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(1.08.09.13)

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



**RECIPIENT:** Regents of the University of Minnesota

**STATE:** MN

**PROJECT TITLE** : Achieving Affordable Zero Energy via Zero Energy Ready Homes

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0001395	DE-EE0007568	GFO-0007568-001	GO7568

**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:

**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.)

**A11 Technical advice and assistance to organizations** Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

**B5.1 Actions to conserve energy or water** (a) Actions to conserve energy or water, demonstrate potential energy or water conservation, and promote energy efficiency that would not have the potential to cause significant changes in the indoor or outdoor concentrations of potentially harmful substances. These actions may involve financial and technical assistance to individuals (such as builders, owners, consultants, manufacturers, and designers), organizations (such as utilities), and governments (such as state, local, and tribal). Covered actions include, but are not limited to weatherization (such as insulation and replacing windows and doors); programmed lowering of thermostat settings; placement of timers on hot water heaters; installation or replacement of energy efficient lighting, low-flow plumbing fixtures (such as faucets, toilets, and showerheads), heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, and appliances; installation of drip-irrigation systems; improvements in generator efficiency and appliance efficiency ratings; efficiency improvements for vehicles and transportation (such as fleet changeout); power storage (such as flywheels and batteries, generally less than 10 megawatt equivalent); transportation management systems (such as traffic signal control systems, car navigation, speed cameras, and automatic plate number recognition); development of energy-efficient manufacturing, industrial, or building practices; and small-scale energy efficiency and conservation research and development and small-scale pilot projects. Covered actions include building renovations or new structures, provided that they occur in a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions could involve commercial, residential, agricultural, academic, institutional, or industrial sectors. Covered actions do not include rulemakings, standard-settings, or proposed DOE legislation, except for those actions listed in B5.1(b) of this appendix. (b) Covered actions include rulemakings that establish energy conservation standards for consumer products and industrial equipment, provided that the actions would not: (1) have the potential to cause a significant change in manufacturing infrastructure (such as construction of new manufacturing plants with considerable associated ground disturbance); (2) involve significant unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (such as rare or limited raw materials); (3) have the potential to result in a significant increase in the disposal of materials posing significant risks to human health and the environment (such as RCRA hazardous wastes); or (4) have the potential to cause a significant increase in energy consumption in a state or region.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to the University of Minnesota (UMn) to validate an innovative moisture-managed wall panel system by measuring cost, performance, constructability and market delivery in 23 test homes in Minneapolis, MN and Denver, CO.

Activities associated with the proposed project would include providing support to the Building America Program, literature review and information gathering, data analysis, computer modeling, and analytical reviews, conceptual home design and feasibility studies, document preparation and data dissemination, as well as providing on-site training to existing housing developers. In addition, these homes would undergo post-construction evaluations and monitoring to validate cost, constructability, quality control, and overall systems performance (energy, moisture, indoor

air quality). All analytical activities would be completed by UMn on campus in St. Paul, MN. No change in the use, mission or operation of this existing facility would arise out of this effort and no physical materials beyond basic office supplies and software would be utilized.

The 23 test sites for the proposed research and training would consist of homes in the Minneapolis (22) and Denver (1) Metro areas that would be constructed irrespective of this project. No federal funds or cost share would be used for construction costs. The proposed integration of moisture-managed wall panels would not change the size, footprint, or site characteristics of the homes in which evaluation, monitoring and training would be conducted. Historic buildings and buildings eligible to be listed as historic are not served under this program. No equipment would be installed outdoors, so no ground disturbance would be necessary for completion of this project and no impact to sensitive resources are anticipated.

The proposed DOE-funded activities pose no risk to human health and/or environment. Proper personal protective equipment such as hard hats and closed toed shoes would be worn at all times when on-site for evaluations and/or training. No hazardous or non-hazardous wastes would be generated as a result of the proposed project.

Based on the review of the proposal, DOE has determined the proposal fits within the class of action(s) and the integral elements of 10 CFR 1021 subpart B outlined in the DOE categorical exclusion(s) selected above. DOE has also determined that: (1) there are no extraordinary circumstances (as defined by 10 CFR 1021.410(2)) related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; (2) the proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and (3) the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, related to other proposals with cumulatively significant actions, or an improper interim action. This proposal is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If the Recipient intends to make changes to the scope or objective of this project, the Recipient is required to contact the Project Officer, identified in Block 15 of the Assistance Agreement before proceeding. The Recipient must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved. If the Recipient moves forward with activities that are not authorized for Federal funding by the DOE Contracting Officer in advance of a final NEPA decision, the Recipient is doing so at risk of not receiving Federal funding and such costs may not be recognized as allowable cost share.

Note to Specialist :

Building Technologies Office

This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.

Review completed by Rebecca McCord 07/07/2016.

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

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



Signed By: Kristin Kerwin

Date: 7/12/2016

NEPA Compliance Officer

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