

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Benton County PUD Fiber Optic Cable Installation Land Use Request

**Project No.:** 2019184

**Project Manager:** Mike Deklyen – TERR-3

**Location:** Umatilla County, OR; Benton County, WA

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Benton County Public Utility District (PUD) has requested to install new overhead and underground fiber optic cables near McNary Substation in Oregon and underground fiber optic cables near structure 3/1 of the McNary-John Day No. 2 transmission line in Washington. These new fiber optic cables would allow Benton PUD to make use of the six fiber optic cables across the Columbia River that BPA provided for them in 2009. The new fiber optic line in Oregon would run along the western edge of the McNary substation between structure 1/5 of the McNary-John Day No. 2 line and an existing communications building approximately 700 feet to the south. A short section of this fiber optic line would be buried near structure 1/5 of the McNary-John Day No. 2 Line. At structure 3/1 on the Washington side, a short section of fiber optic line would be buried between the tower and the customer vault located at the base of the tower.

**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/ Douglas Corkran

Douglas Corkran  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 22, 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.

**Proposed Action:** Pride Disposal Gravel Lot Land Use Request

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## Project Site Description

The project area is composed of two separate sites. The first site is next to BPA's McNary Substation in Oregon and is located in a flat, shrubby plain approximately 2,000 feet south of the Columbia River. The project area is located immediately west of the substation next to an access road into the substation and a large open grassy/weedy area. The surrounding areas are industrial. The area has been heavily disturbed in the past as part of McNary Dam and Substation construction efforts.

The second site sits under structure 3/1 of McNary-John Day #2 transmission line right-of-way in Washington on a rocky bluff approximately 1,500 feet north of the Columbia River. The project area is limited to the area immediately around the tower, which has been heavily graded and disturbed by construction, with little natural vegetation existing. The surrounding area is open range land with sagebrush, grasses, and weed species.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> BPA's archaeologist conducted a survey of the proposed use areas. No cultural resources were identified. BPA determined that the proposed land use would have no potential to affect cultural or historic resources and the Oregon SHPO concurred with this determination on April 15, 2019.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Some ground-disturbing work would take place, but both sites are level or slightly sloped, so soils would remain on site and there are no geological concerns. No adverse impacts to soils or geology are expected.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed land use areas contain disturbed right of way with a mix of weed and native species, and disturbed open space surrounded by industrial areas, with no trees or other special-status species present in either location. No adverse impacts to plants are expected.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed land use areas contain highly disturbed vegetation, which offers limited habitat value to wildlife. No adverse impacts to wildlife are expected.		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed land use areas are uplands with no streams, or other water bodies in or near them and out of any floodplains. No adverse impacts to waterbodies, floodplains, or fish are expected.		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: The proposed land use areas are uplands, with no wetlands on or adjacent to them. No adverse impacts to wetlands are expected.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No hazardous materials are proposed for storage in the proposed land use areas. No adverse impacts to groundwater or aquifers are expected.

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

Explanation: The proposed land use would be an extension of the surrounding land uses (rangeland, industrial, and utility uses). No adverse impact to existing land use is expected.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The proposed land use would be an extension of the surrounding land uses (rangeland, industrial, and utility uses) and would look similar. No adverse impacts to visual quality are expected.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Some minor vehicle emissions and dust would be generated during the installation of the fiber optic cables, but this would be temporary and minor. No adverse impacts to air quality are expected.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: The proposed land uses occur in areas with high noise levels from highway noise, industrial uses, and other disturbance. Additional noise from construction would not rise above the already high ambient noise levels. No adverse impacts from noise are expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: The proposed land use is an extension of similar land use and activities in the area and would not add any additional human health and safety issues. No adverse impacts to human health and safety are expected.

### **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:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Benton County would work with any affected landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Douglas Corkran  
Douglas Corkran, ECT-4  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: April 23, 2019