

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



**RECIPIENT:** University of Virginia

**STATE:** VA

**PROJECT TITLE :** Targeted Extraction of Lithium with Electroactive Particles and Electrodialysis

<b>Funding Opportunity Announcement Number</b>	<b>Procurement Instrument Number</b>	<b>NEPA Control Number</b>	<b>CID Number</b>
DE-FOA-0002823	DE-EE0010885	GFO-0010885-001	GO10885

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 the University of Virginia (UVA) to research the use of a combination of electroactive particles and electromembrane processing to extract and recover lithium from geothermal brine and to understand the technoeconomic and life cycle assessment implications of the process. The process would recover lithium ions as lithium hydroxide (LiOH) but could also be adapted to produce a solid lithium carbonate product.

Award activities would be completed over three Budget Periods (BPs,) with Go/No Go Decision Points between the BPs. This NEPA determination applies to all three BPs.

Proposed project activities by location are:

UVA Geise Laboratory, Charlottesville, VA

- Membrane synthesis, casting, and testing; electrolysis cell design, fabrication, and testing; data analysis, technoeconomic analysis, and life cycle assessment.

UVA Koenig Laboratory, Charlottesville, VA

- Packed bed reactor design, fabrication, and testing; data analysis, technoeconomic analysis, and life cycle assessment.

UVA Colosi Peterson Research Group, Charlottesville, VA

- Technoeconomic analysis and life cycle assessment.

National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), Golden, CO

- Membrane synthesis, casting, and testing; data analysis.

Project activities would involve the use and handling of various hazardous materials, including organic materials and solvents, inorganic particles, and corrosive and/or reactive solutions. All such handling would occur in-lab following proper hazardous material handling and disposal practices. Hazardous materials would be managed in accordance with federal, state, and local environmental regulations. Existing UVA and NREL health and safety policies and procedures would be followed, including employee training, proper protective equipment, engineering controls, monitoring, and internal assessments. Storage, transport, and disposal of geothermal brine would be coordinated with appropriate local authorities and/or environmental health and safety officers at UVA.

All project work would be performed at existing, purpose-built facilities. No modifications to existing facilities, ground disturbing activities, or changes to the use, mission, or operation of existing facilities would be required. No additional permits, licenses, or authorizations would be required. DOE does not anticipate any impacts to resources of concern due to the proposed award activities.

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:

Advanced Materials & Manufacturing Technologies Office (AMMTO)  
NEPA review completed by Melissa Parker, 01/08/24

**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:  \_\_\_\_\_ Date: 1/10/2024  
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