

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Port Angeles-Sappho 34/1 Slide Remediation (*Update to Previous CX Issued May 24, 2023*)

**Project No.:** 4913

**Project Manager:** Rusty Ludt, TEPL-TPP-1

**Location:** Clallam County, Washington

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to remediate a slide along the Port Angeles-Sappho No. 1 transmission line. The slide is placing structure 34/1 in danger of failure, which could result in an emergency situation. To remediate the slide, structure 34/1 would be moved approximately 150 feet ahead on line (AOL), away from the slide. This would include replacing the structure with new poles, a cross arm, insulators, guys, and anchors. Pending design review, structure 34/2 could be eliminated and structure 33/9 could also be moved approximately 150 feet AOL. General equipment used for this type of work includes line trucks, bucket trucks, backhoes, and excavators.

BPA is also proposing to perform access road maintenance in the area to facilitate access to the slide, to replace structures, and to stabilize the slide. This would include approximately 1,200 feet of access road maintenance to access the structures identified above. Work would include placing, spreading, and compacting rock as well as install one cross drain culvert or a drain dip to move ponding water from one side of the road to the other. Slide material would be removed or graded and then stabilized using large rock or seed and blankets. General equipment used for this type of work includes graders, rollers, bull dozers, excavators, backhoes, and dump trucks.

The proposed action would maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

Update - A design review was conducted and BPA proposes to add a new structure, identified as 33/10, approximately 450 feet AOL of structure 33/9. An existing, unmaintained access road to this area, approximately 400 feet in length, would need to be brushed and have rock spread on it. An existing, unmaintained landing at the proposed structure site would also be brushed and have rock spread on it. Equipment used for this work would be similar to what is already proposed. The work would also take place at the same time as the previously identified work.

**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/ Jonnel Deacon*

Jonnel Deacon

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*

Sarah T Biegel

Date: September 1, 2023

NEPA Compliance Officer

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:** Port Angeles-Sappho 34/1 Slide Remediation

## **Project Site Description**

Structures being replaced are in forest land owned by the Olympic National Forest. No waterbodies or wetlands would be impacted in project work areas.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Quileute Nation, the Makah Nation, the Port Gamble S’Klallam Tribe, the Quinault Indian Nation, the Skokomish Indian Tribe, the Suquamish Tribe, the United States Forest Service – Olympic National Forest, and the Washington DAHP. Consultation was initiated in two phases for this project. The first determination letter was sent on April 10th, 2023, to conduct pole raises and road work. DAHP and the Forest Service concurred on April 11th, 2023. The second determination letter was sent on August 1st, 2023, to install a new wood pole structure and conduct road work. DAHP concurred on August 3rd, 2023.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacement and slide remediation. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary. All areas would be stabilized with crushed rock or seed and blankets.

### **3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state- or Federal-sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted access road and transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

### **4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA and US Fish and Wildlife biologists as well as a US Forest Service biologist reviewed the project work area and determined that suitable habitat for marbled murrelets does not exist. Northern spotted owls do not inhabit the area and no other ESA-listed species are documented or known to occur. BPA would implement dawn and dusk

restrictions for the road work portion of the project. In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state- or federally-listed sensitive species, besides the marbled murrelet and northern spotted owl, which BPA determined the project would not likely adversely affect. US Fish and Wildlife concurred with this determination on April 26, 2023 (consultation code FWS/R1/2023-0054671). USFWS confirmed on June 6, 2023, that the additional proposed work falls within the previously consulted work and no additional consultation would be required.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is not located within a floodplain and there are no nearby water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed fish. Erosion control best management practices combined with the distance to the nearest waterbody would ensure that sedimentation would not enter into any water body.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: No wetlands are documented within the project area. No impacts to wetlands are anticipated.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater is proposed. Maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use. No specially-designated areas.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-way or existing access roads. The new wood pole structure and associated components would be similar to those around them and within the right of way; therefore, there would not be a change to the visual quality of the area.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: 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. The outage would be coordinated with Clallam County PUD and their customers.

### 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: N/A

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

Explanation: N/A

**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: N/A

**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: N/A

**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: All activities have been coordinated with landowners and utility customers.

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

Signed: /s/ Jonnell Deacon  
Jonnell Deacon  
EPR-Chemawa

Date: September 1, 2023