



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

Submit by Email

Proposed Action Title: Agrivida - Conditionally Activated Enzymes Expressed in Cellulosic Energy Crops

Program or Field Office: Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy

Location(s) (City/County/State): Medford, MA; Storrs, CT

Proposed Action Description:

This award is a continuation and expansion of research performed by Agrivida under DE-AR0000042 to engineer switchgrass that can be readily converted into soluble sugars for biofuels production. Funding will support efforts to develop a new strain of switchgrass by combining its intein-modified enzyme and greenstarch technologies and produce additional biomass from their transgenic strains of switchgrass.

Proposed work will consist of: (1) development of five new gene stacks of switchgrass by engineering intein-modified enzymes and greenstarch genes in switchgrass; (2) development of micropropagation and/or plant tissue culture methods capable of bulking up switchgrass lines; (3) production and growth of the new switchgrass strain within an enclosed greenhouse facility; and (4) application for a USDA-APHIS release permit for the developed switchgrass. Project work funded by ARPA-E does not involve the release of recombinant DNA or engineered plant materials into the environment.

Development and engineering of the switchgrass will take place at Agrivida's Biosafety Level I containment laboratory facility in Medford, MA. Production and growth of the developed switchgrass will take place at Agrivida's enclosed greenhouse facilities in Storrs, CT.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

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: 09/19/2012