



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Determination Form



Proposed Action Title: Categorical Exclusion for Domestic Atmospheric Radiation Measurement Campaign–Coast-Urban-Rural Atmospheric Gradient Experiment (CoURAGE)

Program or Field Office: NNSA Los Alamos Field Office - Los Alamos, New Mexico

Location(s) (City/County/State): Maryland, United States

Proposed Action Description

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Science, in conjunction with Triad National Security, LLC (Triad), the operating contractor for Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), conducts atmospheric and environmental research and monitoring activities by deploying mobile facilities and equipment (including weather balloons) for 1- to 2-year campaigns at locations throughout the U.S. DOE and Triad propose to deploy equipment and launch weather balloons to support the Coast-Urban-Rural Atmospheric Gradient Experiment (CoURAGE). This project will characterize the extent, radiative properties, aerosol interactions, and precipitation characteristics of stratocumulus clouds year-round at three locations stationed in Maryland: The Main Site at Clifton Park School (near downtown Baltimore); the Rural Site, located northwest of the Main Site; and the Bay Site, located southeast of the Main Site and situated on Kent Island. Weather balloons will be used to provide a valuable means of in-situ measurements of upper air observations of the Earth's atmosphere. Balloons collect scientific data on the atmosphere in an efficient and cost-effective manner. To facilitate gathering data, balloon launches from the Main Site will be conducted twice daily for the duration of the 12-month project. Balloon launches from the Rural Site will be conducted twice daily for 4 months of the 12-month project. Balloons will not be launched from the Bay Site. Activities would be designed in conformance with applicable regulatory requirements and use of best management practices. Following the data collection period each site would be restored to pre-project conditions.

NEPA Analysis

The proposed action as described above meets the conditions that are integral elements of 10 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B3.1 *Site characterization and environmental monitoring* and B3.2 *Aviation activities*. This determination is made pursuant to the 42 U.S. Code § 4321 et seq., the U.S. Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the NEPA [40 CFR 1500-1508], and the DOE NEPA Implementing Procedures [10 CFR 1021].

NEPA Compliance Officer Determination

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer as authorized under NNSA Policy 451.1 *National Environmental Policy Act Compliance Program* and DOE Policy 451.1 *National Environmental Policy Act Compliance Program*, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the class of actions specified at 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B3.1. and B3.2. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances present and that the proposal has not been segmented. I approve the proposed project under 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B3.1 and B3.2.



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Kristen M. Dors Digitally signed by Kristen M. Dors
Date: 2024.03.15 09:02:23 -06'00'

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Date Determined: