

USDA Rural Development Environmental Checklist for DOE Adopted Categorical Exclusions

Note: Use of the DOE Categorical Exclusions requires preparation of an Environmental Document.

Applicant Name:	Stag Moose Solar, LLC OneEnergy Renewables	Project Name:	Whitewater Solar Project
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1. Agency Program: RUS

2. Federal Action: **Loan** **Grant** **Guarantee**

3. General Project Location: Township 108 North, Range 11 West, Town of Plainfield, Wabasha County, Minnesota

4. Project Description: Stage Moose Solar, LLC proposes to construct the Whitewater Solar Project (Project), a 2-megawatt solar photovoltaic facility located on a parcel in the Southwest Quarter of Section 3, Township 108 North, Range 11 West, Town of Plainfield, Wabasha County, Minnesota. The current site is an open field that has been previously disturbed for agriculture activities and therefore, would require minimal grading. The disturbance of land would be limited to the approximately 15-acre Project area during construction.

5. Purpose and Need: The Project supports the mission of the USDA Rural Development office by improving the economy and quality of life in rural Minnesota. According to their mission statement: "USDA, Rural Development is a mission area that includes three federal agencies – Rural Business- Cooperative Service, Rural Housing Service, and Rural Utilities Service. The agencies have in excess of 50 programs that provide financial assistance and a variety of technical and educational assistance to eligible rural and tribal populations, eligible communities, individuals, cooperatives, and other entities with a goal of improving the quality of life, sustainability, infrastructure, economic opportunity, development, and security in rural America. Financial assistance can include direct loans, guaranteed loans, and grants in order to accomplish program objectives."

6. List Appropriate CE: B5.16

7. Application Questions:

	Certify by Checking
a. For application of DOE CE B4.13, B4.14, B5.4, B5.5, B5.16, and B5.23, the action fits within the definition of a "previously disturbed or developed area" per the definition in 10 CFR 1021.410(g) and 7 CFR 1970.6(a).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. For application of DOE CE B4.13, which may involve relocations of small segments of powerline, the activity meets the definition of "small" provided in 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(2).	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion (10 CFR 1021.410(b)(3)). This proposal is not connected to other actions which (1) automatically trigger other actions that may require NEPA review; (2) cannot or will not proceed unless other actions are taken previously or simultaneously; or (3) are interdependent parts of a larger action and depend on the larger action for their justification (40 CFR 1501.3(b)).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
d. The proposal has no extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects (10 CFR 1021.410(b)(2)). Extraordinary circumstances are unique situations presented by specific proposals, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

8. Integral Elements:

	Conditions?
a. Section 106 Determination: No historic properties affected in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.4(d)(1).	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
b. ESA Listed Species and/or Critical Habitat: No Effect	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Wetlands Protection: No Wetlands Identified or Present	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

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d. Floodplains:

e. Areas of Special Designation:

f. Streams, Lakes, and Rivers :

g. Coral Reef/Protected Coastal Habitat:

h. Important Farmland:

i. Does the proposal threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of USDA or Executive Orders?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
j. Does the proposal 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?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
k. Would the proposal disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act --excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases?	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No

Does the proposal have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources:

l. Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a state or local government, federally recognized Indian tribe, or Native Hawaiian organization.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
m. State listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
n. Federally protected marine mammals protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act or Essential Fish Habitat protected through the Magnuson- Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
o. Other Federally protected species protected by laws such as the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
p. Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region).	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
q. Tundra or rain forests.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No
r. Does the proposal 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 of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.	<input type="radio"/> Yes <input checked="" type="radio"/> No

9. Justification & Special Considerations:

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10. Project Conditions to be placed in Loan and Construction Documents:

Applicant is responsible for acquiring the necessary permits for construction and operation of the projects and adhering to all environmental commitments made regarding construction and maintenance of the proposed projects. An inadvertent discovery provision, developed in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.13(b) and (c), will be included as a condition of obligation in order to address any historic properties which might be inadvertently discovered or affected during project construction.

Section 106 Determination Conditions:	An inadvertent discovery provision, developed in accordance with 36 CFR § 800.13(b) and (c), will be included as a condition of obligation to address any historic properties which might be inadvertently discovered or affected during project construction.
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Wetlands Protection Conditions:	The applicant is responsible for meeting any MNDNR or USACE wetland permitting requirements. This authorization will be valid only for those actions for which no individual permit is required under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act.
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11. Finding: Categorical Exclusion w/ conditions Categorical Exclusion w/o conditions

Upon review of the project description and all required environmental documentation, I find that the proposal meets the criteria established in 7 CFR §1970.53, "Categorical Exclusions Involving No or Minimal Disturbance" and is consistent with 40 C.F.R. § 1508.1(d). The proposed activity does not have any extraordinary circumstances, nor will it individually or cumulatively have a significant effect on the human environment; therefore, neither an Environmental Assessment nor an Environmental Impact Statement is required as proposed.

12. CERTIFICATION

	Select date preparer Signed.
Signature of Preparer	Date

Name of Preparer	Preparer Title

	Select date EPS/SEC Signed.
Signature of Agency EPS or SEC	Date

Name of Agency EPS or SEC	Agency EPS or SEC Title

	Feb 10, 2025
Signature of Agency Approving Official	Date

Mark Bartholomew	Supervisory General Field Representative
Name of Agency Approving Official	Agency Approving Official Title

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**Applicant
Name:**

Stag Moose Solar, LLC OneEnergy Renewables

**Project
Name:**

Whitewater Solar Project

Forward the following information for posting on the RD web site

Email the following information to the Office of Public Affairs at: rdwebservices@usda.gov and title the subject line of the email: "Categorical Exclusion".

- Applicant Name and Number
 - Project Name
- Brief Project Description
- Staff Assignment Name
- Project Submittal Date
- Project Approval Date
- DOE CE Applied