

**Notice of Exemption****Form D**

**To:** Office of Planning and Research  
PO Box 3044  
1400 Tenth Street, Room 113  
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

**From:** California Energy Commission  
1516 Ninth Street, MS-48  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Project Applicant:** West Biofuels LLC

**Project Title:** Production of Pipeline Grade Renewable Natural Gas and Value-Added Chemicals from Forest Biomass Residue

**Project Location – Specific:** 14958 County Road 100B

**Project Location – City:** Woodland 95776      **Project Location – County:** Yolo

**Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project:**

The project will advance the state of cellulosic biomass to renewable gas (RG) technologies by utilize an existing pilot-scale gasification system and data and lessons learned from a bench scale catalytic reactor to design, develop, and demonstrate a whole-system pilot-scale RG process with a scaled-up catalytic reactor and new gas separation process using forest fuels from high hazard zone feedstock. The proposed process will produce a methane-rich RG and mixed-alcohol byproducts, including methanol, ethanol, and n-propanol. The Project Team will produce data from more than 500 hours of operation to validate the technology as a cost effective approach to achieving key technical and economic targets. The project will result in the ratepayer benefit of increased natural gas reliability, lower costs, job creation, air emission reductions, and improved forest management and watershed protection

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** California Energy Commission

**Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project:** West Biofuels LLC

**Exempt Status: (check one)**

- Ministerial Exemption (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(1); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15268);
- Declared Emergency (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(3); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(a));
- Emergency Project (Pub. Resources Code § 21080(b)(4); Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15269(b)(c));
- Categorical Exemption. State type and section number  
Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15301 ; Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, § 15303
- Statutory Exemptions. State code number.
- Common Sense Exemption. (Cal. Code Regs., tit 14, §15061(b)(3))

**Reasons why project is exempt:**

California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301 provides that projects which consist of the operation, repair, maintenance, permitting, leasing, licensing, or minor alteration of existing public or private structures, facilities, mechanical equipment, or topographical features, and which involve negligible or no expansion of an existing or former use, are categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. This project will modify an existing gasification system at an existing biofuel production facility. The existing system is housed indoors at a research facility in Woodland, California and all modifications to the system will take place at the same site. The modifications to the existing system will demonstrate, conversion of forest residue from high fire hazard regions to renewable gas and mixed alcohol by-products. The existing gasifier already

produces clean syngas from woody feedstock at atmospheric pressure. The project will install a gas compressor approximately the size of a power washer, and gas storage and separation equipment approximately the size of a refrigerator. No trenching or new concrete pad is necessary to install this new equipment. The equipment will be modified as needed to deliver renewable gas and other products. For these reasons, this project is categorically exempt under CEQA Guidelines section 15301.

California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15303 provides that projects which consist of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure, are categorically exempt from the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act. The project will install a gas compressor approximately the size of a power washer, and gas storage and separation equipment approximately the size of a refrigerator. No trenching or new concrete pad is necessary to install this new equipment. This minimal construction is well within the size limits listed in the examples given in 14 C.C.R. § 15303 (e.g., it is less than a single-family residence, duplex, and the 2,500 square feet - or 10,000 square feet in urban areas - for a store, motel, office, restaurant, or similar structure). Therefore, the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment and falls under the categorical exemption listed in 14 C.C.R. § 15303

**Lead Agency**

Contact Person: Abolghasem Edalati Area code/Telephone/Ext: 916-327-1499

**If filed by applicant:**

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?  Yes  No

Signature:  Date: 5/29/19 Title: \_\_\_\_\_

- Signed by Responsible Agency
- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR: \_\_\_\_\_

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

MAY 30 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE