



Department of Energy

Golden Field Office
15013 Denver West Parkway
Golden, Colorado 80401

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

UNITED STATES (U.S.) AIR FORCE FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR ENERGY SAVINGS PERFORMANCE AT JOINT BASE McGUIRE-DIX-LAKEHURST, NEW JERSEY

DOE/EA-2232

AGENCY: U.S. Department of Energy, Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy

ACTION: Adoption of Environmental Assessment and Issuance of Finding of No Significant Impact

SUMMARY: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) is adopting an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the U.S. Air Force (USAF) pursuant to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 C.F.R. §§ 1500 – 1508) for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.*). The EA, *Final Environmental Assessment for Energy Savings Performance at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey, DOE/EA-2232*, evaluates potential environmental impacts associated with a proposed project which would be led by USAF at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst (JBMDL), New Jersey. The proposed project would involve the implementation of energy conservation measures (ECMs) for electrical power and energy savings at JBMDL through an Energy Savings Performance Contract (ESPC) with Ameresco and the installation of equipment for electricity generation and energy storage. The EA concludes that impacts from the proposed project would not significantly affect the quality of the human environment. As such, USAF issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) on August 4th, 2021.

DOE is proposing to provide federal funding to USAF to complete the proposed project. After reviewing the EA prepared by USAF, DOE has determined the scope of DOE's proposed action is included in the EA. As such, DOE adopts and incorporates the EA herein by reference pursuant to 40 C.F.R. §§ 1501.6 and 1506.3(c)

PURPOSE AND NEED: The National Energy Conservation Policy Act (NECPA) directs DOE to carry out the Federal Energy Management Program (FEMP) to facilitate the implementation of cost-effective energy and water management and energy-related investment practices by the federal government (42 U.S.C. § 8253(i)(1)), including:

- a) to coordinate and strengthen federal energy and water resilience,

- b) to promote environmental stewardship, and
- c) to reduce energy consumption during periods of unusually high electricity or natural gas demand.

More specific to the proposed action, NECPA specifically directs that in administering FEMP, DOE shall:

- a) provide technical assistance and project implementation support and guidance to agencies to identify, implement, procure, and track energy and water conservation measures required by law (42 U.S.C. § 8253(i)(3)(A)(i));
- b) coordinate comprehensive and strategic approaches to energy and water resilience planning for agencies (42 U.S.C. §8253(i)(3)(A)(v)); and
- c) promote the installation of demand-response technology and the use of demand-response practices in federal buildings (42 U.S.C. §8253(i)(3)(A)(vii)).

To support these efforts, DOE issued Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) DE-FOA-0002472: *Assisting Federal Facilities with Energy Conservation Technologies (AFFECT) 2021 Federal Agency Call (FAC)* to address federal facility issues related to energy efficiency and climate change resiliency and adaptation. After completing a review of applications received for the FOA, DOE determined that the proposed project met criteria outlined in the FOA and the merit of the proposed project justified selection for further negotiations.

PROPOSED ACTION: DOE is proposing to authorize the expenditure of federal funds for USAF to complete the proposed project at JBMDL. The proposed project would involve the implementation of ECMs for electrical power and energy savings at JBMDL through an ESPC with Ameresco and the installation of equipment for electricity generation and energy storage. The proposed project would modernize and optimize base building systems while providing resiliency and mission continuity through a mix of distributed generation, energy efficiency, infrastructure, and targeted microgrid operation for critical loads.

At McGuire, Ameresco would install ground-mounted solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays at two locations. The PV arrays would collectively occupy about 50 acres and generate a maximum of about 17 megawatts (MW) of electricity. The PV arrays would be connected to a microgrid control system (MCS). A 4-MW/8-MWh battery energy storage system (BESS) would be integrated with the MCS. The BESS would work in conjunction with energy assets and the new MCS to allow the base to continue mission critical operations in the event of a regional grid failure, brownout, terrorist attack, or utility request for demand reduction. Additionally, solar PV panels would be mounted on existing carports and buildings.

