

February 2, 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

From: Joe Barger
NEPA Coordinator

Subject: Categorical Exclusion Addendum

Project Title: Analytical Laboratory Modernization and Expansion

Location: University of Maine
Deering Hall
Grove Street Ext.
Orono, Maine 04469

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is providing a congressionally directed funding grant for the Modernization and Expansion of the Analytical Laboratory at the University of Maine. In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), NIST conducted an environmental evaluation of this project and prepared a Categorical Exclusion Memorandum dated January 29, 2025 (Attachment A).

NIST was subsequently notified by the University of Maine of a change in the scope of this project.

The original scope of work for the Analytical Laboratory specified that:

- “All work would be conducted within the building envelope” and would be “limited to interior work only within Deering Hall.”

The change in scope includes the following:

- Most work will be completed within the building envelope (on the fourth floor and basement) with the exception that Heating, Air Conditioning and Ventilation (HVAC) equipment will be installed on the first and fifth story roofs of Deering Hall and duct work will be installed on the exterior of Deering Hall (southern face) extending from the first to the fifth floors.

Specific Considerations of this Action and any Extraordinary Circumstances

Installing HVAC equipment and duct work on the roofs and exterior of Deering Hall does not significantly change the environmental impact anticipated for this project.

The change in scope was coordinated with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission and the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred that this change in scope will not result in adverse impacts to historic properties (Attachment B).

Categorical Exclusion

NIST finds that the change in scope discussed above will have no impact on the categorical exclusion applied to this project. Department of Commerce Categorical Exclusion A-1 remains applicable to this project.

The proposed project: Analytical Laboratory Modernization and Expansion at the University of Maine remains categorically excluded from the need for further environmental review under NEPA. Any changes to the above project may require additional NEPA review.

Joe Barger
NIST NEPA Coordinator

Date

Andrew Wright
NIST Chief Facilities Management Officer

Date

Attachment A, Categorical Exclusion Memorandum, January 29, 2025

January 29, 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

From: Joe Barger
NEPA Coordinator

Subject: Categorical Exclusion
Record of Environmental Consideration

Project Title: Analytical Laboratory Modernization and Expansion

Location: University of Maine
Deering Hall
Grove Street Ext.
Orono, Maine 04469

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) require that all major actions by federal agencies be reviewed with respect to the environmental consequences on the human environment. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is providing a congressionally directed funding grant for the Analytical Laboratory Modernization and Expansion project at the University of Maine. Consequently, NEPA and the associated implementing regulations apply to this project.

This memorandum provides a Record of Environmental Consideration and summarizes the determination that the Analytical Laboratory Modernization and Expansion at the University of Maine has been found to be categorically excluded from any further environmental review under NEPA.

Description of the Action

This project includes the modernization and expansion of the University of Maine (UMaine) Analytical Laboratory and Soil Testing Service (Maine Analytical Laboratory). The Maine Analytical Laboratory is housed in Deering Hall on the UMaine Campus. Deering Hall's total

size is 50,001 square feet. This project will renovate approximately 5,200 square feet of laboratory space, office space and general storage and support space. All work will be completed within the building envelope (on the fourth floor and basement).

The Maine Analytical Laboratory is the most comprehensive lab of its type in New England, providing many critical soil, plant, compost, and manure testing services that are not available in labs in neighboring states. This modernization and expansion project will:

- Bolster Maine's ability to drive research and leadership on per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS),
- Enable researchers to carry out work that addresses current and future issues such as food insecurity, climate change, and building local economies to be resilient and adaptable in the face of global change,
- Support conservation efforts and workforce training needed by state agencies and federal partners including U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development Service and the Natural Resources Conservation Service, and
- Improve support for the \$681M agricultural industry in Maine

This project will be accomplished in accordance with all applicable state and federal environmental and safety regulations. All applicable regulatory permitting will be obtained.

Specific Considerations of this Action and any Extraordinary Circumstances

- Existing Site

This project will be limited to interior work only within Deering Hall. Deering Hall is a standard academic, teaching and research building on the UMaine Campus and is the current location of the Maine Analytical Laboratory.

- Endangered Species and Critical Habitats

This project will solely impact the interior of Deering Hall. No endangered species or critical habitats will be impacted.

- Wetlands, Flooding Potential and Resilience

The site is located outside of any 100- and 500-year flood hazard areas (FEMA). The renovations planned are valued at less than half the cost of a full building replacement.

- **Stormwater**

This project will solely impact the interior of Deering Hall. No impacts to stormwater are expected.

- **Building Staffing/Utilities**

Staffing and student populations are not expected to increase significantly due to the planned renovations. Utility use (i.e., electricity, natural gas, water, sewer) is not expected to change significantly due to the renovations planned.

Local roadways have capacity for a temporary increase in traffic during construction.

- **Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Greenhouse Gas emissions are not expected to change significantly due to the renovations planned.

- **Hazardous Materials**

Hazardous materials use and hazardous waste generation are expected to be similar to current operations at Deering Hall. Hazardous wastes are managed in accordance with the UMaine Chemical Waste Management Policy, and State and Federal regulations.

Asbestos and lead based paint have been identified in the construction areas of this project. Any of these materials which may be disturbed during construction will be properly handled and disposed in compliance with State and Federal regulations.

- **Historic/Cultural Significance**

This project will only impact the interior of Deering Hall. No adverse impacts to historic properties are expected. The Maine Historic Preservation Officer concurred with this finding in NIST's letter on 1/8/25 (attached).

- **Environmental Justice**

Due to the nature of the project, no disproportional adverse human health or environmental impacts to overburdened and underserved communities, including minority, Tribal, or low-income populations are expected.

Effects of the Action

No significant adverse impacts on the environment are expected from this action.

Categorical Exclusion

The activities associated with this project fall within the criteria of the following Department of Commerce Categorical Exclusion (CATEX):

A-1 Minor renovations and additions to buildings, roads, airfields, grounds, equipment, and other facilities that do not result in a change in the functional use of the real property (e.g. realigning interior spaces of an existing building, adding a small storage shed to an existing building, retrofitting for energy conservation, or installing a small antenna on an already existing antenna tower that does not cause the total height to exceed 200 feet and where the FCC would not require an environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for the installation). This CE does not apply in instances where the project must be submitted to the National Capital Planning Commission (NCPC) for review and NCPC determines that it does not have an applicable Categorical Exclusion.

This project is considered a minor renovation of a building that does not change the functional use of the real property. The project does not require review by the NCPC.

The proposed activity: Analytical Laboratory Modernization and Expansion at the University of Maine is categorically excluded from the need for further environmental review under NEPA. Any changes to the above project will require additional NEPA review.

**JOSEPH
BARGER**

Digitally signed by JOSEPH
BARGER
Date: 2025.01.30 08:21:56
-05'00'

Joe Barger
NIST NEPA Coordinator

1/30/25

Date

**ROBERT
VAUGHN**

Digitally signed by ROBERT
VAUGHN
Date: 2025.01.30 11:33:54
-05'00'

Robert C. Vaughn
NIST Chief Facilities Management Officer

Date

Attachment B. Maine SHPO Correspondence, 1/30/26

