

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



**RECIPIENT:** Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians

**STATE:** CA

**PROJECT TITLE:** Barona Community Microgrid Project

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0002774	DE-IE0000171	GFO-0000171-001	GO171

**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:

- |  |  |
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| <b>A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination</b> | 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.) |
| <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.   |

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to the Barona Group of Capitan Grande Band of Mission Indians (Barona Band) to construct a solar photovoltaic (PV) system with microgrid switchgear, a lithium-ion battery energy storage system, and underground conduit for communication and electrical lines.

The solar PV system would be installed as parking canopy structures within an existing paved parking area. The solar PV canopy would cover approximately two acres. The battery storage system would be housed in a shipping container while the switchgear would be installed on concrete pads (measuring approximately 500 square feet) in an existing paved parking/ laydown area. The underground conduit and utilities would be trenched approximately 1500 linear feet (3 feet wide x 3 feet deep) along existing roads and through existing parking areas to connect the battery, solar PV and switchgear with adjacent structures and the existing San Diego Gas & Electric meters on site. All activities would occur within pre-disturbed areas on the Barona Indian Reservation in Lakeside California.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies four threatened species (Coastal California Gnatcatcher, Encinitas Baccharis, San Diego Thornmint, and Thread-leaved Brodiaea), eight endangered species (Least Bell's Vireo, Southwestern Willow Flycatcher, Arroyo Toad, Quino Checkerspot Butterfly, San Diego Fairy Shrimp, San Diego Ambrosia, San Diego Button-celery, Willowy Monardella), and one candidate species (Monarch Butterfly), which may occur in the proposed project area. No critical habitats are identified within the proposed project area. The project areas involving ground disturbance are either paved, disturbed, or actively maintained. Therefore, the Encinitas Baccharis, San Diego Ambrosia, San Diego Button-celery, San Diego Thornmint, Thread-leaved Brodiaea, and Willowy Monardella would not be present or impacted by the proposed action. The San Diego Fairy Shrimp would not be impacted as there are no aquatic ecosystems within the proposed project area to provide habitat to the shrimp. Furthermore, Southwestern willow flycatcher prefer riparian habitats waterways and Arroyo toads require slow moving aquatic and riparian areas. No water features or aquatic riparian areas would be impacted by this project. Least Bell's Vireo inhabit willow-dominated riparian woodlands and the Coastal California Gnatcatcher and Quino Checkerspot Butterfly inhabit scrub ecosystems. The proposed project area does not include trees and is either paved, graded, or manicured grass. Therefore, these species would not be impacted by the proposed action. DOE has determined no effect to special status species.

Minimal air emissions may result from the use of diesel-powered vehicles and equipment during construction of the system. However, significant air impacts are not anticipated as emissions would be temporary and intermittent. Project activities would involve hazards associated with construction activities and working with electricity and lithium-ion batteries. Any risks working with hazards would be mitigated through established Tribal safety and construction

protocols. The Barona Band would observe all applicable health, safety, and environmental regulations. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed activities of the project.

## NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs (OIE)  
NEPA review completed by Amy Lukens, 8/9/2023.

## 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: 8/10/2023

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