

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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

**RECIPIENT:** Blackfeet Community College**STATE:** MT**PROJECT TITLE:** Blackfeet Community Sustainable Energy Project

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002168	DE-IE0000130	GFO-0000130-001	GO130

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.)
- 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 U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Blackfeet Community College (BFCC) to install grid-connected solar photovoltaic (PV) energy systems onto the rooftops of four buildings at BFCC's campus. The systems would have a total capacity of 53.2 kW-DC and would be connected to the local grid.

Proposed project activities would include system design/planning, equipment procurement, installation training, PV system installation, quality control inspections, system commissioning/interconnection, and ongoing performance monitoring for at least one year after installation. The solar PV systems would be composed of industry standard parts and components, including inverters, solar PV modules, strings, optimizers, and frames/racking equipment.

Project work would be overseen and coordinated by BFCC. Installation work would be performed by project partner GRID Alternatives and individual members of the Blackfeet Tribe who have received installation/safety training from GRID Alternatives. GRID Alternatives routinely performs solar PV installations and provides training as part of its regular course of business. Installation of solar PV systems would occur on the rooftops of existing buildings at BFCC's campus in Browning, MT. The solar PV systems would be connected to the existing grid, owned and operated by the Glacier Electric Cooperative (Glacier). BFCC would coordinate interconnection with Glacier and obtain any and all necessary state/local permits required for the establishment of this connection prior to undertaking this work. No ground disturbing activities or construction of new facilities would be required.

None of the buildings at which installation work would be performed are listed with the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). All of the buildings are recent constructions, with the oldest having been constructed in 1995. Accordingly, these buildings are not eligible for NRHP listing either. There are no other NRHP listed properties near the area where installation work would be performed.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation database shows that the Canada Lynx, Grizzly Bear, and North American Wolverine are all mammals with the potential to be present in the project area. However, because the project is fully occurring on the rooftops of existing buildings and solely within the bounds of a previously developed area, DOE has determined that the project would have no effect on Endangered Species Act species.

Installation would occur adjacent to a wetland area. However, all installation work would be performed on previously developed land on buildings/facilities that are currently in use for commercial purposes. Once installed, the equipment would remain in place on the rooftops of the selected facilities. Considering the above, DOE has determined that there

would be no effect to the adjacent wetland area.

Installation work would include the use and handling of heavy equipment and powered machinery. Work would also occur on rooftops where fall hazards would be present. In order to mitigate against associated risks, all project work would be performed in compliance with established safety plans and industry-standard best practices. BFCC and its project partners would observe all applicable Federal and Tribal health, safety, and environmental regulations.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs
This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA Provision.
NEPA review completed by Jonathan Hartman, 09/01/2020

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 Date: 9/1/2020
NEPA Compliance Officer

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: _____ Date: _____
Field Office Manager