

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: NREL

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE: NREL-20-035 Control Center Facility - Flatirons Campus

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-AC36-08GO28308	NREL-20-035a	GO28308

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.)
- B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring** Site characterization and environmental monitoring (including, but not limited to, siting, construction, modification, operation, and dismantlement and removal or otherwise proper closure (such as of a well) of characterization and monitoring devices, and siting, construction, and associated operation of a small-scale laboratory building or renovation of a room in an existing building for sample analysis). Such activities would be designed in conformance with applicable requirements and use best management practices to limit the potential effects of any resultant ground disturbance. Covered activities include, but are not limited to, site characterization and environmental monitoring under CERCLA and RCRA. (This class of actions excludes activities in aquatic environments. See B3.16 of this appendix for such activities.) Specific activities include, but are not limited to: (a) Geological, geophysical (such as gravity, magnetic, electrical, seismic, radar, and temperature gradient), geochemical, and engineering surveys and mapping, and the establishment of survey marks. Seismic techniques would not include large-scale reflection or refraction testing; (b) Installation and operation of field instruments (such as stream-gauging stations or flow-measuring devices, telemetry systems, geochemical monitoring tools, and geophysical exploration tools); (c) Drilling of wells for sampling or monitoring of groundwater or the vadose (unsaturated) zone, well logging, and installation of water-level recording devices in wells; (d) Aquifer and underground reservoir response testing; (e) Installation and operation of ambient air monitoring equipment; (f) Sampling and characterization of water, soil, rock, or contaminants (such as drilling using truck- or mobile-scale equipment, and modification, use, and plugging of boreholes); (g) Sampling and characterization of water effluents, air emissions, or solid waste streams; (h) Installation and operation of meteorological towers and associated activities (such as assessment of potential wind energy resources); (i) Sampling of flora or fauna; and (j) Archeological, historic, and cultural resource identification in compliance with 36 CFR part 800 and 43 CFR part 7.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) proposes to design, construct, and operate a Control Center Facility (CCF) at the NREL Flatirons Campus (FC) in Boulder, Colorado. The purpose of the proposed facility is to provide operational control and monitoring of research projects in support of the DOE's Integrated Electrical Systems at Scale (IESS) initiative. The CCF would provide computing and data visualization capabilities to support research data acquisition, analysis, and visualization as integrated real-time experiments are conducted across multiple sites.

The proposed project area is located north of the main FC road and east of the 5 MW Dynamometer. The CCF is expected to be a two-story building of about 6,000 sq. ft. with control rooms, a data center, conference rooms, a 2-D visualization room, and support spaces. Total project footprint is estimated to be 38,000 – 49,000 sq. ft. (0.87 to 1.12 acres), which would include the structure, parking, sidewalks, and landscaping in addition to temporary construction laydown and parking areas. The FC site utilities would be expanded to support the new building.

The proposed project would be phased. Based on the current Project Management Plan, the design phase would start in November 2020 and be completed by June 2021. The construction phase would start around September 2021 and

be expected to continue through approximately December 2022, with project completion in July 2023.

The exact location of the CCF as well as specific facility details are to be determined during the design phase of the project, so there is insufficient data available at this time to complete a thorough review of the anticipated construction activities and any potential associated impacts. The construction phase will be reviewed once the final design has been completed.

Site characterization work that would be performed during the course of the design phase would include geotechnical/soils investigation and site surveys, including bore holes and utility potholing. These activities would be conducted in accordance with existing NREL policies and procedures that guide such work. Minor ground disturbance would occur in areas that have been previously disturbed. Design phase activities would not affect cultural resources, threatened or endangered species, wetlands, floodplains, or prime farmlands, and no permits would be required.

A migratory bird nesting survey shall be completed if design phase activities involving ground disturbance occur between March 15 and September 15. If nests or eggs are found, the area would be cordoned off with a proper buffer until nestlings fledge.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

The NEPA Determination applies to the following Topic Areas, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

[Design phase](#)

The NEPA Determination does not apply to the following Topic Area, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

[Construction phase](#)

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Final design documents must be submitted for further NEPA review prior to beginning the construction phase. No resources shall be committed for construction activities until further NEPA review is complete.

A migratory bird nesting survey shall be completed if design phase activities involving ground disturbance occur between March 15 and September 15. If nests or eggs are found, the area would be cordoned off with a proper buffer until nestlings fledge.

Notes:

[NREL](#)
[Whitney Doss Donoghue, 9/9/2020](#)

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.

A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. The NEPA Provision identifies Topic Areas, Budget Periods, tasks, and/or subtasks that are subject to additional NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  _____ Date: 9/10/2020
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