

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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

**RECIPIENT:** New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority (Sub-recipient)**STATE:** NH**PROJECT TITLE:** Amherst Country Club Solar PV Project

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
	DE-EE0008658	GFO-0008658-003	

**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 New Hampshire Office of Strategic Initiatives to provide a loan to the NH Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) to install a 198-kW solar photovoltaic (PV) ground mounted system located at Amherst Country Club, in Amherst, NH. The project would supply electricity for all operations at the Country Club.

The proposed PV array would consist of 494 modules, six inverters with optimizers and the associated racking system. The site would require minor grading. A swimming pool was originally located at the site but was removed a few years ago and has since been used to store equipment and materials. A total of 40 – 3' diameter holes would be dug 6' deep for the pole foundations supporting the solar racking structure. In addition, a temporary trench up to 2' wide and approximately 265' long would be dug to connect the 5 rows with PV conduit which would then connect to the inverters. All trenches would be refilled and landscaped to grade. The total area for the solar array would be 8,680 ft sq. Existing roads would be used to access the project location. The solar array would have two connections to the grid with two meters. One meter would be used primarily for the cart shed; the other meter would be used for the clubhouse. The utility line and the utility pad-mounted transformer would require upgrades to accommodate the PV array connection.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species Program website (IPaC) lists the threatened Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) as possibly occurring within the project area. Tree removal at the project site could affect the NLEB, if present. Tree removal activities are planned to occur outside of the pup season from June 1 – July 31 to prevent impacts to NLEB from removal or disturbance of maternity roost trees. Based on the above, DOE completed a streamlined Section 7 consultation with USFWS for NLEB. DOE determined that this project may affect the NLEB but that any resulting incidental take of the NLEB is not prohibited by the final 4(d) rule for the species.

The recipient worked directly with their State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to ensure protection of cultural resources during the project activities. The SHPO reviewed the proposed project activities and the site location, and determined, "No Historic Properties Effectuated" on January 11, 2021. DOE is in agreement with this determination from the New Hampshire SHPO.

The proposed project is located within the 100-year floodplain. After evaluation of the potential impacts, DOE has determined that the buried electrical lines and the addition of the poles for the PV foundations 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)).

Some of the soils in the project areas are considered prime farmland if protected from flooding or not frequently flooded during the growing season, but the land has already been heavily disturbed for human use (i.e. buildings, an area where a swimming pool was once located but has since been filled in with dirt, and a parking lot) and therefore there would be no conversion of protected farmlands to non-agricultural use as a result of the DOE funded project.

DOE also conducted a review of potential issues relating to other resources of concern and found that no effects would be expected to result from the proposed project activities.

## NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

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

All electronic components of the solar photovoltaic panels must be installed above the base flood elevation in the 100-year floodplain.

Notes:

Weatherization & Intergovernmental Programs Office - SEP  
This NEPA Determination requires a tailored NEPA provision.  
NEPA review completed by Diana Heyder, 3/2/21

## 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: 3/3/2021

**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: \_\_\_\_\_