

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



RECIPIENT: Southern Oregon University

STATE: OR

PROJECT TITLE : SOU's Alternative Energy Initiative: FOREST TREE (Forging Oregon's Renewable Energy Source Transitions Through Reimagining Education + Energy) Phase 2

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number Procurement Instrument Number NEPA Control Number CID Number  
DE-EE0010785 GFO-0010785-001

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:

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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 administer Congressionally Directed Spending to Southern Oregon University (SOU) to design, fabricate, and install grid-tied solar photovoltaic (PV) arrays, battery storage, and electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at multiple locations on the campus of SOU in Ashland, OR.

Project activities at each installation site would be as follows.

1. Lithia Motors Pavilion (building footprint 40,400 square feet [sq. ft.]): A 241 kW rooftop solar PV array would be installed adjacent to an existing 63 kW PV system. The inverters would be located in a contained courtyard with an existing generator, adjacent to the building and its electrical room.
2. Hawk Dining Hall (building footprint 27,500 sq. ft.): A 151 kW rooftop solar PV array would be installed along with a 125 kWh battery storage system. The inverters and battery would be located in a new 150 sq. ft. enclosure installed adjacent to the building.
3. Central Hall (building footprint 14,800 sq. ft.): A 44.5 kW rooftop solar PV array would be installed.
4. Parking Lot #1 (asphalt-surfaced area 51,000 sq. ft.): An approximately 400 kW canopy-mounted PV array would be installed. Construction of the steel canopies would require underground site work (excavation, conduit, concrete foundations), a new electrical transformer, electrical interconnection (PV system wiring, start-up, and commissioning), and restoration of existing parking lot surfaces and landscaping. Four double level 2 EV Charging Stations would also be installed to increase the current EV charging capacity at this site, which would continue to be used as a parking lot after construction of the solar canopy system with no loss of parking spaces.

Only two of the installation sites would undergo work on the ground surface. Minimal ground disturbance would result from the equipment enclosure at Hawk Dining Hall. Ground disturbing activities at Parking Lot #1 would be limited to an area of extensive previous development. Excavation work during construction of the parking lot solar system would produce an estimated 20 tons of asphalt paving and 110 cubic yards of soil. The asphalt paving would be removed and recycled at a local asphalt reprocessing facility. Most of the excavated soil would be reused for backfill onsite and the remainder trucked to local sites needing fill dirt.

SOU would obtain commercially-available equipment for the proposed installations, including a total of approximately 1000 rooftop PV panels and 700 canopy-mounted PV panels. The projected three-month construction period would be

scheduled to minimize disruption of normal campus activities. Physical modifications to the campus resulting from the proposed installations would not be obtrusive to, or inconsistent with, the surrounding area. No change in the use, mission, or operation of campus facilities would arise out of this effort.

The proposed rooftop PV installations would each require an electrical permit from the City of Ashland and an interconnection agreement between SOU and the City of Ashland Electric Utility. The parking lot PV system would require a building permit from the City of Ashland for the canopy structures as well as an electrical permit and interconnection agreement.

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of the proposed activities to determine potential impacts on resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature. DOE does not anticipate impacts on these resources which would be considered significant or require DOE to consult with other agencies or stakeholders.

## NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Solar Energy Technologies Office (SETO)  
Review completed by Whitney Donoghue on 1/10/2024.

## 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:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/10/2024  
NEPA Compliance Officer

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

Field Office Manager