DOE-ID NEPA CX DETERMINATION
Idaho National Laboratory

CX Posting No.: DOE-ID-INL-19-042

SECTION A. Project Title: 3Dropsonde Targeted Observation Software Solution

SECTION B. Project Description and Purpose:

The Air Drop Mission Planner System is an aircraft tool in the aircraft that calculates an acceptable cargo release point when given a desired landing point using prevailing winds. A Drop Sonde Sensor is sub-system of the Air Drop Mission Planner that collects and tracks GPS location to calculate the best release point. For the proposed action, Idaho National Laboratory assists Drop Sonde data collection testing over Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in southern Idaho by the US Army Natick Soldier Research, Development, and Engineering Center (NSRDEC). Testing uses an aircraft at 10,000 ft above ground level (AGL) and releases a drop Sonde over unoccupied BLM land. A parachute controls descent of the Drop Sonde which descends at about 75 ft/s.

A ground crew communicates with communication with the aircraft and verifies the area is clear of livestock, people, and buildings. The ground crew also monitors the descending Drop Sonde, collects data, and retrieves the Drop Sonde on the ground. The ground crew conducts all off-road retrievals by foot from the nearest road, and there is no anticipated off-road vehicular travel. The project anticipates using 3 different drop locations per day over 5 days of testing.

INL and BLM have agreed on potential locations, and INL will contact BLM prior to testing to verify the area is clear of livestock and or other activities.

The Civilian Air Patrol in Idaho Falls will provide air support for testing.

SECTION C. Environmental Aspects or Potential Sources of Impact:

Air Emissions

Emissions will be from road vehicles.

SECTION D. Determine Recommended Level of Environmental Review, Identify Reference(s), and State Justification: Identify the applicable categorical exclusion from 10 Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) 1021, Appendix B, give the appropriate justification, and the approval date.

For Categorical Exclusions (CXs), the proposed action must not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environmental, safety, and health, or similar requirements of Department of Energy (DOE) or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources (see 10 CFR 1021). In addition, no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal exist that would affect the significance of the action. In addition, the action is not “connected” to other action actions (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1) and is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1608.27(b)(7)).

References: 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B3.11 "Outdoor tests and experiments on materials and equipment components"

Justification: Project activities are consistent with 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, "Outdoor tests and experiments for the development, quality assurance, or reliability of materials and equipment (including, but not limited to, weapon system components) under controlled conditions. Covered actions include, but are not limited to, burn tests (such as tests of electric cable fire resistance or the combustion characteristics of fuels), impact tests (such as pneumatic ejector tests using earthen embankments or concrete slabs designated and routinely used for that purpose), or drop, puncture, water immersion, or thermal tests. Covered actions would not involve source, special nuclear, or byproduct materials, except encapsulated sources manufactured to applicable standards that contain source, special nuclear, or byproduct materials may be used for nondestructive actions such as detector/sensor development and testing and first responder field training."

Is the project funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (Recovery Act) ☐ Yes ☒ No

Approved by Jason Sturm, DOE-ID NEPA Compliance Officer on: 7/3/2019