



# U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: (DE-AR0000021) RTI International - Catalytic Bio-crude Production in a Novel, Short Residence Time Reactor

Program or Field Office: Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy

Location(s) (City/County/State): Research Triangle Park, NC

Proposed Action Description:

RTI proposed to develop a bench-scale pyrolysis unit for catalytic conversion of biomass to biocrude under DE-AR0000021. ARPA-E determined that this project was categorically excluded from further NEPA review pursuant to Categorical Exclusion B3.6. RTI now proposes to have ARPA-E refine its project milestones for this award to increase the size of the pyrolysis unit. In addition, RTI now proposes to locate and operate the pyrolysis unit in its Energy Technology Development Facility (ETDF), along with a small-scale (250-mL, dual-bed) hydrolysis unit that is being funded under an award from DOE's Bioenergy Technologies Office (BTO), DE-EE0005758, and a small-scale (150 mL) carbon capture unit that is being funded under a separate ARPA-E award, DE-AR0000093. ARPA-E determined that the proposed work under DE-AR0000093 was categorically excluded from further NEPA review pursuant to Categorical Exclusion B3.6, and BTO determined that the proposed work under DE-EE0005758 was categorically excluded from further NEPA review pursuant to Categorical Exclusions A9 and B3.6

Given the relationship between the operation of the pyrolysis unit and the hydroprocessing unit, and the co-location of all three units in the ETDF, this review considered the potential impacts from the operation of all three units, including their cumulative impacts.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B3.6 - Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects

B5.15 - Small-scale renewable energy research and development and pilot projects

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Date Determined: 04/26/2013