



Department of Energy
National Nuclear Security Administration
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form



Categorical Exclusion ID#: NV-2026-003

Proposed Action Title: Geophysical Surveys and Exploratory Drilling for Well Selection

Program or Field Office: Nevada Field Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Nevada National Security Site, Nye County, NV

Proposed Action Description

Geophysical surveys and exploratory drilling would be conducted within Areas 25 and 30 at the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS). Information obtained from these activities would be used to evaluate proposed well locations, which when constructed, would offset water withdrawals in the NNSS Mission Corridor. The geophysical surveys would consist of non-destructive testing to confirm geology and exploratory hole drilling locations. The exploratory drilling would occur to a maximum depth of 4500-feet (ft) below ground surface (bgs) at proposed well locations. Construction of drill pad locations prior to drilling would require vegetation clearing, surface contouring, and excavation of a sump to be used to contain drilling fluids produced during drilling. All construction, surveying, and drilling would occur within the drill pad footprint, which would not exceed 500-ft x 500-ft at each drilling location. Infrastructure (i.e., site trailers, generators, water tanks, etc.) would be brought in temporarily to support the drilling and would be vacated once the drilling is completed. Prior to installing infrastructure, NNSS Fire Protection Engineering would be consulted to ensure appropriate fire protection setback distances are maintained from the edge of the drill pad.

The test well would be drilled in compliance with all Nevada Division of Water Resources requirements. The test well drilling method would facilitate collection of continuous geologic formation samples throughout the length of the borehole.

Pumping activities on the new well(s) include zone testing of selected depth horizons within the borehole during drilling and a long-term pumping test after the well is constructed. Water quality samples would be collected for analysis at a Nevada-certified laboratory to ensure compliance with drinking water standards.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied: 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B, B3.1 Site characterization and environmental monitoring

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see 10 CFR 1021.102, Appendix B to 10 CFR 1021, and also Section 5.4 and Appendices B and C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).

To find that a proposal is categorically excluded, DOE shall determine the following:

(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B or C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025). To fit within these classes of actions a



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proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of action in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures;

(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and

(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

NEPA Compliance Officer Determination

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, as a designated NNSA NEPA Compliance Officer, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other requirements and guidance set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Patricia Gallo

Date Determined: March 19, 2026