



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Submit by E-mail

Proposed Action Title: Penn State University - Wide-angle Microtracking Microcell CPV

Program or Field Office: Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy

Location(s) (City/County/State): University Park, PA; Urbana-Champaign, IL; Durham, NC

Proposed Action Description:

Funding will support the project team's small-scale, research and development activities to create a commercially viable high-efficiency rooftop concentrating photovoltaic (CPV) technology and demonstrate its feasibility with a small-scale prototype demonstration module. Specifically, the project team will (1) design, fabricate, and test lenslet-based concentrator optics; (2) develop and test high-efficiency microscale multijunction photovoltaic cells; (3) design, fabricate, and test mechanical tracking actuation mechanisms and control algorithms; and (4) fabricate and scale-up microcell fabrication and transfer printing for prototype module demonstration. If successful, the technology will deliver 50% more energy over the course of a sunny day than state-of-the-art silicon solar panels and thus hold the potential to dramatically reduce the cost of rooftop solar power by leveraging balance of system and soft costs.

Project activities will be conducted at existing facilities that are designed for the applicable activities, and will be conducted in accordance with applicable Federal, State, and local safety and environmental requirements. Outdoor testing will take place in a previously developed area at project team member Semprius facilities in Durham, NC. Testing will be performed in accordance with applicable local land use requirements in the proposed project area and will incorporate appropriate control technologies and best management practices.

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: 11/13/2015