

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Substation Equipment Additions - Lund Hill Solar Energy Project Interconnection

Project No.: G0242 and G0420

Project Manager: Alaric Hsu

Location: Klickitat County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.7 Electronic Equipment

Description of the Proposed Action:

BPA proposes to install electrical equipment in BPA's Rock Creek Substation in Klickitat County, WA in order to interconnect Avangrid's planned Lund Hill Solar Energy Project (solar project) to BPA's Federal Columbia River Transmission System (FCRTS). At the Rock Creek Substation and the solar project's collector substation, BPA would provide additions to existing control and communications equipment and install some equipment, including a SONET ring. Control equipment would ensure reliable operation of the FCRTS by enabling BPA to limit the amount of power entering the federal power grid, if needed, under certain conditions, such as when there is an oversupply of power. BPA would also update some existing communications equipment and control systems at the BPA Dittmer and Monroe Control Centers to ensure reliable operations of the FCRTS.

All BPA work at the Rock Creek Substation would be conducted within the existing substation. The power would enter the Rock Creek Substation on an existing 230-kV transmission line owned and operated by Avangrid that is currently interconnected to Rock Creek Substation. Avangrid would also install, own, and maintain fiber optic cable that would run between the solar project's 230/34.5-kV collector substation and the Rock Creek Substation. Avangrid's fiber optic cable would be spliced to fiber within an existing fiber vault at the Rock Creek Substation.

The solar project is proposed by Aurora Solar, LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Avangrid Renewables, Inc. (Avangrid). Klickitat County approved an Energy Overlay Zone (EOZ) permit for the solar project on September 19, 2019. Avangrid submitted two requests to BPA for this solar project to the BPA Generator Interconnect Queue: G0242 (49MW) and G0420 (101MW). BPA would interconnect up to 150 megawatts (MW) of electric power from the solar project and transmit the electric power from the solar project on the FCRTS, but would not purchase any of the power.

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/ Kimberly St. Hilaire
Kimberly St. Hilaire

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange Date: October 31, 2019
Katey Grange
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.

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Project Site Description

Project activities would take place within existing BPA facilities, mainly the BPA Rock Creek Substation, with a small amount of work within the Munroe and Dittmer Control Facilities. BPA would also install some equipment in the solar project's collector substation.

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> Prehistoric resources and traditional cultural properties would not be affected by the BPA interconnection work because all work would be done within existing BPA facilities. Work would be conducted within existing buildings or outside buildings in fenced areas built on a base of compacted fill and there would be no ground disturbance. Both the existing BPA Rock Creek Substation and the proposed solar project collector substation are not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and therefore the work at these facilities would result in no historic properties affected, as defined in 36 CFR 800.4(d)(1). Both the BPA Dittmer and Monroe Control Centers have been determined eligible for the NRHP. To determine the eligibility of the BPA transmission facilities for listing in the NRHP, a Multiple Property Document (MPD) was prepared for BPA's transmission system (Kramer, 2012). The eligibility of BPA facilities for listing in the NRHP is based on whether they meet the minimum eligibility requirements and retain sufficient historical integrity of location and setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. The type of work required at the control centers to interconnect the solar project would not affect the characteristics that make them eligible for listing in the NRHP or their function, and, therefore, would not affect their eligibility for the NRHP. The addition of equipment would be a relatively minor change and is consistent with changes permitted under BPA's MPD.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There would be no impacts to geology and soil because there would be no ground disturbance and work would occur within developed facilities.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There would be no impacts to vegetation because there would be no ground disturbance or vegetation removal because work would occur within developed facilities that are not vegetated.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There would be no impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitat because there would be no ground disturbance and work would occur within developed facilities that are not vegetated. Noise impacts are not expected to displace wildlife because the work would be of a short duration and mostly would occur within existing buildings.</p>		

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

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



Explanation: There would be no impacts to water resources and fish because there would be no ground disturbance or vegetation removal near or in waterways and because work would occur within developed facilities that are not vegetated.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There would be no impacts to wetlands because work would occur within developed facilities built on compacted fill and no wetlands are present within these facilities.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: There would be no impacts to groundwater or aquifers because there would be no ground disturbance and work would occur within developed facilities and work would not affect water infiltration.

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



Explanation: There are no special land use designations at the BPA facilities that would be affected by this project.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The facilities where work would occur would not appear different to an observer based on the type of work and where it would be installed and there are no sensitive viewers in the vicinity of the facilities where work would take place.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: There would be no emission of criteria pollutants beyond those from vehicle and equipment use, for a short duration.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Work would mainly occur within control houses and any work outside of buildings would be of short duration. There are no sensitive noise receptors in the vicinity of the BPA facilities where work would take place.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Work would only occur within fenced federal facilities and the solar project collector substation.

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: No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination was conducted for this project because it is not expected to impact landowners. Work would occur within BPA facilities and the solar project collector substation. The land use around the Rock Creek Substation is ranching and there are wind projects on either side of the substation. The parcels near the substation are large tracts of open space and do not include residences.

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

Signed: /s/ Kimberly St. Hilaire
Kimberly St. Hilaire

Date: October 31, 2019