

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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

**RECIPIENT:** Quinault Indian Nation**STATE:** WA**PROJECT TITLE:** Taholah Relocation Integrated Energy System

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002317	DE-IE0000148	GFO-0000148-001	

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 Quinault Indian Nation (QIN) for the installation of ground mounted photovoltaic (PV) solar array (approximately 100 kW), a 5 kW / 11 kWh battery energy storage system, and conduit to connect to the electrical room within the newly completed Generations Building in Taholah, Washington. The PV system would be located directly to the north of the Generations Building on the Quinault Indian Reservation.

Installation of the PV array and battery storage would require less than one acre of disturbance which would include minor grading to flatten the site for the installation of the PV system, helical piles, and trenching for running conduit. The installation site is currently vacant and was cleared of trees in 2017 in anticipation of development in the Taholah Village Relocation Area. The conduit would travel under an existing parking lot and the side yard of the Generations Building. An existing roadway and parking lot would be used to access the installation site.

To assess potential impacts associated with development activities on the upland area northeast of the Lower Village of Taholah as described in the Taholah Village Relocation Master Plan, Environmental Assessments (EAs) were prepared in 2016 and 2017 for both the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The project as proposed under the Taholah Village Relocation Master Plan consisted of approximately 400 residential units as well as civic and commercial buildings in a 200+ acre area. While project activities associated with the DOE project (PV array, battery storage, and conduit) were not specifically analyzed within those EAs, the existing conditions and the effects of reasonably foreseeable activities that may stem from the adoption of the Taholah Village Relocation Master Plan were assessed for an area that includes the DOE project installation site. The EAs assessed historic resources, threatened/endangered species, coastal zones, fish habitat, wetlands, floodplains, prime farmland, sole source aquifers, and migratory birds. Consultations with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) were completed as part of the NEPA process. The installation site for the PV array is not in an area having a special designation and is not located within wetlands or a floodplain.

As part of the EAs, potential effects to special status species were considered for development activities in the area, which includes the installation location of the DOE project. Development activities were found to have either no effect or that they may affect but were not likely to adversely affect special status species that may occur in the area considered. Based on the findings in the EAs as well as the small scale and nature of the DOE project, DOE has determined there would be no effect to special status species as a result of DOE project activities.

The installation location for the DOE project was reviewed as part of the EAs by both the QIN Cultural Resource Specialist and the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). It was determined that there were no historic or cultural resources on the site. Although no historic resources are expected, the following will be required as part of best management practices for the project: If during project activities the Recipient or their staff encounters any archaeological or historic materials, all activities must cease in the vicinity of the discovery immediately. The recipient must inform the Washington SHPO and the DOE Project Officer of the discovery so that an evaluation of the discovery can be completed prior to continuing work.

Anticipated development activities associated with the Taholah Village Relocation Master Plan were determined not to have a significant or adverse effect on any of the resources of concern analyzed within the BIA and HUD EAs and each agency signed findings of no significant impact. DOE has completed a review of potential issues relating to the resources of concern that could be impacted by the installation of the PV array, battery storage system, and conduit and has determined that the project activities would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. Based on the previously completed EAs and DOE's review of potential impacts to resources of concern, project activities are categorically excludable and fit within the classes of actions listed above.

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 archaeological or historic materials, all activities must cease in the vicinity of the discovery immediately. The Recipient must inform the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer 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.

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

Date: 8/5/2021

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: _____

Field Office Manager

Date: _____