

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



RECIPIENT: n/a

STATE: DC

PROJECT TITLE : Solar Energy Evolution and Diffusion Studies 4 (FOA)

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b> DE-FOA-0003226	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b> GFO-FOA-0003226-001	<b>CID Number</b>
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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.)

**A11 Technical advice and assistance to organizations**

Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

Rationale for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is issuing Funding Opportunity Announcement DE-FOA-0003226 "Solar Energy Evolution and Diffusion Studies 4 (SEEDS 4)" to invest in innovative social science research that generates actionable insights to improve large-scale solar (1 MW and larger) siting processes and outcomes for host communities—particularly those that are disadvantaged—and the solar industry.

Projects selected to receive federal funding under the SEEDS 4 FOA are expected to collect and analyze data using a variety of methods to observe and investigate human behavior, attitudes, and institutions. All work to be performed would be limited exclusively to intellectual, academic, or analytical activities such as surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Based on the review of the FOA document, DOE has determined that solicited projects fit within the class of action selected above. DOE also conducted a review of potential issues related to resources of concern and found no effects that would be expected to result from anticipated project activities. All projects selected by DOE and funded through DE-FOA-0003226 are categorically excluded from further NEPA review, provided the scope of the selected awards remains consistent with the intent of the FOA as currently described. If selected applicants propose to use project funds for activities outside the scope of this NEPA Determination, additional NEPA review will be required.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

This NEPA Determination applies to the issuance of DE-FOA-0003226 "Solar Energy Evolution and Diffusion Studies 4 (SEEDS 4)" as well as all awards selected under the FOA, provided the scope of the selected awards remains consistent with the intent of the FOA as currently described. If selected applicants propose to use project funds for activities outside the scope of this NEPA Determination, additional NEPA review will be required.

Notes:

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



Andrew Montano

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 12/12/2023

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