



## National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination

### Categorical Exclusion

**Recipient:** Multiple

**State:** Multiple

**Project Title:** The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE's) SOLUTIONS for Lasting Viable Energy Infrastructure (SOLVE IT) Prize

**Funding Opportunity Announcement Number:** N/A

**Award Number:** N/A

**OCED NEPA Control Number:** OCED-SOLVEIT-001-CX

**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:**

#### **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION APPENDIX, NUMBER, AND DESCRIPTION:**

A8 – Awards of Certain Contracts: Awards of contracts for technical support services, management and operation of a government-owned facility, and personal services.

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.

A11 – Technical Advice and Assistance to Organizations: Technical advice and planning assistance to international, national, state, and local organizations.

#### **Rationale for Determination:**

As part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) Technology Commercialization Fund, the DOE Office of Technology Transitions (OTT), Office of Clean Energy Demonstrations (OCED), and the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy (EERE) are proposing to conduct the SOLUTIONS for Lasting, Viable Energy Infrastructure Technologies (SOLVE IT) Prize.

Through the prize, competitors would work collaboratively with stakeholders interested in community-scale (neighborhood-, town-, or city-scale) clean energy strategic planning to engage their communities,

build a network of support for clean energy and decarbonization projects, and develop plans for carrying them out.

The SOLVE IT Prize would be carried out in three phases. In Phase 1, titled “Embark,” teams would demonstrate that they have built the best team to identify critical energy-related challenges impacting their community and articulate the best plan to engage the relevant stakeholders needed to find a lasting solution that works for the community. In Phase 2, titled “Engage,” Embark winners would engage their community stakeholders and demonstrate that they have selected the best clean energy or decarbonization project that addresses local energy challenges. Finally, in Phase 3, titled “Establish,” Engage winners would compete to demonstrate the most progress towards a plan for a clean energy or decarbonization project.

In all phases, competitors would complete work related to paper studies, stakeholder engagement, and community outreach. No field work or construction would be completed as part of the prize competition.

**Consultations (Section 106 NHPA, Section 7 ESA, etc.):** None required.

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 1501.9(e)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant

impacts (40 CFR 1508.1(g)(3)) 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.

DOE has determined that work to be carried out outside of the United States, its territories and possessions is exempt from further review pursuant to Section 5.1.1 of the DOE Final Guidelines for Implementation of Executive Order 12114; "Environmental Effects Abroad of Major Federal Actions."

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

A portion of the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**Notes:** None

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

OCED NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

Date: