvements in generator efficiency and appliance efficiency ratings; efficiency improvements for vehicles and transportation (such as fleet changeout); transportation management systems (such as traffic signal control systems, car navigation, speed cameras, and automatic plate number recognition); development of energy-efficient manufacturing, industrial, or building practices; and small-scale energy efficiency and conservation research and development and small-scale pilot projects. Covered actions include building renovations or new structures, provided that they occur in a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions could involve commercial, residential, agricultural, academic, institutional, or industrial sectors. Covered actions do not include rulemakings, standard-settings, or proposed DOE legislation, except for those actions listed in B5.1(b) of this appendix.

(b) Covered actions include rulemakings that establish energy conservation standards for consumer products and industrial equipment, provided that the actions would not:

1. Have the potential to cause a significant change in manufacturing infrastructure (such as construction of new manufacturing plants with considerable associated ground disturbance);
2. involve significant unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (such as rare or limited raw materials);
3. have the potential to result in a significant increase in the disposal of materials posing significant risks to human health and the environment (such as RCRA hazardous wastes); or
4. have the potential to cause a significant increase in energy consumption in a state or region.

B5.19 Ground source heat pumps

The installation, modification, operation, and removal of commercially available smallscale ground source heat pumps to support operations in single facilities (such as a school or community center) or contiguous facilities (such as an office complex) (1) only where (a) major associated activities (such as drilling and discharge) are regulated, and (b) appropriate leakage and contaminant control measures would be in place (including for cross-contamination between aquifers); (2) that would not have the potential to cause significant changes in subsurface temperature; and (3) would be located within a previously disturbed or developed area. 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.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Jefferson County Board of Education (hereinafter "Jefferson County") to perform energy efficiency upgrades at seven schools in Jefferson County, Alabama, including Bagley Elementary, Brookville Elementary, Corner Middle School, Kermit Johnson Elementary School, Minor Middle School, West Jefferson Elementary School, and McAdory Elementary School. The proposed upgrades at these schools include the installation of high-efficiency heat pumps/HVAC systems, LED lighting, and building automation controls. This funding opportunity is part of a DOE initiative to execute high-impact energy efficiency and health improvements as well as innovative energy technology packages in K-12 schools across the country.

DOE previously completed a NEPA Determination (ND; GFO-SE00002756-BP1; A9 and A11; 11/30/2023) that covered Budget Period 1 (BP1) activities for 18 school districts under the Energy Improvements at Public K-12 School Facilities Funding Opportunity Announcement (DE-FOA-0002756). The current ND review is for the remaining BP2 tasks (Tasks 3 through 5), which include contracting, procurement, implementation, closeout and reporting tasks.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) was initiated by the recipient on December 20, 2024 via the Alabama Historical Commission's Section 106 Project Review Consultation Form. The Alabama Historical Commission responded on December 31, 2024 by concurring that the project activities at all locations will have no effect on cultural resources eligible for or listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) consultation was initiated by DOE on April 29, 2026 with the following Tribes, as outlined in the Tribal Directory Assessment Tool.

- Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
- Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town
- Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
- Muscogee (Creek) Nation
- Seminole Tribe of Florida

Responses from the Tribes were not received.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

DOE determined that there would be no effect to threatened or endangered species at Bagley Elementary, Brookville Elementary, Corner Middle School, Minor Middle School, West Jefferson Elementary School, and McAdory Elementary School.

Section 7 consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was completed for the Kermit Johnson School using the Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) online consultation tool on April 29, 2026. Of the seven sites included in the project, this is the only site where habitat impacts may occur through project implementation. Tree trimming at this site would be necessary in order to clear the appropriate area for new concrete pad placement for HVAC ground units. The IPaC system reported four mammals, one bird, two reptiles, one amphibian, four fish, five bivalves, one insect, and one plant species. The species delineated, as well as their federal protection status under the Endangered Species Act is provided below:

- Mammals
 - o Gray bat (endangered)
 - o Indiana bat (endangered)
 - o Northern long-eared bat (endangered)
 - o Tricolored bat (proposed endangered)
- Birds
 - o Whooping crane (experimental population)
- Reptiles
 - o Alligator snapping turtle (proposed threatened)
 - o Flattened musk turtle (threatened)
- Amphibians

- o Black warrior waterdog (endangered)
- Fish
- o Cahaba shiner (endangered)
- o Coal darter (proposed threatened)
- o Rush darter (endangered)
- o Vermillion darter (endangered)
- Clams
- o Alabama moccasinshell (threatened)
- o Dark pigtoe (endangered)
- o Orangenacre mucket (threatened)
- o Ovate clubshell (threatened)
- o Triangular kidneyshell (endangered)
- Insects
- o Monarch butterfly (proposed threatened)
- Plants
- o Mohr's Barbara's buttons (threatened)

DOE answered project-specific questions within IPaC to complete the Section 7 consultation process and automated Determination Letters were provided from the USFWS yielding a may affect – not likely to adversely affect finding for all species that may occur at Kermit Johnson School. This finding is based on any and all tree trimming activities occurring outside of the summer occupancy season, which occurs from March 15th to September 30th. The Determination Letters verify that the consultation on the proposed project is complete for these three species and no further action is necessary unless either of the following occurs:

- New information reveals effects of the action that may affect the three bat species in a manner or an extent not previously considered;
- The identified action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the three bat species that was not considered when completing the determination keys;
- Tree trimming is for some reason required during the northern long-eared bat activity season, which occurs between March 15th and September 30th.

There are no wetlands or floodplains within the work areas of any of the seven schools proposed for project work.

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 further with other agencies or stakeholders.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

1- Jefferson County School District is required to submit an annual historic preservation report on the MS Forms website summarizing all award undertakings and SHPO reviews occurring from September 1st through August 31st. These reports are due to DOE annually no later than September 15th. Please contact your DOE Project Officer for the link to the online form. If you have any questions about completing the annual historic preservation report, please contact historicpreservation@ee.doe.gov and include your DOE Project Officer on the email.

2- Consultation with the USFWS Alabama Field Office would be required if any of the following occurs:

- New information reveals effects of the action that may affect the three bat species in a manner or an extent not previously considered;
- The identified action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect to the three bat species that was not considered when completing the determination keys;
- Tree trimming is for some reason required during the northern long-eared bat activity season, which occurs between March 15th and September 30th.

Notes:

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

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 6/15/2026

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: _____