

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



**RECIPIENT:** Carnegie Mellon University

**STATE:** PA

**PROJECT TITLE :** Scaling Hydrogen-Direct Reduced Iron Pathways to Decarbonize Iron and Steelmaking

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0002804	DE-EE0010842	GFO-0010842-001	GO10842

**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 Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) to increase the Technology Readiness Level of the hydrogen-based direct reduction of iron oxide (DRI) process.

Award activities would focus primarily on DRI experiments, simulations, and testing. The types of activities associated with the awards would include testing iron oxide pellets, developing computational fluid dynamics (CFD) models, creating a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion plan to evaluate the potential workforce and impacts on underrepresented or disadvantaged community groups, constructing a DRI reactor and performing materials testing, and carrying out techno-economic analysis (TEA), life cycle assessment (LCA) and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions assessments.

CMU (Pittsburgh, PA) would carry out reduction tests on iron oxide pellets and carry out characterization activities by optical, electron, and x-ray methods. The US Steel Research and Tech Center (Munhall, PA) would perform reduction tests of pellets as well as installing and testing a reactor for DRI conditions. Purdue University Northwest (Hammond, IN) would use CFD models to characterize DRI.

Award work would be performed at pre-existing facilities that are purpose-built to accommodate the type of laboratory work and testing to be conducted for this award.

Award activities would involve handling and use of hazardous materials, including heavy reactors, x-rays, and poisonous and flammable gases. High temperature furnaces would also be used. Existing safety policies and procedures would be followed, including using gas monitors and a gas supply system with an emergency shut-off button. X-ray training would be provided by the Environmental Health and Safety regulations at CMU. All applicable federal, state, and local health, safety, and environmental regulations would be followed.

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.

**NEPA PROVISION**

DOE has made a final NEPA determination.

Notes:

Industrial Efficiency and Decarbonization Office (IEDO)  
NEPA review completed by Alex Colling on 08/21/2023.

**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:  Andrew Montano Date: 8/22/2023  
NEPA Compliance Officer

**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: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Field Office Manager