



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, Maryland 20899

October 12, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

From: Mark Liao
NEPA Coordinator
National Institute of Standards and Technology

Subject: Categorical Exclusion

Project: JILA Modernization Planning and Design

Location: University of Colorado Boulder
2055 Regent Drive
Boulder, Colorado

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and associated implementing regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508) require that all major federal actions be reviewed with respect to their environmental consequences. The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has selected the project: JILA Modernization Planning and Design for a federal funding grant. Consequently, NEPA and the associated implementing regulations apply to this project.

This memorandum summarizes NIST's environmental review of this project and the determination that this project is categorically excluded from further environmental review under NEPA.

Description of the Action

This project is focused on the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems at the existing JILA building. Approximately 75 percent of this effort will be focused on planning and design to develop plans to address the aging HVAC mechanical systems serving the facility. The remaining 25 percent of funding may be used to replace critical mechanical components that are

deemed failing or beyond useful life within the HVAC system. The design team make up for this effort will be predominantly mechanical engineers.

This project will perform further assessments and design work to develop specific plans to address the preliminary actions necessary to replace JILA's antiquated HVAC system and help reduce the potential of a disaster level event by identifying deficiencies and upgrades needed to optimize research facilities and infrastructure investments. The existing JILA building is composed of four wings. This project will impact the JILA B wing, which houses research labs and the JILA Instrument Shop. The B-wing has three floors and a fully enclosed mezzanine for mechanical equipment. Square footage for the wing is 40,509 sf.

Impacts of the Action and Extraordinary Circumstances

NIST has determined that no significant environmental impacts are expected from the interior renovations planned, and the equipment purchases, installation, and operation.

The project has been reviewed for compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act and finds that no historic properties are affected. Any work involving replacement of components will be on the existing building. No changes to the exterior elements of the building will be made. This includes no exhaust or intake devices, generators, and roof top units being replaced that will have a greater physical dimension than that of the preexisting component or equipment.

All work including design, testing, and replacement will include a survey in an effort to adequately identify and appropriately address asbestos and lead based paint concerns that may exist in the building. The redesign and replacement of aged equipment may improve energy efficiency. The JILA building is not located in a flood plain.

In accordance with Executive Order 12898, this action is not anticipated to have any disproportional impacts to minority or low-income groups.

Categorical Exclusion

The activities associated with this project fall under the following Department of Commerce Categorical Exclusions and Department of Energy Categorical Exclusions adopted by NIST:

A1 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, and

A-7 Acquisition, installation, operation, and removal of communications systems, data processing equipment, and similar electronic equipment.

B1.31 Installation or Relocation of Machinery and Equipment

Since this grant will only fund design and equipment replacement, the project meets the conditions specified in categorical exclusions A-1, A-7, and B1.31.

The proposed project, JILA Modernization Planning and Design is categorically excluded from the need for further environmental review under NEPA. Any changes to the above project will require additional NEPA review.

Mark Liao
NIST NEPA Coordinator

Date

R.C. Vaughn
NIST Chief Facilities Management Officer

Date