

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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

**RECIPIENT:** Spokane Indian Housing Authority**STATE:** WA**PROJECT TITLE:** Spokane Reservation Residential Solar Energy Project

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002168	DE-IE0000131	GFO-0000131-001	

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.)
- 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 Spokane Indian Housing Authority (SIHA) to install solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays at approximately 145 residences within the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, WA. Both ground-mounted and roof-mounted arrays would be installed, with a total capacity of approximately 980 kW.

Proposed project activities would include development of design drawings/engineering specifications, permitting, equipment procurement, project deployment, and commissioning. SIHA would oversee and coordinate all project activities, as well as engage in administrative functions relating to project management. Equipment installation would be performed by certified third-party installers, with support from approximately 16 tribal members selected to receive training from the third-party company in installation and operational tasks.

Roof-mounted systems would comprise approximately 20 solar PV panels with an average total capacity of 6 kW. Ground-mounted systems would consist of approximately 24 solar PV panels with an average total capacity of 9 kW. Each home would be outfitted with solar modules, inverters, racking systems, and other auxiliary equipment. Ground-mounted systems would also include a concrete footing and foundation system. Approximately 25 houses would require trenching for ground-mounted solar PV installations (installation area of approximately 800 sq. ft. at each site).

Tree removal may be required in instances in which shade affects solar PV system efficiency. However, tree removal would not occur as part of the DOE-funded project, but rather would be funded and performed separately. Because tree removal is not part of the DOE funded project it does not require federal approval and is not subject to federal control, therefore this action is not considered a connected action and is not being reviewed as part of this ND.

DOE undertook a review of the site locations in which installation work would be performed. The project locations do not include any properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places, nor are the sites near any listed properties. DOE consulted with the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) for the Spokane Tribe of Indians. The THPO indicated to DOE that he had no concerns regarding the installations. DOE agrees with the THPO's finding that the project would not have any impacts to historical resources. Although no historic resources are known to occur near the project locations, DOE will require the following as part of best management practices for the project: If during project activities the recipient or their staff encounters any cultural material (i.e. historic or prehistoric), all activities must cease in the vicinity of the discovery immediately. The recipient must inform the Spokane Tribe of Indians THPO and the DOE Project Officer of the discovery so that an evaluation of the discovery can be completed prior to continuing work.

Project site locations are located primarily on land classified as Farmland of Statewide Importance, with a smaller number located on land classified as Prime Farmland. However, all project site locations are existing residences in which the land has previously been disturbed. All equipment would be installed either on the house itself or in the yard of the residence. No ground disturbance would occur in previously undisturbed areas. No conversion of Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance would occur as part of the project.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation database indicates that four listed species have the potential to be present at the project locations. These include the Grizzly Bear, New Mexico Wolverine, Yellow-billed Cuckoo, and Bull Trout. Migratory birds, including the Golden and Bald Eagle also have the potential to be present. However, because the project consists of the installation of small-scale PV systems and is fully occurring on the rooftops and yards of existing residences solely within the bounds of previously developed areas, DOE has determined that the project would have no effect on Endangered Species Act species.

Project work would involve the installation of ground- and roof-mounted solar PV equipment. Potential hazards common to solar installations would be present (e.g. fall hazards, electrical shock). In order to mitigate against potential hazards all personnel engaged in installation work would be trained to do so and would adhere to established health and safety policies and procedures. Industry standard best practices would be observed. The Spokane Tribe of Indians, as the jurisdiction authority, would issue permits required for the installation and operation of the solar PV systems.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

If during project activities the Recipient or their staff encounters any cultural material (i.e. historic or prehistoric), all activities must cease in the vicinity of the discovery immediately. The Recipient must inform the Spokane Tribe of Indians THPO and the DOE Project Officer of the discovery so that an evaluation of the discovery can be completed prior to continuing work.

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs
This NEPA determination requires a tailored NEPA Provision.
NEPA review completed by Jonathan Hartman, 10/26/2020

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: _____



Signed By: Casey Strickland

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 10/27/2020

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: _____