

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Verizon Wireless Cimarron LTE Upgrade

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: Clark County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Verizon Wireless to upgrade an existing telecommunications facility located on a BPA transmission tower (structure 29/3 on the North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 transmission line) in Vancouver, Washington. The work would consist of removing nine existing panel antennas and replacing them with six new antennas with integrated remote electrical tilt (RET) equipment. In addition, six existing remote radio units (RRUs) would be removed and replaced with nine new RRUs. Existing coaxial cables (3 on the tower) and surge protectors (3 on the tower, 3 on the ground) would be retained. To ensure safety, BPA workers and their subcontractors would complete the wireless antenna and coaxial cable installation work. The project would not involve any ground excavation.

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, July 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/ Walker Stinnette

Walker Stinnette

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Portland State University – Hatfield Resident Fellow

Reviewed by:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 20, 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: Verizon Wireless Cimarron LTE Upgrade

Project Site Description

The proposed project site consists of an existing Verizon Wireless telecommunications facility and associated gravel access road in Vancouver, Clark County, Washington. The Verizon Wireless facility is collocated with a 75-foot-high BPA transmission tower (structure 29/3 on the North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 transmission line) in Section 25, Township 2 North, Range 2 East. Access is via a gravel road from NE 18th Street. Underneath the transmission tower is a fenced enclosure with gravel surfacing and Verizon Wireless equipment mounted on concrete pads. The project site and surrounding areas have been previously disturbed and host a mix of native and non-native herbaceous species. Regular mowing is conducted to maintain the area as a transmission line right-of-way. Within the maintained right-of-way, an asphalt parking lot is located east of the project site, and an agricultural field is located to the west. Commercial and residential development can be found beyond the right-of-way to the north and south of the project site.

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> The project would use an established access road and work area, and does not include soil excavation. All work would occur on the structure itself, and such minor additive features would not adversely impact historic resources. The BPA historian reviewed proposed activities and determined that this undertaking does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties. No further review under the National Historic Preservation Act is required.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Geology and soils within and around the project site were likely previously disturbed during the installation of the transmission tower and the telecommunications facility. Although the proposed project does not involve excavation or grading of soils, minor soil compaction may occur due to vehicles driving on the access road and around the project site.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Project-related activities (e.g., vehicle and equipment use) may result in removal of vegetative cover in small areas. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.</p> <p>To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles would be required to be cleaned before entering a new project site.</p>		

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



Explanation: No special-status wildlife species or habitats are present at the project site; therefore, the project would have no impacts to state special-status or ESA-listed wildlife.

If any active nests are found on the tower prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied.

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



Explanation: The project site does not have any waterbodies, floodplains, or listed fish species; therefore, the project would have no impacts to these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project is not in or near wetlands; therefore, the project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project does not involve any ground disturbance; therefore, there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change to land use at the project locations.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the site as a telecommunications facility for Verizon Wireless.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Minor dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operation noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to human health or safety are expected as a result of project activities.

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: The transmission tower is owned by BPA and on BPA fee-owned property.

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

Signed: /s/ Walker Stinnette
Walker Stinnette – EC-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Portland State University – Hatfield Resident Fellow

Date: March 20, 2019