

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
OFFICE OF CRITICAL MINERALS AND ENERGY INNOVATION  
NEPA DETERMINATION**

**RECIPIENT:** Sac & Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa

**STATE:** IA

**PROJECT TITLE :** Meskwaki Solar Energy Project

**Notice of Funding Opportunity Number**  
DE-FOA-0002975

**Procurement Instrument Number**  
DE-IE0000199

**NEPA Control Number**  
GFO-0000199-002

**CID Number**  
GO199

**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:

**B5.16 Solar**

**photovoltaic systems**

(a) The installation, modification, operation, or decommissioning of commercially available solar photovoltaic systems:

1. Located on a building or other structure (such as rooftop, parking lot or facility, or mounted to signage, lighting, gates, or fences); or
2. Located within a previously disturbed or developed area.

(b) 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 be consistent with applicable plans for the management of wildlife and habitat, including plans to maintain habitat connectivity, and incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices.

**Rationale for determination:**

The United States Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the Sac and Fox Tribe of the Mississippi in Iowa (Meskwaki) to install a 23 kW ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) array.

A previous NEPA Determination (ND) was completed (GFO-0000199-001: exclusions A9 and B5.16, signed 7 February 2024) for the installation of two PV arrays, one ground-mounted and the other roof-mounted, at the Meskwaki Settlement in Tama, Iowa. That project realized cost savings, and Meskwaki is proposing to use those funds towards installation of an additional PV array, which is the subject of this ND.

The newly proposed PV array would be installed on previously disturbed ground adjacent to the Meskwaki Natural Resources Building in Tama, using a pile driven racking system. A trench, measuring 40 feet long and 1 foot wide, would be dug at a maximum depth of two feet to connect the array to the neighboring building.

Pursuant to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, DOE submitted a Request for Review to the Meskwaki Tribal Historic Preservation Office (THPO) for the previous ND. The Meskwaki THPO responded on 31 January 2024 with a concurrence with DOE's determination that no cultural sites or historic properties are present or affected in the project area. The THPO updated their concurrence on 21 May 2026 to include the newly proposed site.

The United States Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation website identifies five species of concern (Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid, Indiana Bat, Northern Long-eared Bat, Tricolored Bat, and Monarch Butterfly) that may occur in the project area. There is no critical habitat in any of the project areas. The three bat species prefer forested habitat, which is not present in the project area. The Eastern Prairie Fringed Orchid can be found in a variety of habitats, including wet to mesic prairies, sedge meadows, and marshes; however, none of these habitats exist in the project area. Project activities would occur in a previously disturbed area where these species are unlikely to be present. DOE has determined no effect on special status species or on critical habitats.

Minimal air emissions may result from the use of equipment during system installation. However, significant air

impacts are not anticipated since emissions would be temporary and intermittent. No tree cutting or trimming would occur. Per the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Map Panel number 19171C0430E, dated 7 October 2021, no floodplains occur in the project area. Per USFWS's National Wetlands Inventory, no wetlands occur in the project area.

No new permits would be required. Potential hazards include typical hazards associated with construction, mechanical, and electrical work. 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.

## 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 shall stop, and the area shall 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.

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs  
NEPA review completed by Andrew McClellan, 21 August 2026

## FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the 'Rationale for Determination' above) 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.

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 be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B (4) of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B (5) of Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021.

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. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts and is not precluded by applicable regulations or procedures concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

DOE has determined that work to be carried out outside of the United States, its territories and possessions is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 5.1.1 of the DOE Final Guidelines for Implementation of Executive Order 12114; "Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions."

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: **Kristin Kerwin**  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 8/24/2026

**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: \_\_\_\_\_