

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Proposed Modified Open Access Transmission Tariff (TC-22)

**Project Manager:** Rebecca Fredrickson- TSP-TPP-2

**Location:** Multnomah County, OR

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.4 Power marketing services and activities; and B4.8 Electric transmission agreements

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to adopt and implement the modifications to the Open Access Transmission Tariff, commonly known as Tariff or OATT, described in the TC-22 proceeding. The Tariff includes the terms and conditions of general applicability for all transmission products and services provided by BPA over the Federal Columbia River Transmission System (FCRTS). The modified Tariff adopted through the TC-22 proceeding would supersede and replace BPA's existing Tariff in its entirety beginning October 1 2021.

Modifications to the existing Tariff include adding language pertaining to transmission studies for service requests over the Southern Intertie; making administrative changes to the form of service agreement for transmission service; reflecting BPA's participation in NorthernGrid; revising generator interconnection procedures to better align with FERC Orders and to include procedures for repowering and replacing large generation facilities; and adding BPA's basic credit standards to the Tariff. In addition, BPA is proposing Tariff modifications to include terms and conditions language to facilitate BPA's possible participation in the Western Energy Imbalance Market (EIM) should BPA decide to join the EIM. The EIM-related Tariff changes would become effective in stages and include aspects such as incorporating EIM-related definitions and providing for billing and administrative procedures specific to EIM participation. In the event that BPA decides not to join the EIM, the EIM-specific provisions either would not go into effect or would be innocuous.

By adopting the modified Tariff proposal, BPA would clarify customer obligations, improve customer service and prepare BPA for possible participation in the EIM. In addition, the agency would better align its products and services with FERC's pro forma tariff, as well as the industry standards.

The proposed modified Tariff mostly continues the existing transmission products and services offerings currently provided by BPA with few changes from the previous year, with the exception of the changes related to possible EIM participation. Nonetheless, even with consideration of the EIM-related changes, the changes to the Tariff that would occur are all generally administrative, financial and procedural in nature. These changes in the Tariff are not expected to result in any physical changes in BPA's transmission system beyond previously disturbed or developed facilities or to cause the development of any new generation resources. Furthermore, all existing generation projects would be expected to continue to operate within normal operating limits and consistently with applicable environmental laws and regulations, including compliance with the

National Marine Fisheries Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service 2020 Endangered Species Act consultation and Biological Opinions on the operation and maintenance of the Federal Columbia River Power System, as well as any related court orders.

**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/ Usha Mohan

Usha Mohan  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Katey C. Grange</u>	<u>July 28, 2021</u>
Katey C. Grange	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:** Modifications to Open Access Transmission Tariff (TC-22)

## **Project Site Description**

BPA markets wholesale electrical power from 31 hydroelectric power plant projects in the Northwest, one non-federal nuclear plant, and several small nonfederal power plants. BPA also operates and maintains about 15,000 miles of the high-voltage transmission in its service territory that spans Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Western Montana, and parts of eastern Montana, California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground disturbing activities or changes to any existing structures or landscapes. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons the adjustments would not affect historic and cultural resources.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission offerings would not result in any ground disturbing activities or have any potential for erosion, landslides, or other related impacts. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments were not affected geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground disturbing activities or vegetation removal or alteration. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments would not affect plants.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to special-status species and habitats. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments would not affect wildlife, including Federal/state special-status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to water bodies, floodplains, and fish, including Federal/state-special status species. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons the tariff adjustments would not affect water bodies, floodplains, or fish, including Federal/state special-status species.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to wetlands. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments would not affect wetlands.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to groundwater and aquifers. In addition, all projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments would not affect groundwater and aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff to offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to land-use and specially designated areas. In addition, all generation projects will continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the rate tariff adjustments would not affect land use and specially-designated areas.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to visual quality. In addition, all generation projects will continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons the transmission tariff adjustments would not affect visual quality.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural activities intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to air quality. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments would not affect air quality.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to noise. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments would not affect noise.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative, financial and procedural intended to better align BPA's product and service offerings to be consistent with industry/FERC standards and enable participation in the EIM, should BPA decide to join this market. The updated transmission tariff offerings would not result in any ground-disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to human health and safety. In addition, all generation projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, the tariff adjustments would not affect 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: Because the proposed action does not involve activities directly or indirectly affecting any particular real property, notification and involvement of any specific land owner is not required. However, BPA conducted the TC-22 rate proceedings consistent with procedures under the Northwest Power Act, which included notifying the public through the Federal Register of the tariff adjustment proposal, allowing Public comments on the proposal, and involving potentially affected parties during the development of the final proposal

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

Signed: /s/ Usha Mohan  
Usha Mohan, ECP  
Environmental Protection Specialist

July 28, 2021  
Date