



Application of DOE NEPA Procedure: Categorical Exclusions A1 and A9, Applicable to General Agency Actions (10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix A) and Categorical Exclusion B3.6, Applicable to Specific Agency Actions (10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B).

Rationale: The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) proposes to provide financial assistance to *Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute* for scientific research related to the Predictive Science Strategic Academic Alliances Program II (PSAAP) in the topical area of thermal radiation transport in the high energy density regime. The financial assistance would be given to the *University* over a 54-week period for equipment, supplies and materials, and subawards; for travel, fringe and indirects, tuition, salaries to graduate, and postdoctoral students, support staff (researchers, engineers, technicians, clerical) and senior/key person(s) and other university collaborators. The Principle Investigator is Yaron Danon. These individuals would experimental work to improve the nuclear data for the fission process, (n,p), (n,gamma) reactions, and fast neutron inelastic scattering that are relevant to stockpile stewardship. The overall objective is to improve understanding of nuclear data for specific cases where experimental work is required in order to bridge knowledge gaps and reduce uncertainties. Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) plans to use previously developed (with SSAA support) methods, and develop new methods for nuclear data measurements that are of interest to stockpile stewardship applications. These include: nuclear data for better understanding of the fission process, measurement of small cross section or small (radioactive) samples that are applicable to radiochemistry, and improvement of inelastic scattering cross sections which are essential for criticality and shielding applications DOE/NNSA laboratories are also collaborating Institutions. A more in depth discussion on the objectives and activities can be found in the technical proposal submitted by the applicant. Non-proprietary information within this document is hereby incorporated by reference.

Categorical Exclusions A1 and A9 apply in cases of:

- (A1) Routine actions necessary to support the normal conduct of DOE business limited to administrative, financial, and personnel actions.
- (A9) Information gathering, data analysis, modeling, simulation, applied mathematics, information dissemination

Categorical Exclusion B3.6 applies in cases of:

-operation/ decommissioning of facilities for bench-scale research, conventional laboratory operations, small-scale research and development and pilot projects

This proposal fits within the parameters of Categorical Exclusions A1, A9, & B3.6.

Based upon the information from the environmental questionnaire, the technical proposal, my knowledge, this proposal does not present any extraordinary circumstances of a unique or uncertain nature. It is not connected to other actions with potentially or cumulatively significant impacts.¹

Supported by the information provided by the applicant and my understanding of these activities, the proposal would not²:

1. threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, including requirements of DOE and/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; or
4. adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources (including but not limited to those listed in paragraph B.(4)); or
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 10CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

Therefore, this proposal meets the conditions that are the Integral Elements of the Class of Actions and application of Categorical Exclusions A1, A9, & B3.6 are appropriate.

If changes are made to the scope of actions as described in the proposals, or if the scope is expanded to encompass other actions, NEPA requirements for the action will need to be reassessed at that time.

**John E.
Weckerle**

Digitally signed by John E. Weckerle
DN: c=us, o=u.s. government,
ou=department of energy,
ou=Energy IT Services, ou=DOE
Common Operating Environment,
ou=People, cn=John E. Weckerle
Date: 2015.08.25 15:24:38 -06'00'

John Weckerle
NEPA Compliance Officer
NNSA Office of General Council

¹ See 10 CFR § 1021.410(b)(2)and(3)for full text of regulation.

² See 10 CFR Part 1021 Subpart D Appendix B (B(1)through(5)).