At Dix, Ameresco would install roof-mounted, ballasted solar PV systems on rooftops. The rooftop arrays would be installed on approximately 10 to 15 buildings and generate approximately 5,000 to 8,000 kW of electricity.

At Lakehurst, Ameresco would install a ground-mounted 4-MW solar PV array on about 12 acres of land. An MCS connected to the system would operate similarly as the system at McGuire. The solar PV array would be connected to an existing electrical distribution system. The point of connection would be within or near the site. Ameresco would also install roof-mounted, ballasted solar PV systems on existing rooftops.

Throughout JBMDL, Ameresco would replace or upgrade most light fixtures to light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures and lamps; upgrade existing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) control systems; replace numerous transformers; install thermal glazing window film; replace failing mechanical insulation; and replace a combined total of approximately 25 chillers, boilers, air handling units, and air conditioning packaged units.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS: Considering the analysis documented in the EA, USAF has concluded that completing the proposed project would not result in significant adverse impacts to the human environment, including air quality, water resources, geological resources, ecological resources, cultural resources, safety and occupational health, infrastructure and utilities, and waste management. USAF has concluded that no significant adverse cumulative impacts would result from past, present, and future activities associated with the proposed project. These conclusions are contingent upon USAF following requirements of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Programmatic Biological Opinion on the Final 4(d) Rule for northern long-eared bats. DOE concurs with these conclusions and the supporting analysis documented in the EA.

During the effort to complete the EA, USAF coordinated and consulted with relevant federal, state, local, and Tribal agencies about the proposed project. These agencies provided feedback and assistance regarding compliance with applicable laws and regulations, permits and authorizations, actions to mitigate impacts, and other project specifics. USAF provided multiple opportunities for public involvement.

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE: Under the no action alternative, DOE would not authorize the expenditure of federal funds by USAF in support of completing the proposed project. For purposes of this analysis, DOE assumes the proposed action would not proceed if DOE does not authorize the expenditure of federal funds. Any potential beneficial or adverse impacts to resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature, would not be realized.

DETERMINATION: DOE has independently reviewed the USAF EA (*Final Environmental Assessment for Energy Savings Performance at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey*) and determined that the analysis adequately meets CEQ and DOE NEPA regulations and

adequately assesses and discloses the environmental impacts of the proposed action and no action alternative. DOE has no reason to believe that any new circumstances have arisen or that any new information exists that was not previously analyzed in the USAF EA. Based on DOE's independent evaluation, the USAF EA is hereby adopted.

Based on the analysis presented in the USAF EA, DOE has determined there would be no significant impact from proceeding with the proposed action. The basis of this determination is that there are no adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative environmental effects that would likely result from the proposed action based on the analysis of relevant issues of environmental concern in the EA. Based on the analysis in the USAF EA, DOE has determined that the proposed action does not constitute a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment within the meaning of NEPA. This finding and decision is based on the consideration of DOE and CEQ NEPA implementing regulations. Accordingly, the proposed action does not require the preparation of an environmental impact statement.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: For questions about the adoption of the USAF EA (*Final Environmental Assessment for Energy Savings Performance at Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, New Jersey*) or this FONSI, contact Andrew M. Montano, NEPA Division Director, U.S. Department of Energy, 15013 Denver West Parkway, Golden, CO 80401 or via email at gonepa@ee.doe.gov.

For further information on the DOE NEPA process contact the Office of NEPA Policy and Compliance (GC-54), U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington DC 20585; <http://energy.gov/nepa/office-nepa-policy-and-compliance>.

Issued in Golden, Colorado this 7th day of September 2023.

Andrew Montano  Digitally signed by Andrew Montano
Date: 2023.09.07 15:49:57 -06'00'

Andrew M. Montano
NEPA Division Director