

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Interior Region 8: Lower Colorado Basin  
Phoenix Area Office

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
AND  
DECISION RECORD**

Q280 - Fria Grid Battery Energy Storage System  
Maricopa County, Arizona

Approved: SEAN HEATH Digitally signed by SEAN HEATH  
Date: 2025.09.03 09:33:31 -07'00' Date: 9/3/25

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FONSI No.: PXAO-25-04

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## Introduction

The United States (U.S.) Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation, Interior Region 8: Lower Colorado Basin (Reclamation), has prepared a final Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes the potential environmental impacts of Fria Grid, LLC's (Proponent) proposed interconnection of the Fria Grid Battery Energy Storage System Project (Project) to the Navajo Southern Transmission System (NSTS) at the Westwing Substation operated by Arizona Public Service Company (APS). Under the proposed action, the Proponent would interconnect up to 300 megawatts (MW) of energy storage capacity into the 230-kilovolt (kV) bus of the APS Westwing Substation. The generation point of interconnection would be located on an undeveloped tract of private land adjacent to the APS Westwing Substation located approximately 1 mile south of the City of Peoria in unincorporated Maricopa County, Arizona.

As owner of a share of the NSTS, Reclamation's purpose is to consider and, if appropriate, approve the Proponent's application to interconnect the Project to the NSTS at the Westwing Substation. The need for Reclamation's review and approval of the Large Generation Interconnection Agreement (LGIA) request is based on the partial ownership of the NSTS by the federal government. The Navajo Generating Station and its associated transmission lines were authorized by the 1968 Colorado River Basin Project Act (Public Law [Pub. L.] 90-537, 82 Statute 885), and Reclamation manages the federal government's interests. Reclamation, along with the other owners, must approve the proposed interconnection into the NSTS.

Additional information is provided in the final EA, which is incorporated by reference.

## Public Involvement

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act's (Pub. L. 91-190; 42 United States Code §§ 4321 et seq.; NEPA) purpose and Reclamation's regulations and policy, Reclamation solicited input from the public on the proposed action to assist in identifying key issues and defining the scope of the EA. A public notice soliciting comments was sent to interested parties on September 9, 2024, including neighboring property owners; Native American Tribes; local, state, and federal agencies; and non-governmental organizations. No comments were received during the scoping period.

On June 10, 2025, Reclamation published the draft EA for a 30-day public review and comment period. A Notice of Availability was sent to interested parties (including neighboring property owners within 0.25 miles of the Project); Native American tribes; local, state, and federal agencies; and non-governmental organizations contacted during the public scoping process. Information was also made available on the Reclamation website. Three comment letters were received resulting in minor, editorial changes to the final EA.

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## The Proposed Action

Under the proposed action, Reclamation would approve the LGIA for the interconnection of the Project to a 230-kV bus inside the APS Westwing Substation operated by APS via a transmission line, with both underground and overhead segments. The proposed action considers the associated interconnection facilities, which include a generation intertie line to the APS Westwing Substation, transmission towers, project substation, BESS facilities, stormwater features, and site access.

Best management practices (BMPs) incorporated as part of the proposed action are listed in Table 4 of the final EA and implementation of BMPs would be required.

## Summary of Impacts

Reclamation's analysis in the final EA determined that there would be limited impacts resulting from its proposed action. The following issues were addressed in the final EA and have been taken into consideration in Reclamation's determination of whether a Finding of No Significant Impact is appropriate, or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be prepared:

- 1) **Air Quality** – The proposed action would result in minor, localized short-term adverse effects during construction and decommissioning and negligible, long-term adverse effects during operations. All construction pollutant emissions are below the General Conformity de minimis thresholds and total emissions of each criteria pollutant are each calculated to be less than 1 percent of the total Maricopa County emission inventory. The small amounts of criteria pollutants that would be generated by the proposed action would not be expected to cause a detectable increase in the ambient concentrations of these pollutants or cause a trend toward nonattainment and are not anticipated to affect local or regional long-term air quality.
- 2) **Native Vegetation and Noxious Weeds** – The proposed action would result in minor, short-term adverse effects during construction and decommissioning and negligible, long-term adverse effects during operations. This includes temporary impacts to 7.3 acres and permanent impacts to 12.7 acres of Sonoran desertscrub vegetation, which is locally and regionally abundant. BMPs would be implemented during construction to minimize the spread of noxious weeds.
- 3) **Cultural Resources** – There would be no adverse effect to historic properties.
- 4) **General Wildlife and Migratory Birds** – The proposed action would have minor, adverse, short-term adverse effects to general wildlife and migratory birds during construction and decommissioning. Adverse long-term effects during operations would be negligible. During construction and decommissioning activities, up to 7.3 acres of habitat would be temporarily affected and 12.7 acres of habitat would be permanently removed during the 30-year operations period. Wildlife could be displaced by increased noise and human presence and could be injured or killed by vehicles and equipment operating in the project area. The

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potential for these impacts would be minimized through implementation of BMPs. Migratory bird collision with, or electrocution by, the collector lines and intertie lines would be minimized by following Avian Power Line Interaction Committee guidance.

- 5) Public Health and Safety – The Proposed Action would have negligible, short-term impacts to public health and safety during construction and decommissioning. Impacts during operation would also be negligible, but long-term. However, the implementation of safety plans and BMPs, proposed design, and compliance with appropriate standards and codes would ensure that impacts to public health and safety from project equipment and materials would be reduced.

The following resource issues were evaluated and determined to be either not affected or minimally affected with implementation of BMPs and were therefore not analyzed in further detail in the final EA: Floodplains and flood zones, grazing, Indian trust assets, land use, noise, recreation, special-status species, socioeconomics, soils and geology, wild and scenic rivers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jurisdictional waters (including wetlands), visual resources (aesthetics and scenery), and water quantity and quality. The resources eliminated and the rationale for elimination are presented in Table 3 of the final EA.

## **Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record**

Based upon the analysis presented in the final EA, Reclamation has determined that the proposed action would not have a significant effect on the human environment therefore, an EIS is not warranted. Reclamation certifies that it has considered the requirements of NEPA and 516 Department Manual 1, all relevant information raised in the NEPA process, and that the NEPA process has concluded. Given this information, Reclamation has made the decision to implement the proposed action described in Chapter 2 of the final EA.