

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: University of Minnesota

STATE: MN

PROJECT TITLE: Integrated Radio Frequency and Ultrasonics with Conventional Processes for Efficient Water Removal in Pulp and Paper and Other Biomaterial Applications

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002252	DE-EE0009395	GFO-0009395-001	

Based on my review of the information concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (authorized under DOE Policy 451.1), 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 funding to the University of Minnesota (UMN) to design, develop, fabricate, and test an integrated drying process that could be used in pulp and paper and other biomaterials manufacturing processes. A hybrid drying technology would be developed that dries material from the inside out, integrating directed radio frequency (RF) and ultrasonic energy in the conventional conductive and convective drying process. The project would be completed over two Budget Periods (BPs) with a Go/No-Go Decision Point in between each BP. This NEPA review is applicable to both BPs.

All project activities would be coordinated by UMN in St. Paul, MN. At the Savannah River National Laboratory (SRNL) in Aiken, SC, the small-scale ultrasonic module and RF drying apparatus (each approximately 2 inches) would be designed, developed, fabricated, and verified. Basic principles of RF and ultrasonic technologies would be evaluated for drying applications using rewetted sheets of paper samples and evaluating feasibility of the proposed concept. The next phase integrated drying process development activities would be conducted at the laboratories of UMN and the PSC - a Litzler Company (PSC) in Cleveland, OH. Both participants would work on the design, development, and fabrication of the larger RF and ultrasonic modules (approximately 6 inches). PSC would assist with the implementation of drying equipment in UMN labs where preliminary trials would be conducted to evaluate functioning of the integrated hybrid drying unit along with characteristics of dried paper including tensile strength, elasticity, stress-strain behavior, breaking length, burst strength, and optical properties like brightness and opacity. Process engineering modeling and simulation of pulp and paper drying would be conducted at UMN and SRNL. The RAPID Manufacturing Institute in New York, NY and Electric Power Research Institute in Palo Alto, CA would conduct technoeconomic analyses and lifecycle assessments to illustrate the benefits of the hybrid drying system for commercial paper manufacturing conditions in the United States. No changes in the use, mission, or operation of existing facilities would be required as part of this project and no additional permits would be required in order to conduct any of the work activities.

Project activities would involve the development of the drying experimental set-up. Any risks associated with the handling of equipment would be mitigated through adherence to established health and safety policies and procedures. Protocols would include employee training, the use of personal protective equipment, monitoring, engineering controls, and internal assessments. If new health and safety risks are identified, additional policies and procedures would be implemented as necessary. All waste products would be disposed of by licensed waste management service providers. The University of Minnesota and its project partners would observe all applicable

Federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations.

Any work proposed to be conducted at a federal facility may be subject to additional NEPA review by the cognizant federal official and must meet the applicable health and safety requirements of the facility.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Advanced Manufacturing Office
This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.
Review completed by Shaina Aguilar on 4/27/21.

FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATIONS

The proposed action (or the part of the proposal defined in the Rationale above) 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 proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposed action 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.

The proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:

 Electronically Signed By: Casey Strickland
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 4/29/2021

FIELD OFFICE MANAGER DETERMINATION

- Field Office Manager review not required
- Field Office Manager review required

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

Field Office Manager's Signature:

Field Office Manager

Date: