

PMC-ND

(1.08.09.13)

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

**RECIPIENT:** University of Southern California**STATE:** CA

**PROJECT TITLE:** Hydrogen Release from Concentrated Media with Reusable Catalysts

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0002022	DE-EE0008825	GFO-0008825-001	GO8825

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 federal funding to the University of Southern California (USC) for qualifying catalytic systems for hydrogen generation and showing their flexibility among hydrogen carriers so that storage systems can adapt to feedstock availability and price in any given geography, economy, or time. Project work would occur at the Loker Hydrocarbon Research Institute located at USC in Los Angeles, CA and at Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL). Additionally, collaboration is expected to occur with the Hydrogen Materials – Advanced Research Consortium (HyMARC). 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. The project would be completed over three Budget Periods (BPs), with a Go/No-Go Decision Point in between each BP.

Each BP would include activities related to construction and modification of a laboratory scale demonstration reactor, development of formic acid/methanol blended fuels, and computational studies with each subsequent BP building on previous BPs work. All activities would occur in existing laboratories designed for this type of work that would utilize standard laboratory equipment; therefore no modifications, new permits, additional licenses and/or authorizations would be necessary. No ground disturbing activities, no changes in the operation of existing facilities, and no installation of equipment outdoors would occur for project activities. The project would be evolving hydrogen gas on an increasing scale and would involve the use and handling of various hazardous materials that are routine in synthetic chemistry. All handling of these materials would occur in laboratories equipped with engineering controls such as fume hoods that have appropriate safety, training, and inspection protocols in place. All hazardous and non-hazardous materials would be managed in accordance with Federal, state, and local environmental regulations. All waste generated would be properly disposed of by the respective teams at both USC and LANL. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed activities of the project.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Fuel Cell Technologies Office

This NEPA determination does not require a tailored NEPA provision.

#### 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: \_\_\_\_\_



Casey Strickland

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 12/16/2019

#### 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: \_\_\_\_\_