

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



RECIPIENT: NREL

STATE: CO

PROJECT TITLE : NREL-22-008b AWAKEN Project - Oklahoma

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
	DE-AC36-08GO28308	NREL-22-008b	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:

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) proposed to install, operate, and decommission atmospheric monitoring equipment and support equipment in and around five wind farms in Oklahoma. A NEPA Determination for this scope of work was completed and signed by the DOE NEPA Compliance Officer on February 11, 2022 (NEPA Control Number NREL-22-008). The DOE's NREL is proposing to use portable generators at five of the planned monitoring sites in addition to the current project scope. This review will address the use of the generators; all other project activities would remain as described in the previous NEPA review.

The five portable generators would be used at monitoring sites A1, A2, A4, C1_a, and H. The generators that would be used are the Multiquip WhisperWatt Super-Silent Generator (models DCA20SPXU4F and DCA36SPXU4F). The generators would operate 24 hours a day over an approximately 2-month period.

THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES

There are five threatened or endangered species that could encounter the project area: the piping plover, red knot, Arkansas River shiner, monarch butterfly (candidate), and whooping crane. One species of conservation concern, red-headed woodpecker, could also encounter the project area. There is no designated critical habitat in the project area.

Operation of the generators would produce noise (approximately 65 dB at 23 feet) which is not expected to disrupt threatened or endangered species or other wildlife which could encounter the project area. As such, DOE has determined that the use of generators during the project does not change DOE's previous finding, which determined that the proposed project would have no effect on the threatened and endangered species, nor does DOE anticipate any adverse impacts to the red-headed woodpecker, or migratory birds.

ADDITIONAL IMPACTS

Air emissions resulting from operation of the generators would be de minimis and there no regulatory requirements in Oklahoma for the temporary use of such mobile sources. Each generator location would have a 264-gallon double walled fuel tank and spill containment berm. Spill control equipment would be provided at each location.

Individuals working on this project could be exposed to physical and electrical hazards. Existing corporate health and safety policies and procedures would be followed including employee training, proper protective equipment, engineering controls, and monitoring. Additional policies and procedures would be implemented as necessary if new health and safety risks are identified.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

A migratory bird nesting survey shall be completed if project 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.

All required permissions shall be obtained prior to commencing project activities.

Further NEPA review shall occur for CY2023 activities once details are known.

Notes:

NREL
Completed by Nicole Serio, 8/30/2022

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: Lisa Jorgensen

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 8/30/2022

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: _____