

PMC-EF2a

(2.04.02)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
EERE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER  
NEPA DETERMINATION



RECIPIENT: Nevada State Office of Energy

STATE: NV

**PROJECT TITLE :** Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Program - RO Ranch Hydro Project

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-EE-0000084	DE-EE-0000084		0

**Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:**

**CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:**

## Description:

- B5.1** Actions to conserve energy, demonstrate potential energy conservation, and promote energy-efficiency that do not increase the indoor concentrations of potentially harmful substances. These actions may involve financial and technical assistance to individuals (such as builders, owners, consultants, designers), organizations (such as utilities), and state and local governments. Covered actions include, but are not limited to: programmed lowering of thermostat settings, placement of timers on hot water heaters, installation of solar hot water systems, installation of efficient lighting, improvements in generator efficiency and appliance efficiency ratings, development of energy-efficient manufacturing or industrial practices, and small-scale conservation and renewable energy research and development and pilot projects. The actions could involve building renovations or new structures in commercial, residential, agricultural, or industrial sectors. These actions do not include rulemakings, standard-settings, or proposed DOE legislation.
- B1.15** Siting, construction (or modification), and operation of support buildings and support structures (including, but not limited to, trailers and prefabricated buildings) within or contiguous to an already developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Covered support buildings and structures include those for office purposes; parking; cafeteria services; education and training; visitor reception; computer and data processing services; employee health services or recreation activities; routine maintenance activities; storage of supplies and equipment for administrative services and routine maintenance activities; security (including security posts); fire protection; and similar support purposes, but excluding facilities for waste storage activities, except as provided in other parts of this appendix.
- B4.11** Construction of electric power substations (including switching stations and support facilities) with power delivery at 230 kV or below, or modification (other than voltage increases) of existing substations and support facilities, that could involve the construction of electric powerlines approximately 10 miles in length or less, or relocation of existing electric powerlines approximately 20 miles in length or less, but not the integration of major new generation resources into a main transmission system.

## Rational for determination:

The Nevada State Office of Energy will provide \$522,000 in Recovery Act funds to Truckee River Ranch, LLC (Truckee) to install a 225KW hydropower plant and associated 2.3mile transmission line. The hydropower portion of this work will occur at the RO Ranch, located in Nye County at T12N R42E Sec 12 NESW. The property is owned by Truckee. The approximate 2.3-miles of transmission line will follow a Right-of-Way (ROW) owned by the U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management (BLM). BLM has issued the ROW approval via serial number N-88358.

The 2.3-mile power line will follow an existing water pipeline. The BLM ROW is for a 10ft wide, 2.2mi long transmission line across BLM land to RO Ranch. The proposed transmission line will tie in to an existing Nevada Energy transmission line at the eastern end of the proposed line. The hydro power plant will occupy less than .02 acres of land including the 48 power poles. The power generated by the plant will be used to operate irrigation pivots on deeded property owned by RO Ranch. The proposed project will occur on previously disturbed land in a rural area with no other neighbors in close proximity.

The DOE has reviewed the application and note the following environmental issues associated with this action:

- Air Quality – DOE has determined that the construction of the powerhouse and installation of the utility poles are not likely to cause a significant impact on air quality due to the nature of the work and the small area of land to be affected.
- Water Quality – The project will take advantage of existing water rights. DOE finds that the proposed project will not consume water, impact the quality or flow of the water, or affect down stream users.
- Ground Disturbance – The powerhouse containing the turbine and generator will set on an 18ft x 18ft concrete pad



within a 25ft x 25ft area that has been previously disturbed. The power line route will follow the existing pipeline road and will impact 194 square feet of ground area where the 48 power poles will be located. Mitigation measures were outlined in a plan of development submitted to the BLM for the ROW, which the BLM approved. DOE concurs with the plan as accepted by BLM.

- Visual - The turbine and generator will be housed in an 18ft x 18ft powerhouse that will be placed on a previously graded area. The surrounding area is rural. The project and operation of the powerhouse will use existing roads on private property. DOE finds that the location of the powerhouse will not have adverse visual effects.
- Noise - The turbine generator emits approximately 70 to 95 dB depending upon power level. The building will be made of reinforced, solid concrete blocks. The concrete block wall is projected to reduce the noise level by 40 to 50dB within 50 feet of the building. As appropriate measures are in place to mitigate local noise impacts, DOE has determined that the noise generated from the powerhouse is not likely to have insignificant adverse effect.
- Threatened and Endangered Species – A plan of development for the proposed transmission line has been submitted to the BLM and outlines the appropriate mitigation measures for the construction of the power line. Per that plan, the BLM ROW grant stipulates all mitigation actions required of the permit holder. DOE concurs with the plan and the mitigation strategies contained therein.
- Cultural Resources –A cultural resource survey identified no significant cultural resources within or near-by the boundaries of the project. No modifications to any buildings will occur and all ground disturbances will occur in a previously disturbed area that is currently occupied by a road, concrete ditch, and an 18in pipeline. DOE has determined that there no adverse effects to cultural resources are likely.
- Permits – No building permits are required; however, the engineering and contracting firm will conduct necessary inspections during and after construction to ensure the building meets the plan specifications. The State Engineer’s Office, Division of Water Resources, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, will need to modify Truckee’s water right permit for operation of the hydropower plant. The point of use will not change. NV Energy has agreed, via the HydroGenerations Rebate Program, to a non-net metered agreement with Truckee River Ranch, LLC for RO Ranch. The BLM has issued a ROW lease for a 10ft wide, 2.2mi long ROW across BLM land to RO Ranch for the proposed transmission line.

In view of the information provided by the State and recipient, DOE has been determined that the project will not have a significant impact to human health and/or environment. Based on the information provided, DOE has determined that the work outlined is consistent with activities identified in Categorical Exclusion B5.1, B1.15, and B4.11.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

Insert the following language in the award:

You are required to:

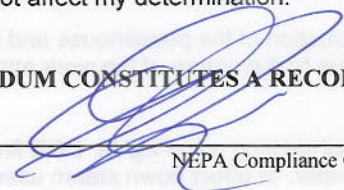
- 1) provide the DOE project officer with a copy of the modified water use permit from the NV State Engineer’s Office, Division of Water Resources, Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.
- 2) stop work and notify the DOE project officer and NEPA compliance officer should the construction of the powerhouse or transmission line uncover cultural artifacts of significance.

Note to Specialist :

According to the project officer, funding for this project is \$522,000. Absent a significant change in the scope of this effort, a change in funding will not affect my determination.

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:



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NEPA Compliance Officer

Date:

8/2/10

**FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION**