

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Goose Prairie Solar Interconnection

Project No.: G0578

Project Manager: Rasha Kroonen- TEPS-TPP-1

Location: Yakima, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B.4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to interconnect an 80 megawatt (MW) solar development to BPA's electrical system. The solar developer is Goose Prairie Solar LLC, a Brookfield Renewable company. The solar project would have a point of interconnection along BPA's Midway-Moxee-1 115 kV line. BPA's proposed action to support the interconnection request consists of installing a tap facility to connect the customer's transmission line to BPA's grid, along with some minor upgrades of system equipment at Midway and Moxee substations and at the customer's control building.

The Midway-Moxee-1 transmission line would be tapped to provide connectivity to Goose Prairie Solar LLC, which is a Brookfield Renewable company's Goose Prairie Solar project, using BPA's standard 115 kV switch and tap layout. This work includes the installation of a new, guyed 60-ft 3-pole dead-end structure 26/2 and switch structure 26/2S approximately 185 ft west of existing Midway-Moxee-1 structure 26/1. This work also includes the replacement of existing Midway-Moxee-1 structure 26/2 with a guyed 70-ft 3-pole dead-end structure 26/3 and switch structure 26/3S. The Goose Prairie Tap would consist of 3 new dead-end structures (1/1, 1/2 and 1/3) and 1 new switch structure 1/2S. Structure 1/1 would be a 50-ft 2-Pole dead-end with 2 guy assemblies. Structure 1/2 would be a 55-ft 3-pole dead-end. Structure 1/3 would be a 60-ft 3-pole dead-end.

Excavation for the wood poles for the tap layout with the new structures would be to a maximum depth of 10 feet. BPA would also install 4 4x4x4 foot fiber vaults and excavate up to 7 feet for their installation. Conduit for ADSS fiber would be trenched between the vault at structure 26/2 and vault at structure 1/3. Additional trenched conduit and ADSS fiber would run between the vault at 1/3 and the vault at 26/3. Crushed rock would be used to backfill around newly set poles. The tap structure and anchoring guy wires would extend about 25 feet by 100 feet wide beyond the existing right-of-way to the north and 200 feet by 100 feet wide to the south of the right-of-way. Additional right-of-way area would be secured by BPA Realty from the adjacent landowners to include the tap layout in the right-of-way. BPA Realty would also secure rights to existing private access roads as necessary for construction access.

At the Moxee and Midway substations, system and communications equipment would be updated in the racks inside the control house to provide for proper electrical connections. Three new

disconnect switches, a new surge arrester foundation, and three new surge arresters would also be added in bay 4 of the Midway substation fenced gravel yard. At the Goose Prairie Solar LLC, a Brookfield Renewable company's, solar control building, BPA would also install necessary electrical equipment and racks including fiber optic rack, telecommunications battery string, metering, and relay racks.

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/ Christopher H. Furey
Christopher H. Furey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>March 10, 2022</u>
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: G0578 Goose Prairie Solar Interconnection

Project Site Description

The proposed project is in Yakima County, Washington about 7 miles east of the town of Moxee. The point of interconnection is located in Township 12 North, Range 21 East, Section 7. The host and adjacent parcels are heavily-grazed cattle land including the transmission right-of-way that is privately owned with a BPA easement. The neighboring parcels are primarily privately-owned ranch land with sagebrush and some public lands. The surrounding topography in the area consists of flat and undulating lands. An unnamed, dry stream, is located approximately 150 feet north of the project site. A wetland area is located about 2,100 feet west of the BPA project site.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On April 6, 2021, the BPA archaeologist initiated Section 106 consultation with the Confederated Bands and Tribes of the Yakama Nation and Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). On December 7, 2021, BPA initiated consultation on an amended APE. BPA determined that the proposed undertaking would still result in no adverse effect to historic properties. BPA also discussed the BPA component of the project with Jessica Lally at the Yakama Nation and confirmed concurrence with BPA's undertaking. On December 20, 2021, DAHP concurred with BPA's determination with the stipulations for professional archaeological monitoring and for an unanticipated discovery plan.

Notes:

- Professional archaeological monitoring to be used at the tap site to ensure any possible sensitive areas are protected in case of unanticipated discovery of historic resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be some soil disturbance for the installation of the tap structure and fiber vaults. Excavation digging would be expected for the new poles at a depth of up to ten feet and seven feet for the fiber vaults.

Notes:

- Use of BMPs for dust and soil control would be expected to be used. Reseeding of disturbed area would be recommended.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project interconnection would be occurring on land owned by a livestock company that has been heavily grazed by cattle. The project site has some low-growing sagebrush and grass vegetation. There are no listed or special-status species present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would be occurring on private land owned by a livestock and farming company that has been heavily grazed by cattle with no effect to ESA or state listed species. Some disruption of cattle grazing would be expected to install the project. Some holes were present in the project area but with no evidence of current use or scat other than cattle excrement. Some state candidate Townsend's ground squirrel colonies were identified in the One Energy solar project footprint primarily adjacent to State Route 24 but not in the BPA project footprint.

Notes: Installation of the project is anticipated to occur outside the January to March breeding season for Townsend's ground squirrels with limited effect in the BPA project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A dry unnamed stream is about 150 feet north of the project area. A wetland is about 2,100 feet east of the project location. The Yakima River flows about 8 miles south of the project area. There would be no in-water work occurring and project activities would not be in any river, creek, or wetland area.

Notes:

- Use of BMPs for dust and erosion control would be expected to be used at the project site.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present at the project area. A wetland area exists over 2,100 feet west of the project location.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The depth of digging for the project to install the poles and fiber vaults would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited impact to the grazing operation of the private landowner for the construction of the tap structure and associated equipment.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts 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: 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: BPA Realty and Transmission would be in coordination with adjacent landowners for access rights.

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

Signed: /s/ Christopher H. Furey March 10, 2022
Christopher H. Furey Date
Environmental Protection Specialist