

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



**RECIPIENT:** Interstate Renewable Energy Council, Inc.

**STATE:** PR

**PROJECT TITLE:** Puerto Rico Resilience Hubs

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-ED0000762	DE-ED0000762	GFO-0000762-001	

**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 federal funding to the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) for the "Puerto Rico Resilience Hubs Project." The proposed project is intended to equip community-serving facilities with distributed energy and storage resources that would provide up to ten of Puerto Rico's most vulnerable communities with access to electricity during, before, or after an extreme weather event or other grid-related disasters.

The proposed project would consist of two 12-month budget periods (BPs). In BP1, IREC would partner with one or more Puerto Rico based entities to deploy small-scale rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) and battery energy storage systems (BESS) for the following five communities: Villa Esperanza, Toa Alta; Guayabota, Yabucoa; El Cerro, Naranjito; Duey, San Germán; and Calle Abajo, Lajas. During BP1, efforts to identify and recruit new communities for a proposed second tranche of communities would be underway. This NEPA Determination applies to BP1 only; BP2 is conditioned upon further NEPA review once additional communities have been identified.

Project coordination and outreach activities would be conducted by IREC's Puerto Rico Chapter in San Juan and subrecipient the University of Puerto Rico, Mayaguez. All installations in the selected communities would be located at existing buildings selected in partnership with community stakeholders. Specific sites within each community selected for the systems could include locations such as community centers, hospitals, or schools. Appropriate measures would be taken to ensure that installation activities do not interfere with any operations of these facilities. New permits would not be required.

The proposed installations would consist of commercially-available PV and battery equipment with a minimum size capacity of 5 kW PV/13 kWh BESS and an estimated footprint of between 400-600 square feet. Installed equipment is unlikely to exceed 10 kW PV/15kWh BESS. Based on current project plans, all the PV installations are expected to be rooftop-mounted systems although it is possible that some equipment may be ground-mounted on the surface of previously developed land adjacent to a selected community site. Project activities are not anticipated to result in ground disturbance regardless of the mounting system deployed.

None of the identified communities listed above are located within or adjacent to federally listed historic districts or properties. For locations within these communities selected by the Recipient that are over 45 years of age or are eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Recipient must submit a list of those locations to the DOE at GONEPA@ee.doe.gov. If DOE determines it necessary, DOE will complete Section 106 consultations under the National Historic Preservation Act for the applicable location and the Recipient must receive written

authorization from DOE prior to moving forward with the activities stated above. DOE also conducted a review of potential issues related to other resources of concern and found no effects that would be expected to result from the proposed project activities.

## NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a conditional NEPA determination.

The NEPA Determination applies to the following Topic Areas, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

[Budget Period 1/Phase 1](#)

The NEPA Determination does not apply to the following Topic Area, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

[Budget Period 2/Phase 2](#)

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Solar PV and battery storage system installations are prohibited unless and until the following conditions have been met:

- 1) For locations selected by the Recipient that are over 45 years of age, listed or eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places, or are located within a listed historic district, the Recipient must submit a list of those locations to the DOE at [GONEPA@ee.doe.gov](mailto:GONEPA@ee.doe.gov);
- 2) If DOE determines it necessary, DOE completes Section 106 (National Historic Preservation Act) consultations for the applicable location; and
- 3) The Recipient receives written authorization from the DOE to move forward with the activities stated above.

Notes:

Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO)

This NEPA determination requires legal review of the tailored NEPA provision.

Review completed by Whitney Donoghue on 9/18/2023

## 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.

A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. The NEPA Provision identifies Topic Areas, Budget Periods, tasks, and/or subtasks that are subject to additional NEPA review.

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_



Electronically Signed By: Andrew Montano

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 9/18/2023

**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: \_\_\_\_\_