



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Submit by E-mail

Proposed Action Title: Tulane University - Hybrid Solar Converter with Integrated Thermal Storage

Program or Field Office: Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy

Location(s) (City/County/State): San Francisco, CA; New Orleans, LA; Sylmar, CA; and San Diego, CA

Proposed Action Description:

Funding will support development and testing of an integrated solar system that can: (1) select the optimum wavelengths from sunlight to produce electricity via high-efficiency solar cells, and (2) use all remaining wavelengths to heat molten salt reserves that can be cost-effectively stored and utilized to generate dispatchable electricity. If successful, an integrated solar system that utilizes the full solar spectrum could provide a disruptive solar conversion and storage technology option with potential to reduce the cost of solar energy generation and increase penetration of solar energy generation technologies in the United States.

Work may begin only at Tulane University's laboratory facilities in New Orleans, LA; Boeing - Spectrolab Inc.'s laboratory facilities in Sylmar, CA; Otherlab's laboratory facilities in San Francisco, CA; and the University of California, San Diego's and San Diego State University's laboratory facilities in San Diego, CA. An outdoor work location may be added to this project in the future to carry out testing activities. Upon selection of the additional work location, the ARPA-E NEPA Compliance Officer will perform a review of all activities to be carried out at the proposed site and issue a categorical exclusion, if appropriate. No work may begin at any outdoor location without prior written authorization from the ARPA-E NEPA Compliance Officer.

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: 04/12/2016