

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians

STATE: CA

PROJECT TITLE : Soboba Community Solar Energy Project

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0001021	DE-EE0006950	GFO-0006950-001	

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.)
B5.16 Solar photovoltaic systems	The installation, modification, operation, and removal of commercially available solar photovoltaic systems located on a building or other structure (such as rooftop, parking lot or facility, and mounted to signage, lighting, gates, or fences), or if located on land, generally comprising less than 10 acres within a previously disturbed or developed area. 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.

Rationale for determination:

The Soboba Band of Luiseño Indians (Tribe) would utilize DOE and cost share funds to develop and install a commercially available ground-mounted fixed tilt photovoltaic (PV) solar array on Tribal Trust land within the Soboba Reservation in Riverside County, California.

The project includes the installation of a 1MWac ground mounted fixed tilt PV array on approximately 5.5 acres and would also include the installation of an 8 by 12 foot concrete equipment pad, new utility pole, 7 foot tall chain link security fence, motion sensor lighting and an 8 foot wide access road that would be built within the security fence for maintenance access to panels. The point of interconnection would be an existing Southern California Edison utility pole along Soboba Road, approximately 175 feet southwest of the project site boundary. The project site is a disturbed area previously used as an equipment laydown yard. Construction of the solar facility would occur in the summer and would last approximately 60 days. All construction equipment and materials would be staged and stored within the project footprint. The site is generally flat so little or no grading would be required. Standard erosion control measures/best management practices would be implemented as necessary. Water during the construction phase (for dust control) would be supplied by a water truck. Because the project would disturb an area that is over one acre, the project will be required to get a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Construction General Permit for stormwater discharges from construction activities. As part of the conditions of coverage under this permit, a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan with construction period best management practices will be required.

The Tribe has completed an environmental constraints study for the project site. Site surveys for biological and cultural resources were completed as part of the study. No cultural or biological resources were found on the project site. No suitable habitat for any special status species was found on site but designated critical habitats for both the San Bernardino kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami parvus*) and the arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*) are found near the proposed project site. Recommendations and mitigation measures were developed as part of the study to help ensure there would be no resources of concern impacted during construction of the project. With implementation of the recommendation (AIR-1) and the mitigation measures (BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, and CUL-1) from the Soboba Solar Facility Final Environmental Constraints Study and with NPDES permit requirements that are designed to avoid off-site discharges, DOE has determined that there would be "no effect" to any special status species or designated critical habitat. No other resources of concern were found during the NEPA review. Specific details of the project locations with detailed maps of the site layout and recommendations/mitigation measures can be found in the uploaded document Soboba Solar Constraints Report_03-26-15.pdf.

Based on review of the project information, DOE has determined that the project activities would not have a significant individual or cumulative impact to human health and/or environment. DOE has determined that these activities are consistent with actions contained in DOE categorical exclusions A9 "Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination," and B5.16 "Solar photovoltaic systems," and are 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 you intend to make changes to the scope or objective of your project you are required to contact the Project Officer identified in Block 11 of the Notice of Financial Assistance Award before proceeding. You must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved.

Insert the following language in the award:

You are required to:

Implement the following recommendations and mitigation measures found in Table 1-1 of the Introduction and Summary Section (page 1) of the Soboba Solar Facility Final Environmental Constraints Study: AIR-1, BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3, and CUL-1.

Provide the DOE Project Officer with copies of the NPDES Construction General Permit and Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan prior to initiating construction activities.

Note to Specialist :

This NEPA Determination does require a tailored NEPA provision.
Tribal Energy Program
Casey Strickland 06/02/15

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____


NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: _____

6/4/2015

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: _____