

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, Inc. (via the AVEC/Pitka's Point Native Corporation Renewable Energy Joint Venture)

STATE: AK

PROJECT TITLE : Pitka's Point/Saint Mary's Wind Energy Construction Project

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0001390	DE-IE0000035	GFO-0000035-002	

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.)

B5.18 Wind turbines The installation, modification, operation, and removal of a small number (generally not more than 2) of commercially available wind turbines, with a total height generally less than 200 feet (measured from the ground to the maximum height of blade rotation) that (1) are located within a previously disturbed or developed area; (2) are located more than 10 nautical miles (about 11.5 miles) from an airport or aviation navigation aid; (3) are located more than 1.5 nautical miles (about 1.7 miles) from National Weather Service or Federal Aviation Administration Doppler weather radar; (4) would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on bird or bat populations; and (5) are sited or designed such that the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts to persons (such as from shadow flicker and other visual effects, and noise). Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements (such as local land use and zoning requirements) in the proposed project area and would incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices. Covered actions include only those related to wind turbines to be installed on land.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Alaska Village Electric Cooperative, Inc. (AVEC) for the installation of a 900 kilowatt capacity direct-drive wind turbine with associated access road and wind turbine pad near Pitka's Point, Alaska. The wind turbine would be located approximately 2.5 miles from St. Mary's and one mile east of Pitka's Point on Pitka's Point Native Corporation lands. The turbine would connect to the existing diesel power generation system serving the communities of Pitka's Point, St. Mary's, and Mountain Village in Alaska. Connection to the existing power generation system would be by a future planned intertie that is being completed regardless of whether the wind turbine is installed. A previous NEPA Determination (GFO-0000035-001; A9; 07/14/16) was completed for Task 1 activities. This NEPA Determination is for all remaining tasks of the project.

Due to the height of the proposed turbine (259 feet) and the proximity to the St. Mary's airport (approximately two miles), AVEC submitted project information to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for an Obstruction Evaluation/Airport Airspace Analysis. The FAA completed an aeronautical study of the wind turbine at the project location and found that the structure would not be a hazard to air navigation with the installation of lighting that meets FAA standards and issued a Determination of No Hazard (2016-WTW-4350-OE) on October 6, 2016.

Project work would require the placement of fill into jurisdictional wetlands for an access road, turbine pad, and power poles so AVEC obtained a Section 404 permit from the Army Corps of Engineers (POA-2012-764; 01/23/13) for the anticipated project work. A Public Notice of Application for Permit was provided to the public for 30 days of commenting prior to issuance of the permit. The current permit (POA-2012-764-M2; 08/19/16) considered modifications to slightly increase the planned amount of fill but reduce the acreage of wetlands affected compared to the original permit. This modification to the permit coincides with the proposed project activities of the DOE funded project. There are no threatened, endangered, or candidate species occurring within or near the project area. Eleven migratory bird species (including bald eagle) could occur within the area with 10 of those species only occurring during the breeding season. One of the conditions of AVEC's Section 404 permit is that no work in wetlands would occur during the local bird nesting season of May 1 through July 15, except in those areas that have previously been cleared

of vegetation or filled. With this requirement, DOE does not anticipate any adverse effects to migratory birds due to construction activities. In accordance with the 2013 Memorandum of Understanding between DOE and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), AVEC has been notified that they should contact the FWS to discuss compliance with laws protecting migratory birds and bald eagles during the operational lifespan of the turbine. There were no other resources of concern found during review of the 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 Appendix B to Subpart D of 10 CFR 1021 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.

Insert the following language in the award:

You are required to:

To aid in daytime conspicuity, the Recipient must install a medium/dual lighting system on the turbine in accordance with FAA Advisory circular 70/7460-1 L, Obstruction Marking and Lighting, a med-dual system - Chapters 4,8 (M-Dual), & 12.

The Recipient must not work in wetlands during the local bird nesting season of May 1 through July 15, except in those areas that have previously been cleared of vegetation or filled.

The Recipient must implement and maintain appropriate and effective erosion and sedimentation control measures before, during, and after construction, until all disturbed areas have been permanently revegetated.

The Recipient must clearly identify project boundaries in the field (e.g., staking, flagging, silt fencing, etc.) prior to site clearing and construction to ensure avoidance of impacts to waters of the U.S., including wetlands, beyond the identified project footprint. In no case may disturbance extend beyond the identified fill footprint without prior approval from the Army Corps of Engineers.

If any previously unknown historic or archeological remains are discovered while completing the proposed project activities, the Recipient must immediately notify the Army Corps of Engineers and the DOE Project Officer of what was found. The Army Corps of Engineers or the DOE will initiate the Federal and State coordination required to determine if the remains warrant a recovery effort or if the site is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Note to Specialist :

Office of Indian Energy
This NEPA determination requires a tailored NEPA provision.
NEPA review completed by Casey Strickland 11/14/16

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Casey Strickland  Date: 11/17/2016
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: _____