



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Pantex Site Office
P. O. Box 30030
Amarillo, TX 79120



NEPA Compliance Officer Rationale

Pantex Site Office

Proj. No.: ESH-11-010-C

NEPA ID No.: PXP-11-0007

Site Characterization, Monitoring, and General Research Activities, FY 2012-2013

Application of DOE NEPA Procedure: The Categorical Exclusions B3.1, B3.6, and B3.8, Applicable to Facility Operations (10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B), apply to project number ESH-11-010-C.

Rationale: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), Pantex Site Office, proposes site characterization, monitoring, and general research activities conducted in accordance with guidance from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ). Activities covered include, but are not limited to, site characterization and environmental monitoring under the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation Liability Act (CERCLA) and the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Specific activities include, but are not limited to:

- Geological, geophysical (such as gravity, magnetic, electrical, seismic, and radar), geochemical, and engineering surveys and mapping, including the establishment of survey marks;
- Installation and operation of field instruments, such as stream-gauging stations or flow-measuring devices, telemetry systems, geochemical monitoring tools, and geophysical exploration tools;
- Drilling and completion of wells for sampling or monitoring of groundwater or the vadose (unsaturated) zone, well logging, and installation of water-level recording devices in wells;
- Aquifer response testing;
- Abandonment of field instruments, measuring tools, or wells used for sampling or monitoring of groundwater or the vadose (unsaturated) zone. Abandonment also includes removal of any surface construction materials such as protective well casing, surface pad, and protective bollards;
- Installation and operation of ambient air monitoring equipment;
- Sampling and characterization of water, soil, rock, or contaminants;

- Sampling and characterization of water effluents, air emissions, or solid waste streams;
- Installation and operation of meteorological towers and associated activities, including assessment of potential wind energy resources;
- Sampling of flora or fauna; and
- Archeological, historic, and cultural resource identification in compliance with 36 CFR, Part 800, and 43 CFR, Part 7.

NEPA Review Form PXP-11-0007 determined that project number ESH-11-010-C was categorically excluded from the need for an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement under B3.1, B3.6, and B3.8 found in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B:

B3.1 “Onsite and offsite characterization and environmental monitoring under CERCLA and RCRA.”

B3.6 “Siting, construction, operation.... decommissioning of facilities for indoor bench-scale research...small scale pilot projects (generally less than two years)... .”

B3.8 “Outdoor ecological and other environmental research.”

Based upon the information in sections A, B, C and Additional Information of NEPA Review Form PXP-11-000, which is hereby incorporated by reference, this proposal to conduct site characterization, monitoring, and general research activities does not present any extraordinary circumstances of a unique or uncertain nature. It is not connected to other actions with potentially or cumulatively significant impacts.¹ It would not²:

1. threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, including requirements of DOE and/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;
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; or
4. adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources (including but not limited to those listed in paragraph B.(4)).

Therefore, this proposal meets the conditions that are the integral elements of the classes of actions to which application of Categorical Exclusions B3.1, B3.6, and B3.8 is appropriate.

¹ See 10 CFR § 1021.410(b)(2)and(3)for full text of regulation.

² See 10 CFR Part 1021 Subpart D Appendix B (B(1)through(4)).

If changes are made to the scope of action as described in PXP-11-0007, or if the scope is expanded to encompass other actions, NEPA requirements for the action will need to be reassessed at that time.

Signature: 

Jim Barrows

Title: NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 23 August 2011