

Notice of Exemption

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

From: UC Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Campus Planning Department
One Cyclotron Road, M/S 76-225
Berkeley, CA 94720

Project Title:	Continuation of the Energy-Water Desalination Program
Location:	UC Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory + various nationwide locations tbd
City:	Berkeley
County:	Alameda

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project (Project Description):

The University of California Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (UC LBNL) proposes to continue to support a nationwide, early-stage and pilot research effort: the Energy-Water Desalination Program (the Program). The Program would continue to be administered by the National Alliance for Water Innovation (NAWI), a consortium of national laboratories, universities, public facilities, and private institutions that is led by UC Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (UC LBNL, or Berkeley Lab). In its lead NAWI role, LBNL would continue to coordinate Program efforts, which would include reviewing, awarding, and overseeing funded research by a variety of nationwide applicants for up to ten additional years.

The Program objective is to support early-stage, applied research aimed at lowering the cost and energy use associated with water desalination and treatment. Under the Program, applicants would apply for and be awarded funding for research that meets the Program objective. Research supported by the Program would continue to include conventional, bench-scale activities and small-scale demonstration and pilot projects by qualified scientific staff. Research would typically take place in existing, appropriately designed and outfitted laboratory and research facilities under controlled conditions.

Public Agency Approving Project:	UC Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
Agency Carrying Out Project:	UC Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

Exempt Status:	Categorical Exemption §15301, Class 1: Existing Facilities §15306, Class 6: Information Collection
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Reasons why the project is exempt:

Consistent with CEQA Guidelines **§15301**, the Project would support continuation of general research taking place within existing research facilities, public and private institutions, and similarly appropriate spaces; consistent with **§15306**, the Project would entail "...basic data collection, research, experimental management, and resource evaluation activities which do not result in a serious or major disturbance to an environmental resource."

None of the exceptions listed under CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 would apply, as the proposed Program activities would take place in developed locations and facilities and not in biologically or environmentally sensitive areas; would not be associated with hazardous waste sites or locations listed pursuant to §65962.5 of the California Government Code; nor would be associated with historic resources or scenic highways. There would not be facility construction and therefore no construction-related impacts.

Project Description

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The objective of the Energy-Water Desalination Program is to support early-stage, applied research aimed at lowering the cost and energy use associated with water desalination and treatment. Under the Program, applicants (expected to include mainly government and university laboratories, public facilities, private research institutions, and industry partners) would apply for and be awarded funding for research that meets the Program objective. Program prioritization and goal-setting, application reviews, funding decisions, and other administrative activities would be undertaken by the NAWI consortium; such efforts would be led by and centralized at LBNL. The NAWI consortium currently consists of LBNL, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the National Energy Technology Laboratory, and over 100 Research Consortium organizations including national laboratories, universities, and industry partners.

Research supported by the Program would continue to include conventional, bench-scale activities, such as investigations into novel membrane separation materials and processes as well as adsorption materials and processes, and development of computational models and simulations of water treatment processes. Small-scale demonstration and pilot projects would continue to be supported, including assembly and field-testing of small, pilot-scale desalination equipment and processes under controlled conditions and in non-environmentally sensitive areas. Research would be conducted by qualified scientific staff; all legal and regulatory requirements governing laboratory protocols and environmental, health, and safety issues would be met. Research would typically take place in existing, appropriately designed and outfitted laboratory and research facilities under controlled conditions. Such research would not include unconventional hazards, such as work with special nuclear or heightened biosafety-level materials, nor would it include large-scale demonstration activities. The Program would not support construction or expansion of large, permanent facilities. Related research would also be conducted by UC LBNL and the other NAWI consortium members at their respective sites, all under the conditions described above.

UC LBNL and the NAWI Consortium would continue to ensure that future applicants meet the above research conditions by implementing "flow-through" requirements through the application and contracting processes. In any cases where it is not clear whether desirable applicants would meet those conditions, UC LBNL would conduct individual CEQA reviews of the specified research at such times. Any individual CEQA reviews would be conducted mindfully of the overall Program and its various components consistent with the considerations of CEQA Guidelines §15130 and §15355 (cumulative impacts).

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