

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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



**RECIPIENT:** Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy

**STATE:** VA

**PROJECT TITLE:** Charles City County Schools Solar Enhanced EPC Project

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
SEP-ALRD-2021	DE-EE0009148	GFO-0009148-002	

**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 Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy (Virginia Division of Energy) to install a 713 kW solar photovoltaic (PV) ground mounted system at the Charles City County High School in Charles City, Virginia.

The site for the proposed PV array is approximately three acres. The PV installation would include 1900 solar panels with 12 inverters and would be installed on a racking system. Each rack would be mounted on "H" piles driven into the ground to a depth of approximately six feet. Horizontal structural supports would be attached to the pilings with the solar panels mounted to the horizontal supports. Inverters and interconnecting wiring would also be mounted to the horizontal structure. Additionally, a dashboard to monitor the PV system and weather would also be attached to the rack. At the end of the rows of arrays closest to the building, a conduit would be trenched to the school building and connected to existing power company equipment. A 6' tall chain link fence would surround the PV installation. No electrical upgrades would be required at the school.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Endangered Species Program website (iPaC) lists the threatened Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) and ten migratory birds that are of conservation concern and may potentially be within the project site, they include: Bobolink, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Hudsonian Godwit, Lesser Yellowlegs, Prairie Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, Short-billed Dowitcher, Willet, and the Wood Thrush. These migratory birds are not expected as the project site does not include the preferred habitat conditions due to a lack of tree nesting and ground nesting sites, and the land is actively managed with regular harvesting of crops. Bald Eagles could nest close to the project area. However, installation of the PV system does not require timber clearing and construction activities would occur outside of the nesting season (i.e., from August through mid-December for Virginia). Associated construction noise at the project site would be short term and minimal for installation of the PV array. Once installed there would be no ongoing noise impacts from operation of the PV system. Considering the timing of installation activities and all project activities would occur on already disturbed lands that are not suitable habitat for these species, DOE has determined that this project would have no effect on any of the above special status species of concern.

The project would convert approximately three acres of prime farmland to non-agricultural use, so a Farmland Conversion Impact Rating form (AD-1006) was used to determine the impact of the conversion. The relative value of the farmland was rated at 146. Sites receiving a total score of less than 160 need not be given further consideration for protection and no additional sites need to be evaluated. Based on the AD-1006 rating, no further consideration for the protection of Prime Farmland is required.

The recipient worked directly with their State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to ensure protection of cultural resources during the project activities. The SHPO reviewed the proposed project activities and the site location, and determined that, "no historic properties will be adversely affected by the proposed undertakings" on January 4, 2021. DOE is in agreement with this determination from the Virginia SHPO.

According to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Map (effective 7/6/2015), the location of the proposed installation is determined to be Zone X, which is outside of the 100-year floodplain.

## NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Office of Weatherization and Intergovernmental Programs – State Energy Program  
This NEPA Determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.  
NEPA review completed by Diana Heyder, 8/16/2021

## 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: 8/18/2021

## 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: \_\_\_\_\_