

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT:Soliculture Inc

STATE: CA

PROJECT TITLE : Reliable and Low-Cost Monolayer Backsheet for cSi Solar Modules

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-EE0001400	DE-EE0007584	GFO-0007584-001	GO7584

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 Soliculture, Inc. to develop a white backsheet for solar photovoltaic (PV) modules with the cost savings of a monolayer backsheet and the reliability profile of a multilayer fluorinated backsheet.

Proposed activities would include the design, development and laboratory testing of polymeric materials. Design and development activities would be completed at a pre-existing, fully licensed and permitted resin manufacturing facility although the specific facility has not yet been identified. In-lab testing would take place at Soliculture’s prototyping research facility in Scotts Valley, CA. The facilities in which these activities would occur were purpose-built for the type of activities being proposed; therefore, no change in the use, mission or operation of existing facilities would arise out of this effort and all applicable permits are already in place.

The proposed project would necessitate the use and handling of a very limited number of industrial solvents. All such handling would occur in-lab and would adhere to established safety protocols such as using proper personal protective equipment. All wastes produced as a result of the proposed project would be non-hazardous in nature and would be disposed of through normal municipal waste streams.

Based on the review of the proposal, DOE has determined the proposal fits within the class of action(s) and the integral elements of 10 CFR 1021 subpart B outlined in the DOE categorical exclusion(s) selected above. DOE has also determined that: (1) there are no extraordinary circumstances (as defined by 10 CFR 1021.410(2)) related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; (2) the proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and (3) the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, related to other proposals with cumulatively significant actions, or an improper interim action. This proposal is 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 the Recipient intends to make changes to the scope or objective of this project, the Recipient is required to contact the Project Officer, identified in Block 15 of the Assistance Agreement before proceeding. The Recipient must receive notification of approval from the DOE Contracting Officer prior to commencing with work beyond that currently approved. If the Recipient moves forward with activities that are not authorized for Federal funding by the DOE Contracting Officer in advance of a final NEPA decision, the Recipient is doing so at risk of not receiving Federal funding and such costs may not be recognized as allowable cost share.

Note to Specialist :

Solar Energy Technology Office
This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.
Review completed by Rebecca McCord 08/18/2016

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Date: 8/18/2016
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