

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Covington Emergency Generator Replacement

PP&A No.: 4899

Project Manager: Mike Henjum

Location: King County, WA

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

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace the existing diesel emergency generator at Covington Substation in King County, Washington.

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/ Chad Browning

Chad Browning

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer Date: July 6, 2023

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: Covington Substation Emergency Generator Replacement Project

Project Site Description

The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace the existing diesel emergency generator at Covington Substation in King County, Washington. Project would include the installation of a new generator and fuel tank, as well the removal and disposition of the existing generator and fuel tank.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On June 23, 2021, BPA initiated National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation with the following parties: Nisqually Indian Tribe/Puyallup Tribe of Indians/Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP).

In the same letter, BPA made a determination of “no adverse effect” to the Covington Substation Historic District. No responses were received from the Nisqually Indian Tribe or the Puyallup Tribe of Indians. BPA received an email from DAHP on July 1, 2021, indicating that BPA’s determination would not receive concurrence from their office based on the singular and exceptional nature of the Covington Substation as BPA’s only National Register listed property. As a result of follow-up conversations with DAHP, BPA revised its determination to reflect that the proposed undertaking would have an adverse effect to the Covington Substation Historic District. A letter with the revised determination of effects was sent to the consulting parties on August 27, 2021. BPA received concurrence from Washington DAHP on September 13, 2021. No responses were received from the Nisqually Indian Tribe or the Puyallup Tribe of Indians.

The Covington Engine Generator Building is a contributing resource to the Covington Substation historic district, which was determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2015 (Project # 021915-11-BPA), and the site was listed in the NRHP in 2018 under Criteria A and C.

The criteria for adverse effect were found applicable because the project would result in the loss (through demolition) of the Covington Substation Engine Generator Building, a contributing resource to the NR listed Covington Substation Historic District. Other measures were considered to avoid, minimize, or mitigate the adverse effects of the project but these were rejected. The current requirements exceed the capacity and capability of the original structure and a new engine generator, and by extension a new engine generator building, is necessary to ensure the safety, efficiency, and reliability of the BPA transmission system for the region that the Covington Substation serves. BPA determined mitigation measures developed in an MOA with DAHP pursuant to 36 CRF Part 800.6. The MOA was executed on March 12, 2022.

Notes:

- Implement inadvertent discovery protocols in the unlikely event that cultural material is encountered during the implementation of this project. BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during installation of new generator and removal of existing generator. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project area wholly inside energized substation fence line. Area is graveled and managed to prevent plant growth.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any Federal or State special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to within the fence line of the already impacted energized substation and would not substantially alter the footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be permanently affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions.

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: No wetlands within or near the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project would adhere to appropriate best management practices to prevent impacts to groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: No specially-designated areas were identified within the project area. Land use would not change as a result of project activities.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: No impacts to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

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

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operation noise of the emergency generator would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The proposed action would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power to the region.

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:

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

Signed: /s/ Chad Browning
Chad Browning
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: July 6, 2023