

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



RECIPIENT: Rincon San Luiseño Band of Mission Indians

STATE: CA

PROJECT TITLE: Rincon Solar Microgrids

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA 0002032	DE-IE0000125	GFO-0000125-002	GO125

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.) |
| B1.31 Installation or relocation of machinery and equipment | Installation or relocation and operation of machinery and equipment (including, but not limited to, laboratory equipment, electronic hardware, manufacturing machinery, maintenance equipment, and health and safety equipment), provided that uses of the installed or relocated items are consistent with the general missions of the receiving structure. Covered actions include modifications to an existing building, within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area, that are necessary for equipment installation and relocation. Such modifications would not appreciably increase the footprint or height of the existing building or have the potential to cause significant changes to the type and magnitude of environmental impacts. |
| 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 funding to the Rincon San Luiseño Band of Mission Indians (Rincon) to deploy three (3) energy microgrid systems at buildings owned and operated by Rincon and located on the Rincon Indian Reservation, in Valley Center, CA.

This project (award number DE-EE0000125) received a final NEPA determination (GFO-0000125-001; CXs A9, B1.31, B5.16) in August of 2019, which was a determination for two (2) energy microgrid systems. This ND includes one additional energy microgrid system and minor changes to the previous two. The scope of work and tasks as defined in the Statement of Project Objectives remain similar. Changes in the SOPO, and additional microgrid system, do not alter the outcome of the previous ND and the previous analysis of potential impacts is still valid for the original two microgrid systems. Changes to the project have been reviewed and approved by the Rincon Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO).

Changes to award activities include reducing the Rincon Fire Station system from 100 kilowatts (kW) to 79.8 kW of rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) panels and increasing the battery energy storage system (BESS) from 50 kW to 60 kW. The second system, to be installed at the Harrah's Resort Southern California, would be reduced from 2 megawatts (MW) to 1,329 (kW) of carport solar PV panels, reduced BESS power capacity reduced from 2,400 kw to 1,404 kW, and reduced diesel generator from 500 kW to 250 kW.

The third microgrid system (PC4 well pump site) would include a 62.7 kW carport-mounted PV system with 60 kW of power capacity and an existing 130 kW diesel generator, left in place for backup service only. The PC4 site would include a canopy structure with 7 concrete footings estimated at 2 feet in diameter and 10 feet deep, and an equipment pad approximately 60 square feet by 10 inches deep for ne BESS and switchgear. The carport and microgrid system would be located entirely on previously disturbed property.

Installation activities would include task work performed on rooftops and elevated surfaces, as well as handling of high powered tools and equipment. Hazards associated with the performance of project work would be mitigated through adherence to health and safety plans developed for the project. Rincon would ensure that all project personnel comply with applicable Federal, state, and local health, safety and environmental regulations.

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of the proposed activities to determine potential impacts on sensitive resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature, and found no effects that would be expected to result from the proposed project activities.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

If during project activities the Recipient or their staff encounters any cultural material (i.e. historic or prehistoric), all activities must cease in the vicinity of the discovery immediately. The Recipient must inform the Rincon THPO and the DOE Project Officer of the discovery so that an evaluation of the discovery can be completed prior to continuing work.

Notes:

Office of Indian Energy Policy and Programs (IE)
NEPA review completed by Dustin Hill, 1/16/2024

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:


NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 1/22/2024

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- Field Office Manager review not required
- Field Office Manager review required