

PMC-ND
(1.08.09.13)

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



RECIPIENT: The Pennsylvania State University

STATE: PA

PROJECT TITLE : Developing A New Polyolefin Precursor for Low-Cost, High-Strength Carbon Fiber

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0001647	DE-EE0008096	GFO-0008096-001	G08096

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 The Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) to develop a new polyolefin precursor, combined with a catalytic amount of B-containing precursor for preparing carbon fiber (CF) with lower cost and higher tensile strength.

The proposed project activities include the design, development, synthesis, spinning and evaluation of new polyolefin polymers with specific structures and properties and B-containing precursors for thermo-transformation to active carbon (BCx) materials. These activities would be completed by Penn State students and postdoctoral researchers in labs on campus in University Park, PA. All research, development and testing activities would take place in existing facilities designed for this type of research; therefore, no new construction, modifications or new permits, additional licenses and/or authorizations would be necessary.

The proposed project would require the use of bench-scale chemicals (solvents, monomers, catalysts, etc.) and chemical reactions, which would be carried out inside the laboratory following the established lab operational practice and waste chemical disposal practices. The research activities in this project shall pose no health and safety hazards to the public or the researchers involved. No siting, construction or expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions/facilities would be required.

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 :

Fuel Cell Technologies Office
This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.
Review completed by Rebecca McCord, 06/27/2017

SIGNATURE OF THIS MEMORANDUM CONSTITUTES A RECORD OF THIS DECISION.

NEPA Compliance Officer Signature:  Casey Strickland  Date: 6/27/2017
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