

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Comcast Fiber Optic Cable Installation Project

**Project No.:** LURR20230214

**Project Managers:** Billie Woodman, TERR-ROSS-MHQA; Laura Master, TERR-3

**Location:** Clark County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.7 Fiber optic cable; B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow the applicant (Comcast Cable Communications) to install fiber optic cable on an existing overhead distribution transmission line (operated by Clark Public Utility District) that runs through BPA's rights-of-way transmission line corridor. The distribution line passes under three double-circuit BPA transmission lines: Bonneville PH 1–Alcoa No. 1 and 2, Ross–Carborundum No. 1 and Ross–Alcoa No. 2, and Ross–Alcoa No. 3 and 4.

The fiber optic cable would enter the BPA rights-of-way corridor from the north and would already be attached to the overhead distribution line. The fiber optic cable would continue south on the distribution line, parallel to, and just west of NE Hazel Dell Avenue until it reaches a wood monopole, located about 5 feet north of the southern boundary line of the BPA rights-of-way corridor. Comcast would install vertical PVC conduit on the wood monopole, and the fiber optic cable would be installed within the conduit.

Near the base of the pole, the applicant would use directional boring methods to install the fiber optic cable eastward under NE Hazel Dell Avenue. The entry boring pit would be located within the BPA corridor, while the exit pit and a new communications vault would be located on the east side of NE Hazel Dell Avenue, and outside of the BPA rights-of-way corridor. The directional boring entry pit and conduit installation would temporarily disturb a roadside grass area about 10 feet by 10 feet in size.

**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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange      Date  
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:** Comcast Fiber Optic Cable Installation Project

## **Project Site Description**

The project site is located within Township 2 North, Range 1 East, Section 10, in the Hazel Dell area of Vancouver, Washington. The site is located within the 200-foot-wide BPA rights-of-way that is managed for low growing vegetation and is surrounded by residential parcels. NE Hazel Dell Avenue is located immediately adjacent to the site, Interstate-5 is located about 330 feet east of the site, and Burnt Bridge Creek riparian corridor is located about 1,200 feet west of the site. Burnt Bridge Creek, located about 1,200 feet west of the project area, is a freshwater habitat for steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and Lower Columbia River Coho species (*O. kisutch*), and is designated freshwater critical habitat for the Lower Columbia River Coho. No wetlands occur within 1,000 feet of the project site.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated Section 106 consultation on January 8, 2024, with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). In the initiation of consultation letter, BPA made a no historic properties affected determination. On the same day, DAHP concurred with BPA's Area of Potential Effect and determination. No responses were received by the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

Notes:

- An Inadvertent Discovery Plan, with contact information for the BPA cultural resources lead, would be supplied to the applicant. Should cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work in the area must stop, and the cultural resources lead must be notified immediately.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: An area about 10 feet wide by 10 feet long would be temporarily disturbed on the ground's surface by project activities associated with directional boring. The fiber optic cable would be installed at a depth of 3 feet under NE Hazel Dell Avenue. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to prevent migration of sediment off-site. Therefore, impacts to geology and soils are expected to be low.

Notes:

- Implement a BPA-approved Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: No federally-listed, special-status plant species or habitats exist within the project area. The area that would be temporarily disturbed contains Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*), English plantain (*Plantago sp.*), trailing blackberry, (*Rubus ursinus*), dock (*Rumex sp.*), morning glory (*Calystegia sp.*), dandelion, and a variety of native and non-native grasses. Temporarily disturbed areas would be revegetated. Therefore, impacts to plants are expected to be low.

Notes:

- Upon project completion, the applicant would reseed the temporarily disturbed areas with seed mixes that are regionally appropriate for the area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No federally-listed, special-status wildlife species or habitats exist within the project area. Common wildlife species potentially using the project area may be temporarily affected during construction and may temporarily disperse to adjacent habitats. Some minor impacts to ground nesting or burrowing species in the immediate area may occur during the directional boring process. However, impacts to wildlife are expected to be low.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Burnt Bridge Creek is located about 1,200 feet west of the project area, and is migratory habitat for steelhead and Lower Columbia River Coho species, and is designated freshwater critical habitat for the Lower Columbia River Coho. No water bodies, floodplains, or special-status fish species or habitats are present within the project area. During construction, BMPs would prevent indirect impacts to off-site water bodies, floodplains, special-status fish, or fish habitat. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies, floodplains, fish, or fish habitat.

Notes:

- Implement a BPA-approved ESCP that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.
- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on-site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

### 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A site visit on June 13, 2023, by BPA Environmental Protection Specialists determined that no wetlands are present in the project area. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

### 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance is unlikely to reach depths to groundwater and no new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. BMPs would prevent impacts from

unintended spills to groundwater or aquifers. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

Notes:

- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on-site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no specially-designated areas within the project area. The project area already contains distribution line infrastructure. The addition of fiber optic cable on the line and under NE Hazel Dell Avenue is consistent with the surrounding land uses within the BPA rights-of-way and land uses adjacent to a public road in an urban environment. No impacts to land use or specially-designated areas would occur as a result of the project.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: New fiber optic cable would be installed underground, vertically along the wood pole in PVC conduit, and along the existing overhead distribution line. The fiber optic cable would not be a noticeable addition to the existing transmission line infrastructure. Therefore, no impacts to visual quality would occur as a result of the project.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor and temporary vehicle and construction equipment emissions and fugitive dust would occur during construction. No new sources of emissions would occur once the project is completed. Air quality impacts are expected to be low.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor and temporary vehicle and construction noise would occur during project activities. Construction noise could temporarily impact residents located within about 1,500 feet of the project area. However, construction noise would be limited to typical working hours during the daytime and would only last a few days. No new sources of noise would occur upon project completion. Overall, noise impacts are expected to be low.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The applicant and their contractors would follow BPA and OSHA safety standards and would submit a safety plan for BPA's review and approval prior to commencing construction work onsite. The project would not create any new safety hazards or use materials that could threaten human health and safety. No new impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

### **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: The project would occur on BPA fee-owned land. The applicant would be responsible for notifying adjacent landowners and coordinating with Clark Public Utility District for work on the distribution line and the City of Vancouver for work under NE Hazel Dell Avenue, as required by BPA prior to commencing work.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill  
Becky Hill  
Environmental Protection Specialist

2/13/2024  
Date