

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: College of Charleston

STATE: SC

PROJECT TITLE: Solar Pavilion

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-EE0008294	GFO-0008294-008	

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:

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 State of South Carolina to design and construct a 330-square foot solar pavilion on the College of Charleston campus. The solar panels would provide power for the pavilion lighting, outdoor fans, and charging power stations for cell phones, computers, etc. The remaining renewable energy produced would be utilized by a School of Science and Math building located at 65 Coming Street.

The proposed site for the pavilion is situated outside of the Addlestone Library and next to an outdoor common space called the Rivers Green. Currently, the site is a public brick walkway with adjacent planting beds. Proposed activities would include the removal of existing brick pavers, digging for the terrace and canopy footers, grading, the addition of soil, new pavers (approximately 350-square feet), and the laying of planting beds. To make room for the structure, existing plants would be relocated around campus and a tree would be removed by a tree removal company and turned into mulch. The 330-square foot solar canopy structure would be installed with 16 southwestern facing solar panels on the roof, along with the associated electrical fixtures and charging stations. The structure would contain permanent seating, phone charging station, and ceiling fans.

Ground disturbance would be required to install footers for the pavilion and the underground power connection from the pavilion to the School of Science and Math building. The new footers would be approximately 2 feet x 6 feet x 6 feet. Power would be routed from the pavilion to the School of Science and Math building, utilizing an electrical protection sleeve 12 inches below the soil surface. The electrical protection sleeve would run from the pavilion and under the landscape bedding to meet the existing meter located at the southwest corner of the building. All required permits would be obtained prior to initiating these activities.

The college is located in the Charleston Historic District. The South Carolina Department of Archives and History made a determination that there would be no adverse effects by this undertaking provided that the following recommended conditions are imposed:

- Planned archaeological investigations in the direct Area of Potential Effect (APE) should meet the SC Standards & Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations. The results of these investigations should be reported to the State Historic Preservation (SHP) office prior to construction. Depending on the results of these investigations, additional consultation with the office regarding the location of the undertaking may be necessary.
- Planned construction activities should include archaeological monitoring. The results of these monitoring activities should be reported to the SHP office.

The site is located within the 100-year floodplain. After evaluation of the potential impacts, DOE has determined that installation of the solar pavilion and buried electrical lines would not have short-term or long-term adverse impacts to the floodplain. Additionally, DOE has determined that the project activities are not subject to the preparation and

distribution of a notice of floodplain action as required under Subpart B of 10 CFR 1022 "Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements", as the project is a minor modification of an existing facility to improve environmental conditions and the requirement is not applicable (10 CFR 1022.5(d)(3)). Impervious ground coverings and landscaping would be utilized to aid in water retention and runoff. The College of Charleston has obtained a Permit to Develop in a Flood Hazard Area.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Information for Planning and Consultation database (iPaC) shows a mammal (Northern Long-eared Bat), six birds (Bachman's Warbler, Eastern Black Rail, Piping Plover, Red Knot, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Wood Stork), and four flowering plants (American Chaffseed, Canby's Dropwort, Pondberry, Seabeach Amaranth) as endangered or threatened species that have the potential to be in or around the project area. There are also 23 migratory birds listed (American Oystercatcher, Bald Eagle, Black Skimmer, Clapper Rail, Dunlin, Gull-billed Tern, King Rail, Least Tern, Lesser Yellowlegs, Nelson's Sparrow, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-throated Loon, Ruddy Turnstone, Rusty Blackbird, Seaside Sparrow, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Swallow-tailed Kite, Whimbrel, Willet, Wood Thrush). The Northern Long-eared Bat has been found breeding within Charleston County and may possibly use trees in or near the project area as maternity roosts from June 1 to July 31. To ensure protection of this species, tree removal activities will be conducted outside of this timeframe. With the above timing restriction and the nature of the project (i.e. solar PV pavilion on previously-disturbed land, currently used for human activities), it is unlikely that any of the species of concern would be present in the project area. Additionally, the proposed project site is outside of the critical habitat of all listed species. Accordingly, DOE has determined the proposed project will have no effect on federally listed threatened or endangered species. Further, DOE does not anticipate adverse impacts to migratory bird species.

Measures would be taken to protect the public during construction. The area would be roped off so that those not in personal protective equipment and not part of the project cannot step into the site. The jobsite would be cleaned daily to prevent accidents and trip hazards. Contractors would be required to follow all applicable disposal and recycling requirements.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Planned archaeological investigations must meet the South Carolina Standards & Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations. The results of these investigations must be reported to the State Historic Preservation Office prior to construction. Depending on the results of these investigations, additional consultation with the office regarding the location of the undertaking may be necessary.

Planned construction activities must include archaeological monitoring. The results of these monitoring activities must be reported to the State Historic Preservation Office.

The College of Charleston must submit the final color scheme and painted/unpainted surfaces, clarification and limitations on lighting levels of LED strip lighting, and the ceiling fan cut sheet to the City Board of Architectural Review for Charleston, SC.

Recipient must complete project tree removal activities outside of June 1 – July 31, for protection of the Northern Long-eared Bat.

Notes:

Weatherization & Intergovernmental Program – State Energy Program
This NEPA determination does require a tailored NEPA Provision.
NEPA review completed by Shaina Aguilar on 2/22/21.

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:

 Electronically Signed By: Casey Strickland
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 2/25/2021

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: