

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



RECIPIENT: Prism Power Partners LLC

STATE: MI

PROJECT TITLE: Manitou Farms

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
SEP-ALRD-2023A	DE-EE0010036	GFO-0010036-001	

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:

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.
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Rationale for determination:

NEPA Control Number: GFO-0010036-001
Recipient: Prism Power Partners LLC
FOA Number: SEP-ALRD-2023A

Applicable CXs:

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.

Justification:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide funding to Prism Power Partners LLC to install a ground-mounted 150 kilowatt (kW) solar facility at Manitou Farms, located in Benzonia, Michigan.

Award activities would involve the construction and installation of 312 photo-voltaic (PV) modules on top of pile-driven supports spread across 28,000 square feet (ft). Support infrastructure would include trenched electric cable, an electrical panel, a transformer, a medium voltage switch, and three 8 ft x 8 ft pads. Only the transformer and medium voltage switch would require foundations, and the project would use fiberglass "basement" foundations instead of concrete foundations. Power would be trenched to the array from a single new riser utility pole. The new pole would be added to bring the power lines within connecting range of the project. Consumers Energy, the utility, would run the power line from the new riser pole to their existing distribution line near the road. "Deer fence" fencing would be installed around the solar facility. In addition, the solar array would be designed to integrate experimental agricultural practices underneath and between the panels, such as grazing sheep and cattle and potentially planting blueberries.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) website identifies seven endangered species (i.e., Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, tricolored bat, rufa red knot, eastern massasauga rattlesnake, monarch butterfly, and pitcher's thistle), which may occur in the proposed project site at Manitou Farms in Benzonia, Michigan. No critical habitats are identified within the proposed project area. There would be no anticipated effects to the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, or tricolored bat because no tree removal would occur. There would be no anticipated effects to the rufa red knot; the rufa red knot is a riparian bird, and it is unlikely that it would be found on the project site. There would be no anticipated effects to the eastern massasauga rattlesnake or the pitcher's thistle; the project site is already disturbed and maintained through regular mowing, and it is unlikely

that these species would be found onsite. The monarch butterfly is listed as a candidate species and does not require a determination. Therefore, the Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, tricolored bat, rufa red knot, eastern massasauga rattlesnake, monarch butterfly, and pitcher's thistle would not inhabit the project area, and no effects to ESA-listed species are anticipated from this project.

The recipient would work directly with their State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to ensure protection of cultural resources during the course of project activities, per their historic preservation programmatic agreement with DOE and the Michigan SHPO.

Potential air emissions would be limited to vehicles traveling to and from the project site, along with one motorized tracked pile driver and one motorized on-track trencher for temporary and intermittent construction and installation activities. Existing government and corporate health, safety, and environmental policies and procedures would be followed, including personnel training, proper personal protective equipment (PPE), monitoring, and internal assessments. Prism Power Partners LLC would observe all applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations and requirements. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed activities of the project.

The recipient has also been awarded a U.S Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) grant award. Both the USDA grant and the DOE grant would be used to fund this project.

Conditions:

1. Prism Power Partners LLC must adhere to the terms and restrictions of the DOE executed Historic Preservation Programmatic Agreement with the State of Michigan, available at <https://www.energy.gov/node/812599>.

2. Prism Power Partners LLC is responsible for reviewing the online NEPA and Historic preservation training at www.energy.gov/node/4816816 and contacting EECBG.NEPA@ee.doe.gov with any EECBG NEPA or historic preservation questions.

3. Prism Power Partners LLC is required to submit an annual Historic Preservation Report in the Performance and Accountability for Grants in Energy system (PAGE) located at <https://www.page.energy.gov/default.aspx>.

4. If during project activities the recipient or their contractors encounter any cultural materials (i.e. historic or prehistoric), all activities must cease in the vicinity of the discovery immediately. The recipient must inform the DOE Project Officer of the discovery so that an evaluation of the discovery can be completed prior to continuing work.

Notes:

Office of State and Community Energy Programs – SEP.
NEPA review completed by Nick Iraola, 6/7/2024.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

SEP; prepared by N. Iraola

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 Blevis** _____ Date: 6/10/2024
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