PMC-EF2a

(2/04/02)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY
EERE PROJECT MANAGEMENT CENTER
NEPA DETERMINATION

RECIPIENT: TX STATE ENERGY CONSERVATION OFFICE **STATE:** TX

PROJECT TITLE : RALLS ISD

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0000052	DE-EE0000116	GFO-0000116-029	EE116

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:

Description:

B5.18 Wind turbines

The installation, modification, operation, and removal of a small number (generally not more than 2) of commercially available wind turbines, with a total height generally less than 200 feet (measured from the ground to the maximum height of blade rotation) that (1) are located within a previously disturbed or developed area; (2) are located more than 10 nautical miles (about 11.5 miles) from an airport or aviation navigation aid; (3) are located more than 1.5 nautical miles (about 1.7 miles) from National Weather Service or Federal Aviation Administration Doppler weather radar; (4) would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on bird or bat populations; and (5) are sited or designed such that the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts to persons (such as from shadow flicker and other visual effects, and noise). 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. Covered actions include only those related to wind turbines to be installed on land.

Rational for determination:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) provided funding to the Texas State Energy Conservation Office (SECO) under the DOE's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 State Energy Program (SEP). SECO selected Ralls Independent School District (School) to receive $253,543 in SEP funding (total project cost - $458,300).

The School would use federal funding to partially fund the purchase and installation of two (2) 20 kW Enertech 44A wind turbines on two separate 100-foot lattice towers (height of ~ 143') at the Ralls ISD School complex, located at 1608 Ave. , Ralls Texas 79357 (proposed project). The wind turbines are manufactured by Enertech, a manufacturer of wind systems for some time (over 30 years).

The proposed project and associated actions have the potential to impact the following resource areas:

Land Use and Ground Disturbance: The relatively small size of these wind turbines means that ground disturbing activities would be minor and are as follows: The proposed site for the turbines would be located at the South end of an athletic track and field area, east of the school and is currently unused and is currently covered by Bermuda grass. The foundations would be pier-drilled to ~ 21 ft, with a 6 inch triangle concrete top cap between three piers. During construction, ~ 196 sq ft would be excavated for each turbine foundation and ~ 466 sq ft would be trenched for wires, with a total ground of ~ 564 sq ft for each turbine. Once constructed, the remaining footprint would be ~ 196 sq ft of permanently committed land (life of the project). The turbines would be constructed ~ 225 ft apart. The existing roads are sufficient for construction/delivery traffic and no new roads would be constructed. Because of the relatively minor ground disturbance required for the proposed project, DOE does not anticipate any adverse impacts related to ground disturbance.

Utilities: The proposed turbines have 3-phase, 480 VAC induction generators and would be directly connected to the grid. It is anticipated that Ralls middle school would utilize all power generated by the turbines and any excess generated would be sold to a local utility company via a net metering agreement. The turbines would be grid connected with under-ground electrical wiring. It is estimated that the turbines could produce ~ 350,400 kWh of electricity per year. DOE has determined that the proposed project would have a small, beneficial impact on electric consumption at the School and a negligible impact to electricity use and production outside of the School.
Visual and Aesthetics: The wind turbines would be on cement foundations without any occupied structures nearby. The School is located in a rural community with residential areas to the South and West, and open farmland to North and East.

Due to the distance from occupied structures, the height of the proposed turbines, DOE has determined that impacts related to "shadow-flicker" would be negligible. After reviewing the existing conditions at the proposed locations and

the current use in the vicinity, DOE has determined that the proposed project would have minor impacts to visual resources and aesthetics.

Noise: The Enertech 44A Turbines have relatively low noise levels and based on the distance from occupied structures, baseline conditions, and attenuation, DOE has determined the proposed project would have a negligible impact on noise levels.

Biological Resources: The School contacted the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department (FWS) in regards to the proposed project. The FWS has not yet responded. However, based on a review of the existing conditions at the proposed project location and the lack of potential for threatened and endangered species to be impacted by the proposed project, DOE has determined the proposed project would not impact listed or eligible species in the area.

Historic and Cultural Resources: The Texas State Historic Preservation Officer determined the proposed project would have no impact on listed or eligible historic/cultural resources in the project vicinity. Based on this and the previous disturbance at the proposed project locations, DOE has determined the proposed project would not adversely impact historic or cultural resources. Should unanticipated discoveries be made during construction, the School would immediately cease construction and contact the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer for guidance.

Permits and consultations: The School contacted U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and requested a "No Impact" determination as to any wetlands in the project vicinity. The Corps has not yet replied. However, after a review of the proposed project location, DOE has determined the proposed project locations are not in a wetland and will not adversely impact wetlands. The school contacted FAA and requested "No Hazard" determinations for the proposed turbines. However, using the FAA's "Notice Criteria" tool and based on the distance from the nearest airport (~8 miles), the proposed turbines do not exceed the notice criteria. However, if FAA responds to the school's letter and determines anything other than "No Impact" the school will consult with FAA and provide SECO and DOE with the results of that consultation. Other than permits required for construction of the proposed turbines, the School does not anticipate needing additional permits for operation.

Based on review of project information and the above analysis, DOE has determined that the proposed project does not have a significant individual or cumulative impact to the human environment. The proposed project consists of 2 turbines, which would be ~143' tall; due to the location on previously disturbed land; distance from the closest airport and not exceeding FAA's notice criteria; lack of potential to impact bird and bat populations; and lack of impacts related to cultural/historical resources, shadow flicker, visual resources, and noise - DOE has determined the proposed project is consistent with the actions contained in DOE categorical exclusion B5.18 "wind turbines" and is categorically excluded from further NEPA review under CX B5.18.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If you intend to make changes to the scope or objective of your project you are required to contact the Project Officer identified in Block 11 of the Notice of Financial Assistance Award before proceeding. You must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved.

Note to Specialist :

DOE funding - $253,543
EF2a prepared by Melissa Rossiter

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____ Date: 12/20/2011
NEPA Compliance Officer

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

☐ Field Office Manager review required

NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:

☐ Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
☐ Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.