



U.S. Department of Energy

Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Submit by E-mail

Proposed Action Title: Quidnet Energy Inc. -- Catalyzing Commercialization of Geomechanical Pumped Storage

Program or Field Office: Advanced Research Projects Agency - Energy

Location(s) (City/County/State): Houston, Texas

Proposed Action Description:

Funding will support the project team's research and development of their Geomechanical Pumped Storage (GPS) methodology that uses the Earth as a mechanical battery by storing energy as pressurized water in a storage lens between layers of rock in the subsurface, which the pressurized water returns to the surface and powers an energy generating turbine, producing electricity. Specifically, the project team will (1) identify suitable geologic and hydrological locations for field sites, (2) prepare sites for project testing, including installing roads, clearing well location, well drilling, equipment installation, and constructing water holding ponds, (3) conduct GPS test operations, (4) analyze results from field test operations, and (5) verify optimal locations for GPS based on geologic properties. If successful, this project will result in the development of GPS technology for low-to no greenhouse gas emission generated electricity.

Project activities will be conducted at existing facilities at Quidnet Energy Deployment LLC and Quidnet Energy Inc. (Houston, TX) designed for the applicable activities. Field site locations to be determined. 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. Quidnet Energy Inc. has not obtained all necessary permits and approvals applicable to their proposed actions, including any necessary for field testing, and is prohibited from commencing project work until those permits are obtained. Per the terms of the award, a permits certification and, if necessary, an amended NEPA Determination, are required prior to the conduct of applicable project work.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

A9 - Information gathering, analysis, and dissemination

B3.1 - Site characterization and environmental monitoring

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:

Approved via email

Date Determined: 02/14/2023

(This form will be locked for editing upon signature)