

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Transmission Line Structure Hardware and Equipment Maintenance, Replacement, and Installation

Project Manager: Multiple

Location: Multiple locations in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to maintain, replace, or install hardware and equipment on its lattice-steel, tubular-steel, and wood pole electrical transmission structures throughout the BPA service territory.

BPA would maintain, replace, or install hardware and equipment along transmission line structures, including but not limited to; cross-arm brackets, insulators, connectors, bracing, jumpers, peaks and associated overhead protected ground wire hardware, and fall protection cable safety systems. Installation would require a line truck and approximately two-to-four workers in the tower and one-to-two workers on the ground. Temporary cribbing may be utilized to level and stabilize line truck out-riggers.

These actions would occur on existing towers of transmission lines that cross both BPA fee-owned land and land where BPA possesses an agreed upon easement with the landowner. The towers would be accessed using BPA's existing access road system and the proposed work would not require ground disturbing activities.

Each project would be reviewed by the BPA NEPA lead to ensure that the activities fall within the range of those described in this Categorical Exclusion prior to initiating 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/ Laura Roberts
Laura Roberts
Biological Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange
Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Office

Date: December 5, 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: Transmission Line Structure Hardware and Equipment Maintenance, Replacement, and Installation

Project Site Description

Existing transmission towers located in BPA's service territory, including Idaho, Oregon, Washington, western Montana and small parts of eastern Montana, California, Nevada, Utah and Wyoming.

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> As no ground disturbance would occur as a result of this undertaking, and minor additive features do not adversely impact the integrity of historic transmission infrastructure, BPA has determined that this undertaking has No Potential to Effect historic properties.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed activities would not require ground disturbing activities.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed activities may cause minor crushing of existing vegetation surrounding transmission line structures. The activities would not impact any Federal or state special-status species or habitats. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. The proposed activities would not require plant removal. In locations on BPA access roads or surrounding transmission line structures where ESA-listed plant species (e.g. Kincaid's lupine) are known to occur, established measures or timing restrictions would be implemented, as appropriate, so that activities would have no effect on ESA-listed plant species.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed activities would not require habitat removal or disturbance. Minor, intermittent noise associated with project activities has the potential for temporary disturbance to nearby wildlife species. In those locations containing nesting sensitive Federal or state bird species (e.g. bald and golden eagles), timing restrictions would be employed to minimize nest disturbance.</p> <p>There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. In locations along BPA access roads or surrounding transmission line structures where ESA-listed wildlife species are known to occur, established measures or timing restrictions would be implemented, as appropriate, so that activities would have no effect on ESA-listed wildlife species.</p>		

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

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



Explanation: The proposed activities would not require in-water work or ground disturbance that would produce sediment that could enter nearby waterways.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The proposed activities would not require ground disturbance that would produce sediment that could enter nearby wetlands. In locations along BPA access roads or surrounding transmission line structures where wetlands occur, appropriate Clean Water Act permitting and authorizations would be obtained prior to implementation.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during project activities. No groundwater or aquifers would be impacted by the activities.

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



Explanation: No change in land use would occur and activities would not impact land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The activities would have minimal impacts to visual quality and the results would remain consistent with the existing surroundings of the transmission line corridor.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: The activities would generate a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission lines would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Workers would follow all standard safety protocols. Activities would not impact human health or safety.

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: All activities would be coordinated with landowners prior to beginning work.

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

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts
Laura Roberts, EPI-4
Biological Scientist

Date: December 5, 2019