

December 16, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

From: Joe Barger
NEPA Coordinator

Subject: Categorical Exclusion
Record of Environmental Consideration

Project Title: Modernization of Repository Facilities for the West Virginia Geological
and Economic Survey

Location: 13, 15, & 17 Excavation Lane
Morgantown, WV 26508

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 Modernization of Repository Facilities for the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey. 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 Modernization of Repository Facilities for the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey has been found to be categorically excluded from any further environmental review under NEPA.

Description of the Action

The West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey (WVGES) has been a state government agency for over 125 years. The WVGES maintains a geological sample collection of thousands of rock cores, drill cuttings, coal samples, various grab samples and paleontological samples. These samples provide valuable information for work being conducted today that cannot be

obtained elsewhere. The current storage facility for these sample collections is over 70 years old and at capacity.

This project includes the purchase of an existing metal panel warehouse building, approximately two years old. No exterior construction or site work will be involved. The warehouse is a pre-constructed building for sale by a commercial realty company. The warehouse is located in an industrial area on a public roadway.

The WVGES will purchase the warehouse and use it as a storage facility for geological samples that continue to be collected. By statute, all core samples and cuttings collected in the State of West Virginia must be stored and catalogued by the WVGES.

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

The existing warehouse was constructed on an open lot. The land use in the area is mixed industrial with residential present. The property is privately owned by a commercial developer.

- Endangered Species and Critical Habitats

No endangered species or habitats are anticipated in the project area.

- Wetlands, Flooding Potential and Resilience

The site is located outside of FEMA 100- and 500-year flood hazard areas. The nearest flood zone is 5,672 feet west of the project site and at an elevation 343 feet below the project site. No future flood hazards resulting from climate change are anticipated.

- Building Staffing/Utilities

Staffing is not expected to increase significantly due to the operation of the warehouse.

Local roadways have capacity for the ongoing traffic expected.

Initially the warehouse will not be connected to water or sewer and will have minimal climate control. Utility requirements will be minimal.

- **Air Quality/Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Due to the minimal climate control required and minimal energy needs of the warehouse, greenhouse gas emissions resulting from the operation of the warehouse are expected to be insignificant.

- **Hazardous Materials**

No hazardous materials will be used at the warehouse and no hazardous waste will be generated. The site at which the warehouse was constructed was previously undeveloped with no history of industrial activity or potential contamination.

- **Historic/Cultural Significance**

No impacts are expected to historic properties as the facility is a common metal panel structure of approximately 2 years in age.

- **Environmental Justice**

No disproportional adverse human health or environmental impacts to overburdened or 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):

B1.24: Property transfers. Transfer, lease, disposition, or acquisition of interests in personal property (including, but not limited to, equipment and materials) or real property (including, but not limited to, permanent structures and land), provided that under reasonably foreseeable uses (1) there would be no potential for release of substances at a level, or in a form, that could pose a threat to public health or the environment and (2) the covered actions would not have the potential to cause a significant change in impacts from before the transfer, lease, disposition, or acquisition of interests.

This project meets the criteria of CATEX B1.24 as follows

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- (1) Operation of the proposed warehouse would not result in the release of any material that could cause a threat to public health or the environment. No hazardous materials would be used in the

warehouse, no hazardous waste would be generated, and no direct air emissions would result from the operations.

- (2) Purchase and operation of the warehouse would not cause a significant change in impacts when compared to the existing conditions.

The proposed activity: Modernization of Repository Facilities for the West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey is categorically excluded from the need for further environmental review under NEPA. Any changes to the above project will require additional NEPA review.

Joe Barger
NIST NEPA Coordinator

12/16/2024

Date

Robert C. Vaughn
NIST Chief Facilities Management Officer

Date