

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Central Lincoln PUD Reconductoring at Gardiner Substation

Project No.: N0816

Project Manager: James Jang, TPCV-TPP-4

Location: Douglas County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Central Lincoln People's Utility District (Central Lincoln) to replace transmission equipment at BPA Gardiner Substation in Douglas County, Oregon because the equipment is aging and has reached the end of its useful life.

Specifically, Central Lincoln staff with BPA staff on-site would reconductor the existing 135-foot-long 13.8kV Feeder No. 1 line with a like-for-like replacement that runs from the existing BPA Gardiner Substation to the existing Central Lincoln switchyard. Several boom trucks would be used to complete this work, which would produce minor noises (e.g., diesel engines, hydraulic pump revving, beeping). The project would not involve ground disturbance and would use established access road and work areas.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol Leiter

Carol Leiter
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel March 5, 2021

Sarah T. Biegel 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: Central Lincoln PUD Reconductoring at Gardiner Substation

Project Site Description

The project site is located at the existing BPA Gardiner Substation property in Douglas County, Oregon (Township 2 North, Range 2 East, and Section 30). Gardiner Substation is abutted by Central Lincoln's switchyard along its northwest property line. The existing 13.8kV Feeder No. 1 line spans approximately 135 feet long and connects equipment from Central Lincoln's switchyard to the terminal connection at BPA Gardiner Substation. Both the substation and switchyard are covered by gravel and fenced in. The surrounding area consists of forested land and the unincorporated community of Gardiner, Oregon. US Highway 101 (Oregon Coast Highway) abuts the project site along its eastern property line and the site is approximately one-quarter mile from the Umpqua River.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA historian reviewed the proposal and determined that the project would have no potential to effect to historic resources on January 27, 2021. While BPA's Gardiner Substation is an identified historic substation, the work would not have the potential to affect historic resources because it consists of minor in-kind replacements and no ground disturbance.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would not require ground-disturbing activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work in existing substation yard; no special-status species present. Existing roadways and work areas would be used.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur in an existing graveled and fenced substation yard. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) was consulted to determine whether western snowy plover (*Charadrius nivosus nivosus*), northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), or

marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*) may be present near the site and what potential effects the project could have on these species. On February 12, 2021, a USFWS representative indicated that it did not seem there was any appropriate habitat for western snowy plover in the project area. Additionally, since no habitat would be removed as a result of this project and the project is immediately adjacent to the Oregon Coast Highway, the noise and activity that would be produced as a result of this work are unlikely to be substantially above normal background levels. Therefore, the proposed work would not affect nearby wildlife or habitat, including any special-status species or habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

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

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed activities would not require ground disturbance that would produce sediment that could enter nearby wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance is proposed.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No changes in land use would result from this project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The new conductor line is a like-for-like replacement; therefore, it would be visually consistent with the existing line.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor, temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. This noise would primarily be generated by several boom trucks that would be used to remove and replace the conductor. The noise levels produced as a result of this project would not

represent a significant increase compared to the typical noise levels produced by traffic on the adjacent Oregon Coast Highway.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Workers would follow all standard safety protocols. Replacing the aging equipment would ensure reliable electrical transmission, which would benefit human health and safety. Project activities would not be expected to negatively 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: 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: No notification – all work on BPA fee-owned property. BPA would coordinate with Central Lincoln to plan the work schedule and site access.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette March 5, 2021
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT