

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: AT&T Lake Meridian LTE Antenna Upgrade

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: King County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow AT&T to upgrade an existing telecommunications facility located on a BPA-owned transmission tower (structure 3/6 on the Covington-Duwamish No. 1 transmission line) in Kent, Washington. The work would consist of removing three existing panel antennas and replacing them in-kind with new panel antennas. In addition, nine existing tower-mounted amplifiers (TMAs) would be removed and six new TMAs would be installed. To ensure safety, BPA workers and their subcontractors would complete the tower installation work. In addition to upgrading tower-mounted equipment, removal and/or installation of ground-level telecommunications equipment would occur in AT&T's equipment shelter adjacent to the transmission tower on privately-owned property. The project would not involve any ground excavation, and the site would be accessed via existing routes.

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.

W. Walker Stinnette

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Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Portland State University – Hatfield Resident Fellow

Reviewed by:

/s/ Douglas F. Corkran

Douglas F. Corkran

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: May 1, 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.

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Project Site Description

The project site consists of an existing AT&T telecommunications facility in Kent, King County, Washington. The AT&T facility is collocated with an 85⁺-foot BPA transmission tower (structure 3/6 on the Covington-Duwamish No. 1 transmission line) in Section 22, Township 22 North, Range 5 East. An AT&T equipment shelter is located less than 50 feet north-northwest of the transmission tower. The project site is immediately surrounded by a maintained transmission line right-of-way (ROW) containing a mix of low-growing native and non-native herbaceous and shrub species. Within the ROW, 144th Avenue SE is located east of the transmission tower and residential lawns and gardens surround the tower to the north, west, and south. Land use outside of the ROW is primarily commercial and residential development.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project would use established access roads and work areas and does not include ground excavation. All work would occur on the structure itself, and such minor additive features would not adversely impact the integrity of historic resources. The BPA historian reviewed the proposed activities and determined that this undertaking has No Potential to Effect historic properties. No further review under the National Historic Preservation Act is required.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Geology and soils within and around the project site were likely previously disturbed during the installation of the transmission tower and the telecommunications facility. Although the proposed project does not involve excavation or grading of soils, minor soil compaction may occur due to vehicles driving around the project site.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Project-related activities (e.g. vehicle and equipment use) may result in removal of vegetative cover in small areas. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.</p> <p>To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles would be required to be cleaned before entering a new project site.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species.</p> <p>If any active nests are found on the tower prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any mapped waterbodies or floodplains, and there are no special-status fish species. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any mapped wetlands. The project would use established access roads and work areas, and would not include ground excavation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project would not involve any ground excavation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change to land use at the project location. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to visual quality at the project location. The wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the site as a telecommunications facility for AT&T.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Minor dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction. However, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to human health or safety are expected as a result of project activities.

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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The transmission tower is owned by BPA. AT&T is responsible for acquiring and maintaining easements for their facilities from underlying landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette

Date: May 1, 2019

W. Walker Stinnette – EC-4

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