U.S. Department of Energy
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: Building Reliable Electronics to Achieve Kilovolt Effective Ratings Safely (BREAKERS) Program (FOA No. DE-FOA-0001979)

Program or Field Office: Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy (ARPA-E)

Location(s) (City/County/State): AR, CA, CT, FL, GA, IL, KY, OH, PA, MI, MS, NC, NJ, NM, NY, TN, VA, WI

Proposed Action Description:

FIRST AMENDED DETERMINATION: (See attached Original Programmatic Determination, dated May 17, 2019)
The BREAKERS Program seeks to fund the development of novel technologies for medium voltage direct current (MVDC) circuit breakers If successful, innovations in MVDC circuit breakers developed in the BREAKERS Program could enable significant efficiency improvements in the United States; transforming how electricity is delivered and managed across the entire power grid, in transportation, and other valuable parts of the economy.

The BREAKERS Program is composed of 8 small-scale research and development projects that will be conducted by universities, non-profit entities, for-profit entities, and federal laboratories. This Amended Determination adds three (3) projects (listed in Attachment A to this Amended Determination) to the Programmatic Determination. These 3 projects (Sandia National Laboratories, Eaton Corporation-1521, and Georgia Institute of Technology) are covered by and fit within the class of actions identified under the DOE Categorical Exclusions identified below and do not involve any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the projects. This assessment was based on a review of the proposed scope of work and the potential environmental impact of the projects. All project tasks will be conducted in accordance with established safety and materials/waste management protocols and pursuant to applicable Federal, State, and Local regulatory requirements. No modifications will be made to the existing facilities to accommodate the proposed work.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

A9 - Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination

B3.6 - Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, 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: 08/07/2019

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