

PMC-EF2a

(2.04.02)

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



RECIPIENT: Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts

STATE: TX

PROJECT TITLE : ARRA SEP Lampasas Solar Project Phase II

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-EE0000052	EE0000116	GFO-0000116-020	EE116

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:

Project Description – The City of Lampasas, Texas, plans to install a 309 kW grid-connected solar photovoltaic (PV) system. The solar PV panels would be installed on about 2 acres of a capped, closed landfill. About 1.2 additional acres on that landfill site would be disturbed for improvements to an existing road. The project would also require installation of buried electrical cables and a perimeter fence and lighting,

Potential Environmental Impacts:

The following evaluation was developed primarily from the environmental assessment of project impacts prepared for the City of Lampasas (dated October 27, 2010).

Land Use – Installation of the solar PV system would not affect current land uses, as it would be installed on an unused portion of a closed landfill No “areas having a special designation” (per 10 CFR 1021, subpart D, App B) or prime farmland would be affected.

Protected Species – The project would not affect federally listed threatened or endangered species. Four federally listed bird species (black capped vireo, golden-cheeked warbler, least tern, and whooping crane) may occur in Lampasas County. The project site, which has a scattered second growth of live oak, mesquite, and Ashe juniper, is not habitat for black capped vireos or golden-cheeked warblers. There is no riparian habitat nearby that would attract least terns, and migrating whooping cranes would not be affected by the solar project. There also is no habitat for the federally protected Concho water snake on or near the site. One federally listed plant species, the slender rush-pea, is historically known to occur only in two adjacent counties and there is no suitable habitat for this species on the abandoned landfill site.

Other Biological Resources – The project would be located on the site of a closed landfill. The conversion of just over 3 acres at that site for use by this project would have little or no adverse effect on native species that occur in the region.

Cultural Resources – Installation of the solar PV panels, improvement of the access road, and installation of other infrastructure on a closed, capped landfill site would not affect cultural resources.

Wetlands – The solar panels would be installed in an upland area with no surface waters. A National Wetlands Inventory review was conducted using the USFWS online mapper tool. The nearest mapped wetland is about one-quarter mile from the project site.

no registered historic properties in Jonestown. The turbine would have minimal indirect adverse effects on any eligible historic properties because the turbine would be about 60 feet tall and thus would not be visible from long distances.

Wetlands – According to aerial photographs and site photographs of the turbine locations, no wetlands will be affected by the project. The City has received a letter from the Corps of Engineers confirming that the project will not require actions to comply with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.

Floodplains – According to the FEMA flood insurance maps for Travis and Burnet Counties, none of the proposed wind turbine locations are within 100 year floodplains.

Other Surface water and groundwater resources – Installation of the turbines would require little or no excavations or other surface disturbing activities and surface and groundwater resources would not be affected.

Coastal Zone Consistency Review – Jonestown is not within the area managed by the Texas coastal management program.

Noise – The turbines will be located on vacant land or in industrial/government-use areas and the turbines will not result in noise impacts.

Aesthetics impacts – The 60-foot-tall turbines would not be visible for long distances. However, the large number of turbines to be installed may cause some individuals in the area to consider the turbine an intrusion on the visual landscape.

Shadow flicker – Because the vertical axis turbines have a somewhat solid helix shape they will not cast flickering shadows.

Hazardous substances and wastes – Installation of the turbines would require little or no excavations or other surface disturbing activities and would not affect contaminated soils or result in the generation of hazardous wastes.

Health and Safety – The small turbines would not present a safety hazard.

Aviation – The City of Jonestown has received determinations of no hazard to air navigation from the FAA for all sites.

Conclusion – The City of Jonestown proposal involves the development of an energy-efficient industrial practice. The project would meet the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions for that and similar categories (10 CFR 1021, Subpt. D, App. B), and would have minimal impacts on the environment. The project therefore can be categorically excluded under category B5.1A CX. Stipulations should be added to the grant award prohibiting the City from installing any turbines on the Heber West site, and suggesting that the use of guy wires be avoided if possible, and if they cannot, that visual deterrents be added to make the wires more visible to birds.

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:

Avoid installing any turbines on the Heber West site to avoid potential impacts to threatened and endangered species.

Avoid or minimize the use of guy wires. If guy wires must be used, visual deterrents should be added to make the wires more visible to birds.

Note to Specialist :

None Given.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____

Date: _____

11/29/10