

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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

RECIPIENT: Little Rock School Board a.k.a. Little Rock School District (LRSD)

STATE: AR

PROJECT TITLE : Renew Little Rock Schools

Notice of Funding Opportunity Number
DE-FOA-0003325

Procurement Instrument Number
DE-SE0001457

NEPA Control Number
GFO-SE0001457-001

CID Number
GO1457

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.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Little Rock School District to perform energy efficiency upgrades at 15 schools within their district. This funding opportunity is part of a DOE prize competition known as FY24 Renew America's Schools - Prize to Cooperative Agreement. DOE's Renew America's Schools Program funds eligible energy efficiency and renewable energy projects at public K-12 schools, prioritizing schools serving high-need communities. 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-FY24 Renew Schools-001; A9 and A11; 3/14/2024) that covered Phase 1 and Phase 2 activities for up to 23 winners. Phase 1 activities included the subject schools identifying their project teams, assembling the proposed portfolio of school activities, and demonstrating the need for energy improvements. Phase 2 activities included data analysis, feasibility studies, conceptual designs, and energy audits. This NEPA review is for a Phase 3 project to be implemented by Little Rock School Board. (Note: Phase 3 ("Implementation") is synonymous with Budget Period 2 of the Cooperative Agreement.)

Project activities would occur at the following schools: Bale Elementary School, Central High School, Chicot Elementary & Early Childhood Center, Dunbar Middle School, Geyer Springs Early Childhood Center, Gibbs Elementary School, Mabelvale Elementary School, Mabelvale Middle School, Mann Middle School, Dr. Martin Luther King Magnet School, Romine Early Childhood Center, Stephens Elementary School, Wakefield Elementary School, Carver-Washington Magnet Elementary School, and Watson Elementary School.

The proposed project activities include:

- upgrades to building automation/temperature controls
- minor building envelope improvements
- rooftop unit (RTU) replacements
- air handling unit replacements (including associated pumps/variable frequency drives)
- boiler replacements

These activities involve standard operational safety hazards, including electrical shock and arc flash, work in confined or restricted mechanical spaces, lifting and rigging, pinch points, hot work, slips, trips, and falls, as well as exposure to dust and debris. The recipient would adhere to 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 further with other agencies or stakeholders.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Per Section XIV(c) of the Programmatic Agreement, DOE requires that Little Rock School District submit an annual Historic Preservation Report summarizing all award undertakings and reviews occurring from September 1st through August 31st. These reports are due to DOE annually for the life of the award and are to be received no later than September 15th each year.

Notes:

Office of State and Community Energy Programs – Renew America's Schools
NEPA review completed by Shaina Aguilar on 8/27/26.

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.

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: 8/28/2026

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: _____