

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2021 Wireless Program Site Upgrades

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: Clark, King, Pierce, Thurston, Skamania, Snohomish Counties, WA; Benton, Polk, Washington Counties, OR

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 Sprint, T-Mobile and Verizon to upgrade their antennas and equipment at existing wireless sites on BPA transmission towers and radio towers in western Oregon and Washington. The work would consist of removing antennas and replacing those with new antennas, along with the antenna mounts. In some cases, the number of antennas on the towers would decrease or increase from the original installation and/or the antenna configuration would change. Additionally, remote radio units (RRUs) or tower mounted amplifiers (TMAs) would be added to the antenna mounts and new coaxial cable would be installed, connecting the RRUs or TMAs to existing equipment located on the ground at the tower base. At some sites, the equipment on the ground, would also be replaced. The proposed work at T-Mobile's Maltby site, consists of installing a backup generator on a new 5-foot by 9-foot concrete pad, within the existing equipment compound. To ensure safety, BPA workers and their subcontractors would complete the wireless antenna and coaxial cable installation work.

Sprint Ainsworth: Skamania County, WA. DC (donation claim) 39, Township 2 North, Range 7 East. Knight-Ostrander No. 1 Transmission Line.

Sprint Covington: King County, WA. Section 2, Township 21 North, Range 5 East. Tacoma-Covington No. 3 & 4 Transmission Line.

Sprint Maplewood: King County, WA. Section 21, Township 23 North, Range 5 East. Echo Lake-Maple Valley No. 1 Transmission Line.

Sprint Springhill: Benton County, OR. Section 36, Townshio 10 South, Range 4 West. Salem-Albany No. 1 Transmission Line.

T-Mobile Covington Square: King County, WA. Section 36, Township 22N, Range 5 East. Covington-Maple Valley No. 2 Transmission Line.

T-Mobile Gaiser Park: Clark County, WA. Section 36, Township 3 North, Range 1 East. Ross-Lexington No. 1 Transmission Line.

T-Mobile Lake Sawyer: King County, WA. Section 3, Township 21 North, Range 6 East. Raver-Covington No. 1 Transmission Line.

T-Mobile Maltby: Snohomish County, WA. Section 20, Township 27 North, Range 5 East. Sno-King Substation.

T-Mobile Maytown: Thurston County, WA. Section 18, Township 16 North, Range 2 West. Paul-Olympia No.1 Transmission Line.

T-Mobile Nike World Campus: Washington, OR. Section 5, Township 1 South, Range 1 West. Keeler-Oregon City No. 2 Transmission Line

Verizon Chapman Hill: Polk County, OR. Section 20, Township 7 South, Range 3 West. Chemewa-Salem No. 1 Transmission Line.

Verizon Four Corners: King County, WA. Section 26, Township 22 North, Range 6 East. Covington-Brettas Road No. 1 Transmission Line.

Verizon Lake Morton: King County, WA. Section 7, Township 21 North, Range 6 East. Raver-Covington No. 1 Transmission Line.

Verizon Maplewood: King County, WA. Section 21, Township 23 North, Range 5 East. Echo Lake-Maple Valley No. 1 Transmission Line.

Verizon Shaw Road: Pierce County, WA. Section 2, Township 19 North, Range 4 East. South Tacoma-White River No. 1 Transmission Line.

Verizon Walnut Grove: Clark County, WA. DC (donation claim) 56, Township 2 North, Range 1 East. Sifton-Ross No.1 Transmission Line.

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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol Leiter

Carol Leiter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange August 16, 2021

Katey C. Grange

Date

NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment: 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.

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Project Site Description

Antenna equipment replacements would occur on existing transmission structures located within existing transmission line rights-of-way or at BPA facilities and substations. The structures are located in urban and rural areas. The sites have existing access roads to the tower bases and radio towers. All of the sites have had prior ground disturbance.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA cultural resource staff has determined that these undertakings have No Potential to Cause Effects to historic properties or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All of the proposed projects, except for Maltby, would not involve ground disturbance. Vehicles and equipment used during construction may result in minor compaction of soils. The ground disturbance at Maltby would be a maximum of 3-feet-deep for the new concrete pad. This work would occur in a previously disturbed location and there would be no impacts to geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Some vegetation would be crushed during antenna replacement activities but no Federal/state special-status plants would be impacted.

Notes: To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles would be required to be cleaned before entering a new project location.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: No special-status species or habitats are present at the project locations.

Construction activities may temporarily displace non-listed wildlife but there would be no long-term impacts to wildlife.

Notes: If any active nests are found on the structures 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, ESUs, and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project areas do not have any water bodies, floodplains, or listed fish species; therefore, there would be no impacts to these resources.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Per the USGS Soil Survey, the Covington, Lake Sawyer, Lake Morton and both Maplewood sites are located on hydric soils; however, the sites exhibit upland vegetation. The projects do not involve any ground-disturbing activities. There would be no impacts to wetlands.

Notes: The construction vehicles would be required to stay on the access roads and at the base of the towers.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

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

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change to land use and there are no specially designated areas at any of the project locations; therefore, there would be no impact to land use or specially designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the utility corridor and radio tower facilities; therefore there would be no impact to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

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

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no impact to 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 proponent is responsible for acquiring and maintaining easements for their facilities from underlying landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger August 16, 2021
Beth Belanger – ECT-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC