

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** FY19 Pasco District Washington Priority Pole Replacements

**PP&A No.:** 4198

**Project Manager:** Meadow Nelson

**Location:** Benton and Franklin Counties, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to replace deteriorating wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on the Benton-White Bluffs #1, Eltopia Tap to Smith Canyon-Redd and Franklin-Hedges #1 transmission lines in the Pasco district.

See table below for structure names and locations on the transmission lines.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	Township	Range	Section	County, State
Benton-White Bluffs #1	5/9	11N	28E	35	Benton, WA
	6/3	10N	28E	2	
Eltopia Tap to Smith Canyon-Redd	6/6	11N	30E	23	Franklin, WA
Franklin-Hedges #1	2/1	9N	30E	35	Franklin, WA
	2/4	8N	30E	3	

Replacement would be in-kind and would utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger would be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement.

Access road maintenance would be limited to minor blading, grading, and rocking of access road segments that have become impassable. All road maintenance would take place in the existing road prism.

Two structures are located on DOE-Hanford property. The remaining structures being replaced are in easements on privately-owned property. These structures are located within or adjacent to residential properties, pastures, dry land wheat farming, scabland, or similar type land uses.

The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line, which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

*/s/ Shawn Barndt*  
Shawn L. Barndt  
Tri Cities RMHQ

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 14, 2019

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

cc: (w/ enclosures)  
T. Cossairt – TFPF-Tri Cities RMHQ

# Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

**Proposed Action:** FY19 Pasco District Washington Priority Pole Replacements

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## Project Site Description

Two structures are located on DOE-Hanford property. The remaining structures being replaced are in easements on privately-owned property. These structures are located within or adjacent to residential properties, pastures, dry land wheat farming, scabland, or similar type land uses.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> WA DAHP concurrence on no adverse effect determination was received May 16, 2019. The Nez Perce, CTUIR, Wanapum, and Yakama Tribes were consulted, but did not respond during the 30-day period. Tribal staff from the Hanford Tribal Technical Working Group assisted with the survey and was in agreement with the no adverse effect determination for the replacement of the priority poles on DOE-Hanford property. The Department of Energy-Richland was consulted, but did not respond during the 30-day period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>In the event that archaeological or historic materials are discovered during project activities, work in the immediate vicinity must stop, the area would be secured, and SHPO and the environmental project lead must be notified.</li><li>Crews and equipment are to use existing access roads to and from each work site.</li><li>Limit access road maintenance to the existing road prism.</li></ul>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance (two 100x100 foot areas); erosion control measures would be used.</p>		
<b>3. Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. Area of disturbance is frequently disturbed by agricultural operations.</p>		
<b>4. Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species or designated habitat present. Area is previously disturbed by agriculture and road development.</p>		
<b>5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No water bodies present in project area.</p>		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: Wetland near Franklin-Hedges structure, but would be avoided by staying on current access roads and working in the dry season. Wetland delineation completed November 2018.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No wells or use of groundwater proposed. Spill prevention measures would be present on site. Maximum depth of ground disturbance would be 10 feet.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation: Temporary agricultural impacts during construction; landowners would be compensated for crop damage, as needed.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: New wood-poles would not be noticeably different than existing poles.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Temporary and small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction. Dust would be of minor concern due to the timing of construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions. The proposed action would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

### Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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 of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Coordination with DOE-Hanford and private property owners has occurred. No concerns.

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Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts to any environmentally sensitive resource.

Signed: /s/ Shawn Barndt  
Shawn L. Barndt, Tri Cities RMHQ

Date: June 14, 2019