

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Conifer Energy Powerline Install

Project No.: LURR OR 2023-0182

Project Manager: Candias Davis

Location: Polk County, OR

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

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Conifer Energy Partners, LLC to construct a new overhead 69kV power line across BPA's fee owned right-of-way, located approximately 115 feet southwest of Structure 5/3 on the Chemawa-Salem No. 1 and Chemawa-Salem No. 2 lines in Polk County, Oregon.

BPA would grant a temporary authorization to access BPA's right-of-way during construction and tensioning of the new powerline install. There would be no easement or in-fee land use changes for this project. Construction of the new line would not include any significant ground disturbance or placement of new wooden pole structures within BPA's right-of-way.

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/ Sylas Daughtrey

Sylas Daughtrey

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel 11/16/2023

Sarah T. Biegel Date
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist



NPCE MEMO

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

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property in Polk County, Oregon on the Chemawa-Salem No. 1 and Chemawa-Salem No. 2 (Township 6 South, Range 3 West, Section 29). The general construction area consists of agricultural land, private residential and compacted non-vegetated access roads, as well as areas consisting of non-vegetated and vegetated with common native and non-native grasses and shrubs. No wetlands or surface water are present within the project site. The Willamette River is located approximately 0.4 miles east of the project area. Areas surrounding the project site primarily consist of agricultural farmland and large residential properties.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA Historian and Archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these types of activities do not have the potential to cause effects to historic and cultural properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance beyond previously-compacted and graveled areas would occur; there would be no impacts to soils and geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance beyond previously agricultural and farmed crop areas would occur; no plants would be disturbed.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, any wildlife species that could be present in the area would likely be habituated to this level of disturbance given surrounding land uses. There are no ESA-listed or special-status wildlife species present within the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish-bearing streams are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands at the proposed construction site.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur at the proposed construction site beyond previously disturbed and compacted areas. The proposed action would have no disturbance to groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed construction project would not constitute a land use change. BPA would draft a temporary land-use agreement during the construction period to allow access within BPA's fee-owned right-of-way. Once construction is complete there would be no permanent changes to BPA's right-of-way or land use and specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During implementation, the presence of equipment and general construction activities would cause temporary visual impacts. Changes surrounding the construction of the new powerline would be consistent with the surrounding visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would produce minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. No long-term change in air quality would occur following the completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action could produce intermittent noise at levels greater than current ambient conditions, which could be audible outdoors on nearby residential properties. Noise impacts would be temporary and would only occur during daylight hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). No long-term change in ambient noise would occur following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Standard construction best management practices would minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact human health and 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: The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property, and BPA would notify any other easement holders on the BPA property. Conifer Energy Partners LLC would be responsible for any adjacent landowner notification, involvement, or coordination, if required.

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

Signed: /s/ Sylas Daughtrey

Sylas Daughtrey

Environmental Protection Specialist

11/16/2023

Date