

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



RECIPIENT: Washington University in St. Louis

STATE: MO

PROJECT TITLE: Ca-Ce-Ti-Mn-O-Based Perovskites for Two-Step Solar Thermochemical Hydrogen Production Cycles

Funding Opportunity Announcement Number	Procurement Instrument Number	NEPA Control Number	CID Number
DE-FOA-0002792 0001	DE-EEDE-EE0010733	GFO-0010733-001	

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 funding to Washington University in St. Louis (WUSTL) to design, engineer, and test high-efficiency, low-cost two-step solar thermochemical hydrogen (STCH) production with Ca-Ce-Ti-Mn (CCTM) oxide perovskites. The award aims to investigate CCTM-based perovskites materials that can effectively produce hydrogen from thermochemical processes.

Award activities would include data analysis, computer modeling, preliminary engineering/design, and laboratory research. Additional award activities would include the completion of a techno-economic analysis (TEA). The award would be iterative in nature and focus on the optimization of CCTM composition and STCH conditions. The award would be divided into three phases, each phase would be 12 months in length. The first phase would focus on the creation of a crystal-feature model, identification of the density functional theory (DFT)-enthalpy-optimizing CCTM composition, and creation of a preliminary thermodynamic model. Phase 2 would involve the synthesis and characterization of the CCTM composition, creation of a refined thermodynamic model, and identification of CCTM composition and STCH conditions representing maximum efficiency. Phase 3 efforts would test the optimized CCTM composition and STCH conditions.

WUSTL (St. Louis, MO) would develop computational methods, including DFT modeling and the creation of crystal-feature model, as well as theoretical designs. Arizona State University (ASU; Tempe, AZ) would utilize university laboratory facilities to synthesize and characterize redox-active metal oxides, including thermogravimetric analysis, for hydrogen production. ASU would also perform operational testing of the metal oxides in an electrically heated two cubic foot reactor in the same laboratory facility. Ohio State University (Columbus, OH) would be responsible for system modeling and TEA. Additionally, collaboration is expected to occur with the HydroGEN Energy Materials Network National Laboratory consortium. All facilities are preexisting purpose-built facilities for the type of work to be conducted for this award. Facility modifications would not be required.

Award activities would involve typical hazards associated with the use and handling of hazardous materials, including ceramic powders, organic binders, solvents, and pressurized gases. All such handling would occur in-lab and follow ASU Environmental Health and Safety hazardous material handling and disposal practices. Existing health, safety, and environmental policies and procedures would be followed to mitigate hazards to acceptable levels. Mitigated hazards would pose negligible risks to the public and environment. All activities would comply with existing federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

DOE has considered the scale, duration, and nature of proposed activities to determine potential impacts on resources, including those of an ecological, historical, cultural, and socioeconomic nature. DOE does not anticipate impacts on these resources which would be considered significant or require DOE to consult with other agencies or stakeholders. A diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) plan would be implemented to encourage the inclusion of individuals from underrepresented groups in fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).

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.

NEPA PROVISION

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Technologies Office
NEPA review completed by Corrin MacLuckie, 08/14/2023.

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: 8/14/2023

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: _____