

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY  
NEPA DETERMINATION**

**RECIPIENT:** NYSERDA**STATE:** NY

**PROJECT TITLE:** National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0001767	DE-EE0008390	GFO-0008390-027	GO8390

**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:

**A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination** Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.)

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) to form a not-for-profit 501(c)(3) entity, the "National Offshore Wind Research and Development Consortium" which would be led by NYSERDA, along with key industry stakeholders and research institutions. The Consortium would finance research initiatives seeking to address the technical barriers faced by offshore wind developers, original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) and supply chain partners, with the goal of reducing the Levelized Cost of Electricity (LCOE) for U.S. offshore wind plants and increasing opportunities for U.S. manufacturing.

The proposed project is divided into four (4) Budget Periods (BPs). DOE previously completed NEPA reviews for BP1, 2 and 3 (GFO-0009380-001 CX A1, A9 and A13, 10/09/2018; GFO-0009380-002 CX A1, A9 and A13, 01/13/2020; GFO-0009380-019 CX A1, A9 and A13, 12/02/2020). In addition DOE completed NEPA reviews for 16 subawards made by the consortium under Task 19 (GFO-0009380-003 to 018, various CX determinations and dates) as well as awards under an Annual Operating Plan to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. This NEPA review is for a sub award proposed to be made under Task 27 to ThayerMahan.

Task 27 in BP3 involves reviewing applications received in response to the solicitation released in Task 26, and then choosing specific projects which would receive a sub award. While NYSERDA is allowed under the previous NEPA determination to proceed with choosing projects under Task 27, all projects chosen for sub award are subject to additional NEPA analysis prior to NYSERDA contracting for the sub award and prior to any work being completed on the sub award.

Under the proposed sub award ThayerMahan would develop a cable monitoring system for offshore wind farm applications. Specifically, ThayerMahan would develop and test an inspection and imaging methodology that would utilize an autonomous acoustic imaging device to detect cables and infrastructure on the seafloor to monitor and prevent cable failure. Using the acoustic imaging device, ThayerMahan would inspect/image an existing transmission cable servicing the Brock Island Wind Farm off the coast of Rhode Island.

Because inspection/imaging activities would involve the deployment of equipment into ocean waters where Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed species may be present, these activities cannot be reviewed until ThayerMahan prepares a Biological Evaluation (BE) allowing DOE to make a determination regarding any potential impacts to listed species. Accordingly, this NEPA Determination will be applicable only to Tasks 1.1 and 1.2, as these tasks consist of planning activities needed to prepare for future ocean-based inspection/imaging work, including the preparation of a BE. Task 1.3 consists of inspection/imaging activities and Task 1.4 consists of post-inspection analysis. These tasks are conditioned upon completion of an additional NEPA review after preparation of a BE by ThayerMahan and compliance by DOE with any ESA consultation requirements in accordance with ESA Section 7.

Task 1.1 consists of project planning activities, stakeholder engagement, and reporting. These activities would be

strictly administrative and nature and would not include and physical experiments or testing.

Task 1.2 consists of computer-based research and analysis. ThayerMahan and its project partners the State University of New York Maritime College (SUNY Maritime) and OceanIQ would prepare a leveled cost of energy and impact analysis, a cable failure and mitigation analysis, and an operations and test plan. A Biological Evaluation, which would be used for consultation with USFWS/NMFS, would also be produced. Analyses would be strictly computer-based and would not include any field research.

Any work proposed to be conducted at a DOE laboratory may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant DOE NEPA Compliance Officer for the specific DOE laboratory prior to initiating such work. Further, any work conducted at a DOE laboratory must meet the laboratory's health and safety requirements.

## NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

The NEPA Determination applies to the following Topic Areas, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Budget Period 1

Budget Period 2

Budget Period 3

Task 1.1 (Project Management and Progress Reporting) of Sub Award to ThayerMahan

Task 1.2 (Research and Development) of Sub Award to ThayerMahan

The NEPA Determination does not apply to the following Topic Area, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

Task 1.3 (Test Survey) of Sub Award to ThayerMahan

Task 1.4 (Post Survey Analysis) of Sub Award to ThayerMahan

Budget Period 4

Notes:

This NEPA determination does require a tailored NEPA provision  
Wind Energy Technology Office  
Review completed by Jonathan Hartman, 07/21/2021

## FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D. To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, 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 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (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 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

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 (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. The NEPA Provision identifies Topic Areas, Budget Periods, tasks, and/or subtasks that are subject to additional NEPA review.

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

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

 Electronically Signed By: **Roak Parker**  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 7/21/2021

**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: \_\_\_\_\_