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 : SHARYLAND ISD

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-EE000116	DE-EE000116	GFO-0000116-032	GO0

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:

B5.16 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.

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 Sharyland Independent School District (School) to receive $900,000 in SEP funding (total project cost - $1,080,300).

The School would use federal funding to partially fund the design and installation of a 168 kW ground-mounted solar array at the Sharyland North Junior High School Building, located at 5100 Dove Ave., McAllen, TX 78504 (proposed project). The solar array is manufactured by Suniva Solar.

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

Land Use and Ground Disturbance: The solar modules are Self-Ballasted and mounted vertically on the rack – with each module in "portrait mode." The School is located in a mixed residential/agricultural area, with another school located to the east and agricultural lands located to the west. The proposed project location is on the property of the School's complex and is a previously disturbed, grassy area, which is located adjacent to and just west of the School. During construction, ~ 12,000 sq. ft. would be excavated for the cement pad and a trench for underground wires would likewise be excavated (the trench would be ~ 3' W x 4' D, however length is dependent on final design). Once constructed, the footprint would be ~ 15,000 sq. ft. (including the addition of a chain link fence). (See NEPA Questionnaire and "Sharyland ISD - PWP with Attachments-9.27.pdf" for additional siting information). The existing roads are sufficient for construction/delivery traffic and no new roads would be constructed. Due to the previously disturbed nature of the site and the relatively minor ground disturbance required for the proposed project, DOE does not anticipate any adverse impacts related to ground disturbance.

Utilities: The proposed project would be grid-connected and would tie into the School's main electrical service. The solar array would operate under Reliant Energy net-metering protocol, in which any power generated that exceeds the immediate need of the School would be fed back into the grid. It is anticipated that the School would utilize much the array's generation during peak production hours and the array could produce ~ 235,000 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 proposed array would be on a cement foundation and located adjacent to and immediately west of the School. The School is located in a mix-use community. A road is immediately to the east of the proposed project location and across the road are a few homes and agricultural land. Due to the distance from residences and its location on School property, DOE has determined that the proposed project would have minor impacts to visual resources and aesthetics.

Biological Resources: The School contacted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department with regard to the proposed project. The School determined the proposed project would have no effect on federally listed species. Based on a review of the existing conditions at the proposed location and the lack of potential for threatened and endangered species to be impacted by the proposed project, DOE has also 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 location, 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 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and requested a "no permit required" letter. The Corps has not responded. However, after a review of the proposed project, it does not appear the location is in a wetlands or floodplains. Therefore, DOE has determined the proposed project will not impact wetlands or floodplains. Other than permits required for construction of the solar array, 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 a commercially-available 168 kW ground-mounted solar array, located within a previously disturbed area. DOE has determined the proposed project is consistent with the actions contained in DOE categorical exclusion B5.16 "solar photovoltaic systems" and is categorically excluded from further NEPA review under CX B5.16.

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-$900,000
EF2a prepared by Melissa Rossiter

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: _____ Date: 12/13/2011
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.

BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :

Field Office Manager's Signature: _____ Date: _____
Field Office Manager