U.S. Department of Energy
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign -- Midwest Bioenergy Crop Landscape Laboratory (MBC-Lab): Capturing Spatio-temporal and Managerial Variations to Provide a Gold Standard Data and Platform for Validating Field-level Emission from Bioenergy Crops

Program or Field Office: Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy

Location(s) (City/County/State): Champaign, IL; Urbana, IL

Proposed Action Description:

Funding will support the project team's small-scale research and development activities to establish high quality datasets for biofuel feedstock emission monitoring at three commercial corn/soybean sites. Specifically, the project team will (1) conduct sensor installation and operation, (2) develop an integrated data set of all sensor modalities from the commercial field site, (3) demonstrate functioning Eddy Covariance (EC) towers at all field sites, and (4) establish a model determining the carbon intensity of the crops produced. If successful, the project team will enable technology development for managing bioenergy crops, improving yield and reducing over-fertilization, as well as, develop and validate technologies such as remote sensors and decision support tools for smart farms.

Project activities will be conducted at an existing facility at University of Illinois (Urbana, IL & Champaign, IL) designed for the applicable activities. Project tasks will be conducted in accordance with established safety and materials/waste management protocols and pursuant to applicable Federal, State, and local regulatory requirements. No modifications will be made to existing facilities to accommodate the proposed work. Prime Recipient, UIUC, has obtained all necessary permits and authorizations for the use of airplanes at applicable locations and from land owners for the planned construction.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

A9 - Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination

B3.6 - Small-scale research and development, laboratory operations, and pilot projects

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

☑ The proposal 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 proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

☑ The proposal 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.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Geoffrey Goode Digitally signed by Geoffrey Goode Date: 2020.04.03 06:25:27 -04'00' Date Determined:

(This form will be locked for editing upon signature)