

PMC-ND  
 (1.08.09.13)

**U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY  
 OFFICE OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND RENEWABLE ENERGY  
 NEPA DETERMINATION**



**RECIPIENT:**Picasolar Inc.

**STATE:** AR

**PROJECT TITLE :** One-Step Super Emitters for High Efficiency Solar Cells

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
FOA0000923	DE-EE0006691	GFO-0006691-001	

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have made the following determination:

**CX, EA, EIS APPENDIX AND NUMBER:**

Description:

- A9 Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination** Information gathering (including, but not limited to, literature surveys, inventories, site visits, and audits), data analysis (including, but not limited to, computer modeling), document preparation (including, but not limited to, conceptual design, feasibility studies, and analytical energy supply and demand studies), and information dissemination (including, but not limited to, document publication and distribution, and classroom training and informational programs), but not including site characterization or environmental monitoring. (See also B3.1 of appendix B to this subpart.)
- B3.6 Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects** Siting, construction, modification, operation, and decommissioning of facilities for smallscale research and development projects; conventional laboratory operations (such as preparation of chemical standards and sample analysis); and small-scale pilot projects (generally less than 2 years) frequently conducted to verify a concept before demonstration actions, provided that construction or modification would be within or contiguous to a previously disturbed or developed area (where active utilities and currently used roads are readily accessible). Not included in this category are demonstration actions, meaning actions that are undertaken at a scale to show whether a technology would be viable on a larger scale and suitable for commercial deployment.

**Rationale for determination:**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) is proposing to provide federal funding to PicaSolar, Inc. in order to achieve mini-module status with full-sized solar cells that have been treated with hydrogen super emitter (HSE) technology.

PicaSolar, Inc. proposes to design, build and test an HSE chamber capable of uniformly hydrogenating 156 mm x 156 mm solar cells and utilize atomic hydrogen to modify the doping profile of the cells. Fabrication, hydrogenation and testing activities would take place at two locations: the Research Park at the University of Arkansas (U of A) and the Center for Excellence in Photovoltaics at Georgia Tech (GT). All research and development activities would take place in existing facilities designed for this type of research; therefore, no modifications or new permits, additional licenses and/or authorizations would be necessary.

Hazardous materials to be used in this project would be limited to hydrofluoric acid, sulfuric acid and silane gas. All such handling would occur within state of the art facilities at institutions who have dedicated hazardous material disposal practices. Furthermore, all employees have been trained in the proper use, storage, handling, and disposal of these materials, and proper safety equipment is provided. Any excess/contaminated materials would be maintained in specialized holding tanks until professionally collected. The silane gas would be passed through a Gas Reactor Column to ensure that it is removed from any equipment exhausts. All facilities meet or exceed federal safety and hazardous materials standards and no siting, construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions/facilities would be required.

Based on review of the project information and the above analysis, DOE has determined the proposed project would not have a significant individual or cumulative impact to human health and/or environment. DOE has determined that this project is consistent with actions outlined in DOE categorical exclusions A9 "Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination" and B3.6 "Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects" and is therefore categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination for this award

Insert the following language in the award:

If you intend to make changes to the scope or objective of your project you are required to contact the Project Officer identified in

Block 11 of the Notice of Financial Assistance Award before proceeding. You must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved.

Note to Specialist :

This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.  
Review completed by Rebecca McCord 08/29/2014.

**SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.**

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
NEPA Compliance Officer

**FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION**

Field Office Manager review required

**NCO REQUESTS THE FIELD OFFICE MANAGER REVIEW FOR THE FOLLOWING REASON:**

- Proposed action fits within a categorical exclusion but involves a high profile or controversial issue that warrants Field Office Manager's attention.
- Proposed action falls within an EA or EIS category and therefore requires Field Office Manager's review and determination.

**BASED ON MY REVIEW I CONCUR WITH THE DETERMINATION OF THE NCO :**

Field Office Manager's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Field Office Manager