

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



RECIPIENT: Green Era Educational NFP

STATE: IL

PROJECT TITLE: Green Era Anaerobic Digester

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
CDS	DE-EE0010714	GFO-0010714-001	

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:

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.)
B1.35 Drop-off, collection, and transfer facilities for recyclable materials	Siting, construction, modification, and operation of recycling or compostable material drop-off, collection, and transfer stations on or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area and in an area where such a facility would be consistent with existing zoning requirements. The stations would have appropriate facilities and procedures established in accordance with applicable requirements for the handling of recyclable or compostable materials and household hazardous waste (such as paint and pesticides).
B3.14 Small-scale educational facilities	Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of small-scale educational facilities (including, but not limited to, conventional teaching laboratories, libraries, classroom facilities, auditoriums, museums, visitor centers, exhibits, and associated offices) within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Operation may include, but is not limited to, purchase, installation, and operation of equipment (such as audio/visual and laboratory equipment) commensurate with the educational purpose of the facility.
B5.5 Short pipeline segments	Construction and subsequent operation of short (generally less than 20 miles in length) pipeline segments conveying materials (such as air, brine, carbon dioxide, geothermal system fluids, hydrogen gas, natural gas, nitrogen gas, oil, produced water, steam, and water) between existing source facilities and existing receiving facilities (such as facilities for use, reuse, transportation, storage, and refining), provided that the pipeline segments are within previously disturbed or developed rights-of-way.
B5.15 Small-scale renewable energy research and development and pilot projects	Small-scale renewable energy research and development projects and small-scale pilot projects, provided that the projects are located 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.
B5.21 Methane gas recovery and utilization systems	The installation, modification, operation, and removal of commercially available methane gas recovery and utilization systems installed within a previously disturbed or developed area on or contiguous to an existing landfill or wastewater treatment plant that would not have the potential to cause a significant increase in the quantity or rate of air emissions. 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 Green Era to construct and operate a digestate barn on their existing campus to process and house compost. Natural gas would be produced through the anaerobic composting process. The natural gas would be collected and transferred via a network of underground pipes installed to connect the barn to the main gas utilities on campus. Additional activities would include the movement of a defunct water tower, installation of a truck scale, purchase of operational equipment, and the construction and operation of a community farm and education center.

Award activities would occur within Green Era Renewable Energy's nine-acre brownfield campus, located within the Auburn Gresham neighborhood in Chicago, IL. This location was a contaminated brownfield for approximately 100 years, but recently went through the remediation, revitalization, and restoration steps to create a community space with renewable energy. The award would fund the construction of a compost storage building (approximately 5,424 square feet), digester buildings (approximately 46,945 square feet) with small supporting structures (<400 square feet each) to house tanks and air control devices. Installation of underground pipes, a truck scale, and operational equipment would occur.

Consultation with the Illinois State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) revealed the existing defunct water tower on site is eligible to be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As the structure is a safety concern in its current condition, Green Era proposes to remove the water tank from the tower support structures in the near future. The water tank would be restored or preserved as an art or historic installation on site in the near future. DOE determined the proposed preservation of the water tank would have no adverse effect to historic properties. The Illinois SHPO concurred with DOE's determination on April 18, 2024.

Minimal air emissions may result from the use of diesel-powered vehicles and equipment during the construction activities. However, significant air impacts are not anticipated as emissions would be temporary and intermittent. Operation of the facility would emit criteria air pollutants. Green Era would be required to install and operate Best Achievable Control Technology (BACT), obtain required permits, and comply with all applicable federal, state, and local requirements and regulations. Hazards associated with award activities include use of construction equipment, machinery, scaffolding and lifts, working with electricity and gas, and potential exposure to lead-based paint and asbestos. Employee training, proper protective equipment, and internal safety reviews and assessments would be utilized to mitigate hazards. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed activities of the project.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Include the following condition in the financial assistance agreement:

Bioenergy Technologies Office (BETO)
This NEPA determination requires legal review of the tailored NEPA provision.
NEPA review completed by Amy Lukens, 4/19/2024.

Notes:

Prior to award closeout, the recipient must provide documentation to DOE ensuring that the water tank was not demolished, and that the recipient is moving forward with a preservation or restoration plan.

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: _____

 Electronically Signed By: Andrew Montano

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 4/22/2024

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: _____