

## **Attachment 23A**

### **Explanatory Note for National Science Foundation (NSF) Report May 3, 2010**

As of March 31, 2010, NSF has made or obligated a total of 4,878 awards funded under Division A of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA).

The NSF spreadsheet lists all three of the programs for which NSF received ARRA funding. These programs are: (1) Research & Related Activities (R&RA); (2) Major Research Equipment & Facilities Construction (MREFC); and (3) Education & Human Resources (E&HR). Activities for which NEPA reviews have been completed are listed on page 2 of the spreadsheet; funding for these have either been obligated or funded with ARRA funds (see page 1).

Eleven proposals have not yet been obligated or awarded, as they are awaiting completion of NSF's NEPA compliance. As explained below, one pending Environmental Assessment, initiated since the last reporting period, will analyze the impacts associated with a group of 10 proposals within the Academic Research Infrastructure Program (page 2, row 8 of the NSF spreadsheet), and another pending Environmental Assessment will analyze the impacts associated with one Major Research Instrumentation Program proposal (page 2, row 9).

Listed on page 2 of the spreadsheet are four pending EAs for activities being considered for funding with ARRA funds. Two of the pending EAs are being prepared for activities which, if approved, would be funded through the MREFC account. One of the pending EAs is a site-specific EA being prepared for the Oceans Observatory Initiative (OOI) (see row 3 of page 2; note, a programmatic EA for the OOI was completed on February 4, 2009). The other pending EA relates to the Advanced Technology Solar Telescope (ATST; see row 5 of page 2). As stated in our last report, a Record of Decision was issued for the ATST on December 3, 2009, following a FEIS that was completed on July 31, 2009. Since the issuance of the ROD, however, slight changes to the project have occurred, including a mitigation fencing project to protect endangered species. Accordingly, preparation of an EA is currently in the early stages of development to address these changes.

The spreadsheet also lists the remaining awards that have been made with ARRA funds through the Research & Related Activities and Education & Human Resources accounts. These awards (4,799 R&RA awards and 76 E&HR awards) are general research awards that support individual scientific research and, as such, are considered categorically excluded activities pursuant to NSF's regulations implementing NEPA. Of the R&RA awards, 163 were funded during this reporting period and are recorded as categorically excluded on page 2 of the spreadsheet (row 10).

Benefits:

The NEPA process for the ATST (see page 2, row 4 of the NSF spreadsheet) was very beneficial. As a result of the NEPA process—during which NSF prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and Final Environmental Impact Statement, and completed NSF’s compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA—NSF became aware of concerns about the ATST’s potential impacts on cultural resources (among other resources). In response to those concerns, NSF agreed to implement many forms of mitigation, including the formation of the ATST Native Hawaiian Working Group, a novel approach designed to help ensure continued consultation as part of the NEPA and Section 106 consultation and throughout the construction and operation phases of the ATST. In addition, the NEPA process led to a \$20 million mitigation measure designed to address the intersection between Native Hawaiian traditional cultural practices and science through an educational initiative with the University of Hawaii’s Maui College.

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