

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



RECIPIENT: Spokane Edo LLC

STATE: WA

PROJECT TITLE : Spokane Connected Communities Project

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-SOL-0002206	DE-EE0009775	GFO-0009775-002	G09775

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.)

B3.6 Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects

Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of facilities for smallscale research and development projects; conventional laboratory operations (such as preparation of chemical standards and sample analysis); and small-scale pilot projects (generally less than 2 years) frequently conducted to verify a concept before demonstration actions, provided that construction or modification would be within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Not included in this category are demonstration actions, meaning actions that are undertaken at a scale to show whether a technology would be viable on a larger scale and suitable for commercial deployment.

B5.1 Actions to conserve energy or water

(a) Actions to conserve energy or water, demonstrate potential energy or water conservation, and promote energy efficiency that would not have the potential to cause significant changes in the indoor or outdoor concentrations of potentially harmful substances. These actions may involve financial and technical assistance to individuals (such as builders, owners, consultants, manufacturers, and designers), organizations (such as utilities), and governments (such as state, local, and tribal). Covered actions include, but are not limited to weatherization (such as insulation and replacing windows and doors); programmed lowering of thermostat settings; placement of timers on hot water heaters; installation or replacement of energy efficient lighting, low-flow plumbing fixtures (such as faucets, toilets, and showerheads), heating, ventilation, and air conditioning systems, and appliances; installation of drip-irrigation systems; improvements in generator efficiency and appliance efficiency ratings; efficiency improvements for vehicles and transportation (such as fleet changeout); power storage (such as flywheels and batteries, generally less than 10 megawatt equivalent); transportation management systems (such as traffic signal control systems, car navigation, speed cameras, and automatic plate number recognition); development of energy-efficient manufacturing, industrial, or building practices; and small-scale energy efficiency and conservation research and development and small-scale pilot projects. Covered actions include building renovations or new structures, provided that they occur in a previously disturbed or developed area. Covered actions do not include rulemakings, standard-settings, or proposed DOE legislation, except for those actions listed in B5.1(b) of this appendix. (b) Covered actions include rulemakings that establish energy conservation standards for consumer products and industrial equipment, provided that the actions would not: (1) have the potential to cause a significant change in manufacturing infrastructure (such as construction of new manufacturing plants with considerable associated ground disturbance); (2) involve significant unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources (such as rare or limited raw materials); (3) have the potential to result in a significant increase in the disposal of materials posing significant risks to human health and the environment (such as RCRA hazardous wastes); or (4) have the potential to cause a significant increase in energy consumption in a state or region.

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 Spokane Edo LLC for the development, deployment, and field testing of hardware in the Spokane area, in order to meet local grid needs and the energy needs of marginalized and low income communities. Needs would be met through a diverse mix of grid interactive efficient buildings (GEBs) providing energy efficiency (EE) opportunities and hosting distributed energy resources (DERs) which can deliver grid services (GS). These communities, called connected communities, would provide advantages to low-income residential customers while simultaneously reducing emissions and promoting resiliency and equity.

This project (award number DE-EE0009775) received a Conditional NEPA determination (GFO-0009775-001; CX A9) on April 15, 2022, which applied only to Budget Period (BP) 1, and BP2 subtasks 7.1 through 7.5, it did not apply to BP2 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 8, 9, BP3, BP4, or BP5. The Statement of Project Objectives (SOPO) was updated to split subtask 7.7 into three separate subtasks (7.7, 7.8 and, 7.9). This NEPA Determination (ND) includes BP2 subtasks 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8, 9, BP3, BP4, and BP5.

Remaining tasks in BP2, and tasks in BP3, BP4, and BP5 include the following:

Budget Period 2

1. Conducting customer surveys
2. Installation of EEs/DERs
 - a. Communication equipment (gateway and data acquisition devices), smart thermostats, connected lighting controls, air source heat pumps, insulation, rooftop unit controls, solar PV, EV charging station management software, battery storage, and weatherization measures.
3. Sharing of lessons learned, conducting meetings, present findings, creation of a working group and drafting of a connected community playbook

Budget Period 3

1. Conducting annual customer surveys, responding to customer queries, and adjustment of program
2. Optimization of EE measures (EEM)
3. Complete installation of EEMs (smart thermostats, connected lighting controls, and heat pumps), and communication equipment
4. Complete additional installation of DERs in all residential, commercial, and industrial buildings
5. Engage DERs to provide grid services (GSs)

Budget Periods 4 and 5

1. Repeat subtasks and milestones from Task 2, and Tasks 9 through 12.
 - a. Connected communities cohort and national coordination collaboration
 - b. Sharing of lessons learned
 - c. Retention
 - d. Optimization of EEMs and GSs
 - e. Sharing of lessons learned.

Spokane Edo LLC submitted 1415 potential residential locations. Work at the potential customer locations includes smart thermostats and blown-in attic insulation.

DER installation would take place at multiple potential site locations in the Spokane, WA area. As some of the potential sites may be listed on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) or be potentially eligible for listing on the NRHP, only those activities that would have no potential to affect historic properties, even if those properties were assumed to be present, are covered here with no requirement for further review. Any activities beyond the scope of this ND would require further NEPA review. This ND covers only the following EEMs/DERs, listed below.

Installation and/or replacement of the following DERs/EEMs and/or carrying out the following award activities would not have the potential to affect historic properties, even if assumed to be present:

1. Smart thermostats.
2. Blown-in attic insulation.
3. Communication equipment.
4. Connected lighting controls.
5. EV charging management software.

Installation and/or replacement of the following DERs/EEMs may have the potential to affect historic properties, if present, and so will require further review if a location where this work would occur is a:) listed on the NRHP, b:) the building is 50 years old or older, or c:) the activities are occurring within a National Register Historic District:

1. Air source heat pumps.

2. Rooftop control units
3. Solar PVs
4. Battery storage

Locations 50 years old or older, receiving EEs/DERs outlined above, have the potential to impact historic properties, would need additional NEPA review, and are not covered in this ND.

Award activities would involve handling and use of various hazardous materials including, working with lithium-ion batteries. Project activities involving hazardous materials pose no risk to the public. Hazardous materials would be utilized, managed, stored, and disposed of in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local environmental regulation. Existing lab, and governmental health and safety policies and procedures would be followed, including employee training, proper protective equipment, engineering controls, monitoring, and internal assessments.

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 conditional NEPA determination.

The NEPA Determination applies to the following Topic Areas, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

BP2 subtasks 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8, 9, BP3, BP4, and BP5 on buildings 50 years old or newer, and all locations receiving smart thermostats, blown-in attic insulation, communication equipment, connected lighting controls, and EV charging management software.

The NEPA Determination does not apply to the following Topic Area, Budget Periods, and/or tasks:

BP2 subtasks 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 8, 9, BP3, BP4, and BP5 for EEMs/DERs including air source heat pumps, rooftop control units, and battery storage on buildings 50 years old or older.

Notes:

Building Technologies Office (BTO)

This NEPA determination requires legal review of the tailored NEPA provision.

NEPA review completed by Dustin Hill, 5/15/2024

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: _____

 Electronically
Signed By: [Matthew Blevins](#)

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 5/22/2024

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: _____