

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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

**RECIPIENT:** Solstice Initiative, Inc.**STATE:** MA

PROJECT TITLE: Product Innovation to Increase Low-to-Moderate-Income Customers' Adoption of Community Solar PV

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0001840	DE-EE0008757	GFO-0008757-001	

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 federal funding to Solstice Initiative to conduct research on community solar contracts available to low-to-moderate income populations (LMI), in order to assess what contract types are most readily adopted by LMI populations. Data collection would be performed at LMI populations across the United States. This would include reviews of existing data sets and the collection of new data via end-user surveys. The project would be completed over three Budget Periods (BPs), with a Go/No-Go Decision Point in between each BP.

BP1 task work would focus on completion of the study design. Proposed activities would include development of prototype contract types (e.g. four different contract types to research their adoptability by LMI communities), development of research forms for data collection (i.e. subscriber questionnaires and financier questionnaires), preparation of informed consent documents, research methodology preparation, and stakeholder engagement (e.g. financiers, developers, researchers, etc.). BP2 task work would consist of data collection and analysis. Proposed activities would include enrollment of individuals in the study, end-user/financier outreach and polling, data analysis on end user default, delinquency, and payment trends, guarantee fund research, and dissemination of results (e.g. conferences, webinars, etc.). BP3 would focus on the finalization of research and dissemination of results. Task work would include trend analysis, publication of results (e.g. white paper, abstracts), presentation of results (e.g. webinars, conferences, and events), finalization of a best practice prototype contract, and development of a guarantee fund structure.

Project work would be limited to the collection of data, data analysis, and reporting. End-user polling/surveys would be performed with the express consent of participating individuals. DOE's Institutional Review Board (IRB) would also evaluate all project activities involving human subject research. Approval would be obtained from the IRB before initiating surveys or collecting end-user data. Individuals would be surveyed at communities with existing PV installations. Solstice Initiative would coordinate with the PV developers that operate the target PV installations to access data needed for the project and to survey end-users. No system installations would be performed as part of this project.

Because project work would be limited to surveys and office-based analysis, health and safety risks would be minimal. Solstice Initiative and its project partners would observe all applicable Federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Solar Energy Technologies Office

This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.

Review completed by Jonathan Hartman on 8/05/2019

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.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____



Casey Strickland

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 8/6/2019

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: _____