

PMC-EF2a

2010021

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



RECIPIENT: City of Albuquerque

STATE: NM

PROJECT TITLE : Ground mount PV installations at City of Albuquerque Fire Academy

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0000013	DE-EE0000680	GFO-0000680-001	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.

Rational for determination:

The City of Albuquerque proposes to use \$1,349,562.50 of EECBG funding to install an approximately 200 kW of ground mounted solar photovoltaic at the City of Albuquerque Fire training Academy complex. The PV array will provide alternative energy to the Academy and the adjacent City owned facilities of City of Albuquerque West-side Animal Shelter and the City of Albuquerque Air Quality District Administration buildings.

The total system will consist of a 200kW PV Ground mount solar array installed in open area between the Fire Academy and the adjacent City facilities. Electricity generated by the array will be used to offset electric use for the entire complex. The PV system will be located on top of shade structures which will be installed as part of this project. The existing ground cover is all previously disturbed from construction activities associated with building installation at the complex. A small hedgerow of ornamental pinyon-juniper shrubs, most of which are dead/dying from lack of adequate hydrology, is located within the footprint for the proposed solar array. A portion of these shrubs will need to be removed permanently in order to accommodate the proposed project.

The 200kW systems will be grid-tied and net-metered into the local utility grid. The unit will generate approximately 200,000 kilowatt hours (kWh) annually. According to the EPA eGRID sub-region calculator this amount of alternative energy will offset more than 288 tons of CO2 emission annually or the equivalent of preventing the emissions from nearly 20,000 gallons of gasoline.

Potential environmental impacts of the project and associated action include:

- Visual – The proposed solar array will be located within an open area between the Fire Academy and adjacent City facilities. There would be no or negligible visual impacts from the proposed PV project as the panels will be located on top of parking shade structures between buildings.
- Wildlife Habitat – Portions of an ornamental hedgerow comprised of Pinyon-juniper will be permanently removed as a result of proposed project activities. The majority of these shrubs are currently dead/dying. Additionally, since this feature is located within a developed commercial complex, it provides little use as viable wildlife habitat. There would be no or negligible impacts wildlife habitat from the removal of these shrubs. All shrub removal will be done outside of the breeding season avoid any potential issues and be compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.
- Traffic – There could be a small increase in traffic required for the delivery/installation of the solar PV array. However, the project site is relatively isolated away from mainstream traffic and therefore any delays in traffic would be of short duration.
- SHPO – The project has been reviewed by the state SHPO and been determined not to have any adverse impacts.

There would be no or negligible impacts to biological resources, wetlands, or other sensitive resources as the

proposed project is sited on previously disturbed land withing a developed commercial/city building complex.

All solar structures will be designed by a structural engineer, and will meet all building code standards, including dead load, wind load and snow load requirements. In addition, a structural engineer will stamp, permit drawings and supervise the PV installation.

Based on the information above and the projects potential to offset of 288 tons of CO2 emissions annually, this project is categorically excluded from further NEPA review under CX number B5.1, Actions to Conserve Energy.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

Note to Specialist :

Completed by Bill Knapp

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:


NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 11/24/10

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

Field Office Manager review required

NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature:

Field Office Manager

Date: