

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



**RECIPIENT:** Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation

**STATE:** WI

**PROJECT TITLE :** EIGP PY21 - Aldo Leopold

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
SEP-ALRD-2021	DE-EE0008669	GFO-0008669-021	

**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:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>B5.16 Solar photovoltaic systems</b>         | 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. |
| <b>B5.23 Electric vehicle charging stations</b> | The installation, modification, operation, and removal of electric vehicle charging stations, using commercially available technology, within a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions are limited to areas where access and parking are 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 Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation to fund the installation of solar photovoltaic (PV) panel systems for the Aldo Leopold Foundation, in Baraboo, Wisconsin.

The award would fund the installation of five solar PV panel systems. Three of the systems would be roof-top mounted on existing buildings. Two of the systems would be ground mounted arrays (each ground mounted array would consist of three rows of panels measuring 15 feet x 20 feet and would require approximately 75 linear feet of trenching). Additionally, three electric vehicle (EV) charging stations would be installed, requiring approximately 200 linear feet of trenching through an existing restored prairie. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed activities of the project.

Six trees have been identified to be removed during installation. Tree removal is consistent with Aldo Leopold's prairie land management plan and aligns with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) regional Joint Venture plan targeting conservation of grassland habitat for birds. The USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies one candidate species (Monarch Butterfly), two threatened species (Northern Wild Monkshood, Northern Long-eared Bat) and one endangered species (Sheepnose Mussel), and one non-essential experimental population (Whooping Crane) that may occur in the proposed project area. Northern Wild Monkshood prefer moist, cool, low-lying areas and are not found in or around the proposed project sites. Due to the lack of wet environments as well as the nature and scale of the project, DOE has determined the proposed project would have no effect to the Sheepnose Mussel or Northern Wild Monkshood species. The proposed project is consistent with activities assessed in the USFWS' January 5, 2016 Programmatic Biological Opinion (PBO) applying to activities that may affect Northern Long-eared Bat. The proposed project may affect the northern long-eared bat; however, any take that may occur as a result of the proposed project is not prohibited under the ESA Section 4(d) rule adopted for this species at 50 CFR §17.40(o).

Minimal air emissions would occur during construction and installation activities from the use of construction vehicles and equipment. However, significant air impacts are not anticipated as emissions would be temporary and intermittent only during construction. Potential hazards would be mitigated through adherence to established institutional health and safety policies and procedures. The Wisconsin Office of Energy Innovation would adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations.

Any changes to the project activities or locations are subject to additional NEPA review by DOE and are not authorized

for federal funding unless and until the Contracting Officer provides written authorization on those additions or modifications.

## NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Weatherization and Intergovernmental Programs Office - State Energy Program  
NEPA review completed by Amy Lukens, 10/27/2022

## 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: Casey Strickland  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 10/27/2022

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