

State of Wisconsin
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
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Tony Evers, Governor
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September 14, 2023

Michael J. Queensland, Senate Chief Clerk
Wisconsin State Capitol, B20 (SE)
Madison, WI 53707
Michael.Queensland@legis.wisconsin.gov

Edward A. Blazel, Assembly Chief Clerk
17 W. Main Street, Room 401
Madison, WI 53703
Ted.Blazel@legis.wisconsin.gov

Dear Messrs. Queensland and Blazel:

The Department of Natural Resources is pleased to provide you with a copy of our annual Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) report. In fulfillment of Section 1.11 (2) (j) of the state statutes, this document provides information on the WEPA-compliance activities completed by the Department in fiscal year 2023.

Questions about this report can be directed to me at AdamC.Mednick@Wisconsin.gov.

Sincerely,



Adam C. Mednick, PhD, AICP
Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act Coordinator

ACM/acm
enclosures

cc: Erin A. Gillitzer, Assistant Senate Chief Clerk
Calvin Boldebuck – AD/8
Maggie Hutter – AD/8
Ann Kipper – AD/8
Paul Neumann – MB/8
Greg Pils – EA/7
Dreux Watermolen – EA/7

**ANNUAL REPORT OF WEPA-COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES
WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
FY 2023**

September 14, 2023

Overview of WEPA and the Department's WEPA-Compliance Procedures

Signed into law in 1972, the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA) requires state agencies to analyze, consider, and disclose the anticipated environmental and socioeconomic effects of certain agency actions, along with reasonable alternatives to those actions. The Department's WEPA-compliance procedures are established in Chapter NR 150 of the Wisconsin Administrative Code.

Some Department actions, like the permitting of metallic mines and licensing of certain new hazardous waste facilities, require the preparation of an environmental impact statement (EIS), following the procedures set forth in sec. NR 150.30, Wis. Adm. Code. The Department may also determine that an EIS is required for a proposed project, under s. NR 150.20(4)(b).

In most cases, Department compliance with WEPA is achieved through the Department's programmatic procedures for those actions listed as "integrated analysis actions" under s. NR 150.20(2)(a). As defined under s. NR 150.03(12m):

"Integrated analysis action" means a department action for which department programmatic procedures provide for public disclosure and include an environmental analysis that provides sufficient information to establish that an environmental impact statement is not required.

An additional class of Department actions, called "prior compliance actions," are WEPA-compliant because one or more environmental analysis documents already exist for prior actions that were similar in kind, scale, and environmental setting (s. NR 150.20(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code).

The Department also cooperates with other state and federal agencies in the preparation of environmental analysis documents, under s. NR 150.40(2). This includes the joint preparation of EISs and "environmental assessments" (EAs).

Lastly, the Department conducts "strategic analyses" of broader natural resource issues and policies, following the procedures set forth in s. NR 150.10. The purpose of a strategic analysis is to inform decision-makers and the public about alternative courses of action and the anticipated environmental and socioeconomic effects of those alternatives.

Department WEPA-Compliance Activities Completed in FY 2023

The Department made WEPA-compliance determinations for all actions classified as integrated analysis actions and prior compliance actions, respectively, under s. NR 150.20(2)(a) and s. NR 150.20(3)(a), Wis. Adm. Code.

The Department cooperated with other state and federal agencies, under s. NR 150.40(2), on the completion of environmental analysis documents for thirteen projects as listed below.

The Department cooperated with the Public Service Commission (PSC) on the completion of nine environmental assessments (EAs), for the following projects:

- City of Bloomer – project to replace lead jointed water main and services in the City of Bloomer, Chippewa County.
- American Transmission Company – project to rebuild and expand existing Granville Substation in the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee County.
- Manitowoc Public Utilities – project to construct a 13.2 kV distribution express line and 4 MW Emergency Stationary RICE standby generator resiliency project in the City of Manitowoc, Manitowoc County.
- Portage Solar – project to construct a 250 MW solar electric generation facility in the towns of Grant and Plover, Portage County, Wisconsin
- Northern Prairie Solar – project to construct a 101MW solar electric generation facility in the town of Cylon, St. Croix County, Wisconsin
- Saratoga Solar – project to construct a 150MW solar electric generation facility in the town of Saratoga, Wood County, Wisconsin
- High Noon Solar Energy – project to construct a 300MW solar electric generation facility, a 1.9-mile 345kV generator transmission tie-line, and a 165MW Battery Energy Storage System in the Towns of Leeds, Lowville, Arlington, and Hampden, Columbia County, Wisconsin
- Elk Creek PV1 – project to construct a 324MW solar electric generation facility and a 76.6 Battery Energy Storage System in the Town of Spring Brook, Dunn County, Wisconsin
- Ursa Solar – project to construct a 200MW solar electric generation facility and a 50MW Battery Energy Storage System in the Towns of Courtland and Springvale, Columbia County, Wisconsin

The Department cooperated with the PSC on the completion of three Supplemental EAs, for the following projects:

- Apple River Solar – project to construction and operate a 100MW Battery Energy Storage System at the previously approved Apple River Solar project in the towns of Clayton, Beaver, Apple River, and Lincoln, Polk County.
- Saratoga Solar – project to construct and operate a 75MW Battery Energy Storage System at the previously approved Wood County Solar project in the town of Saratoga, Wood County.

- Grant County Solar – project to construct and operate a 200MW Battery Energy Storage System at the previously approved Grant County Solar project in the town of Potosi, Grant County.

The Department cooperated with the National Park Service on the completion of an EA for the following project:

- Ice Age National Scenic Trail – Corridor Plan for Marquette County, Wisconsin.