

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Dixon Transformer Move and Containment Installation

**PP&A No.:** 4146

**Project Manager:** John Roeder – TEP-TPP-1, Cynthia Rounds – TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Dixon, Montana; BPA Kalispell District  
Sanders County  
T18N R21W Sec20

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.6 – Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The proposed work would occur on BPA-owned land surrounding the Dixon Substation and within the substation fenceline. Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace the existing transformer (T-1774) at Dixon Substation with a new transformer, T-1885, which is currently located at Garrison substation. The following actions would be necessary to ensure that the transformer is able to be transported to the site, maintain compliance with the Clean Water Act, and maintain electrical reliability once the new transformer is in service:

- To transport the transformer to the site, the entry road would need to be widened in three areas, allowing the truck carrying the transformer to safely follow the curves of the substation entry road. This would consist of adding and compacting rock in three discrete locations.
- To achieve compliance with the Clean Water Act, a containment system consisting of a geomembrane liner surrounding the transformer, piping, and oil storage vault would be installed surrounding the new transformer for Clean Water Act compliance. The geomembrane and the majority of the associated piping would be located inside the fenceline, and the new vault and an outfall would be constructed outside the substation fenceline.
- Structures 26/1 and 26/2, located to the north and south of the substation, respectively, would need to be replaced. Both are wood 3-pole dead end structures that would be replaced in the same location with wood 3-pole dead end structures. The new structures would be taller to allow for the installation of overhead ground wire.
- Disconnect switches 26/1S and 26/2S, along with their switch stand structures and grounding platforms, would be replaced. These structures are located adjacent to the associated wood pole structures within the landing areas.
- Fiber optic vaults would be installed adjacent to the wood pole structures within the landing areas.
- Conductor would be replaced and overhead groundwire would be installed from structures 26/1 to 26/2.

Equipment used to perform this work may include a combination of the following: dump trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, excavators, and work trucks. All disturbed areas would be restored at the end of the project.

**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, July 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/ Emma Reinemann*

Emma Reinemann  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*

Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 7, 2019

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

## 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: Dixon Transformer Move and Replacement of Structures 26/1 and 26/2**

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### Project Site Description

The proposed project would be conducted at Dixon Substation on BPA-owned property, located approximately 0.5 miles southeast of the town of Dixon, Montana in the BPA Kalispell District. The project area is located within the Flathead Indian Reservation. The project area is mostly flat with mostly grassy vegetation with some shrubs. The land use in the surrounding area is rural/agricultural.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

<b>Environmental Resource Impacts</b>	<b>No Potential for Significance</b>	<b>No Potential for Significance, with Conditions</b>
<p><b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> A portion of the project area was surveyed by a BPA archaeologist in 2013 and reviewed by the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribe’s Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO). No cultural resources were identified during the survey. Based on this survey and the fact that the majority of the work would be happening in a previously-disturbed area, the CSKT THPO concurred with BPA’s no adverse effect to historic properties determination on February 6, 2019, with the condition that a BPA archaeologist would be on site during ground-disturbing work.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, work would be stopped immediately. The CSKT Tribal Preservation and Culture Committee’s Notification Procedures for the Discovery of Native American Human Remains and Non Native Human Remains would be followed. Additionally, the contractor would comply with the Montana Human Skeletal Remains and Burial Site Protection Act Procedures, and Inadvertent Discoveries on Federal Lands procedures would be followed. These documents would be provided to crews performing the work.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>2. Geology and Soils</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> Ground-disturbing activities proposed as part of this project would involve widening the roads to allow the truck carrying a transformer to access the substation, excavation for the installation of the oil containment system, and excavation for the installation of fiber vaults in previously-disturbed ground adjacent to structures 26/1 and 26/2. The proposed work would not substantially impact geology and soils.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no federal/state special-status species in the project area. All work would occur on previously-disturbed land.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><b>4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)</b></p> <p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. All work would occur on previously-disturbed land.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**  
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project, and there are no floodplains present within the proposed work area. The project area is located approximately 1,000 feet west of the Jocko River. Best management practices would be used during construction to prevent sediment from migrating off site during ground-disturbing activities.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: A construction SPCC plan would be implemented for the transportation of the transformers. The proposed secondary containment system would prevent any potential future spills from impacting groundwater or aquifers.

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

Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use. No specially designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: There would be no change to the visual quality of the area as a result of the proposed activities.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: The project would have no significant impacts on air quality; however, a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. A site-specific health and safety plan would be prepared and implemented to address any hazards during the proposed work. Project activities would not impact human health or safety.

### **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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: NA

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: All activities would take place on BPA-owned land within the Flathead Indian Reservation. Proposed project activities have been coordinated with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann  
Emma Reinemann  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: March 7, 2019