

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fiber Optic Cable and Communications Equipment Installation for the Technical Services Building (West Campus)

Project No.: P03911

Project Manager: Scott Lissit – TEPF-3

Location: Clark County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and Modifications to Transmission Facilities, B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration proposes to upgrade the fiber optic cable and communications network located in the West Campus area of the J.D. Ross Substation. Specifically, the upgrades would connect a steel-lattice communications structure located at the northern side of the Ross Substation, Dittmer Control Center, and the Emergency Scheduling Center building to the newly-constructed Technical Services Building (TSB).

New telecommunications, fiber optic cable, and electronic equipment would be installed inside TSB. A new high frequency antenna would be mounted on the TSB or on the ground near the TSB. Throughout the West Campus, new conduits, fiber optic cables, power and utility cables would be installed underground via trenching and/or directional boring. The majority of the trenches would be up to 6 feet deep and would be about 3 to 5 feet wide. However, some trenches may need to be up to 10 feet deep to avoid disturbing existing underground utilities. In total, about 2,700 linear feet of fiber optic cable would be installed on the West campus (about 1,800 linear feet being installed in new underground conduit and the remaining 900 linear feet being installed within existing underground conduit). The trenching and/or boring would occur on BPA fee-owned property, primarily covered by asphalt roadways, vehicle parking lots, and sidewalks, and some grass lawns and landscaped areas. Project areas would be restored with new asphalt surfaces, sidewalks, and curbs, and revegetated following a BPA-approved revegetation plan.

Some segments of existing cable may be decommissioned to accommodate the trenching paths for the new conduit. Existing BPA vaults, customer vaults, and fiber hand hole vaults would be used, when feasible. However, up to eight new vaults may need to be installed at key junction points for the new fiber optic cable on the West Campus.

To facilitate the work, BPA proposes to allow Lumen to re-route existing fiber optic cable on BPA fee-owned land by installing about 400 linear feet of fiber optic cable in existing conduit between existing vaults (Lumen vault and BPA transformer vault) and the Dittmer Control Center.

BPA also proposes to allow Zayo to re-route communications signals via existing fiber optic cable through existing conduit to connect to a BPA communications building and splice into existing vaults and lines. New fiber jumpers would also be installed.

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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

May 6, 2022

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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property within BPA's Ross Complex located in Vancouver, Washington. The 260-acre Ross Complex consists of the Ross Substation, Ross Maintenance Headquarters, and other BPA support facilities. The complex is surrounded by residential neighborhoods on the north, east, and south, while Highway 99 and Interstate-5 are located about 250 feet and 500 feet, respectively, on the west side of the complex. The complex is split north-south by a riparian corridor associated with Cold Canyon Creek and Burnt Bridge Creek, which are designated freshwater critical habitats for Lower Columbia River coho salmon. This east-west riparian corridor connects the creeks and their floodplains to freshwater-forested shrub wetlands located along both sides of Interstate-5 and Highway 99. The West Campus work areas are comprised of asphalt roadways and vehicle parking lots, sidewalks, and some lawn and landscaped areas.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On March 17, 2022, the BPA archaeologist initiated Section 106 consultation and determined that implementation of the proposed undertaking, would result in no adverse effect to historic properties and no adverse effect to historic transmission lines. The Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) and the Cowlitz Indian Tribe were consulting parties in the Section 106 consultation. On April 22, 2022, DAHP concurred with BPA's determination. No response was received from the Cowlitz Indian Tribe.

Notes:

- An Inadvertent Discovery Plan, with contact information for the BPA cultural resources lead, would be supplied to the construction contractor prior to commencing construction work. Should cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work in the area must stop, and the cultural resources lead must be notified immediately.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: If trenching is the selected as the installation method, then the proposed action would result in approximately 5,000 square feet (0.1 acre) of ground disturbance in areas covered by asphalt roadways, paved parking areas and sidewalks, and approximately 4,000 square

feet (0.09 acre) of disturbance in grass lawn and landscaped areas. Alternatively, if directional boring is selected, then the amount of anticipated ground surface disruption would be reduced by up to 80 percent as only the entry and exit pits would disturb the ground's surface. Ground-disturbing activities include trenching and/or directional boring at depths up to 10 feet deep. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to prevent the migration of sediment off-site.

Notes:

- Test soils for hazardous materials, which if found, would be disposed of off-site according to local, state, and federal regulations.
- Implement a BPA-approved Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.
- Implement a BPA-approved revegetation plan as soon as practicable after disturbance.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No special-status plant species or suitable habitat for special-status plant species are present within or near the project area. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species. About 4,000 square feet of low-quality, regularly mowed grass lawn habitat, and landscaped areas with ornamental native and non-native shrubs, would be uprooted as a result of the proposed project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: About 4,000 square feet of low-quality, regularly mowed grass lawn habitat, and landscaped areas with ornamental native and non-native shrubs, would be disturbed as a result of the proposed project. Minor and temporary disturbance of wildlife could occur from elevated noise during construction. Because the work would be occurring adjacent to a currently operating substation and within the overall complex, any wildlife present are used to human presence and noise. No special-status wildlife species or suitable habitat are present within or near the project area. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: No water bodies or special-status fish species are present within the project area, and the project area is not located within a floodplain. During construction, BMPs would prevent indirect impacts to off-site waterbodies, floodplains, and special-status fish.

Notes:

- Implement a BPA-approved ESCP that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington.
- Implement a BPA-approved Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) during construction.
- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on-site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: No wetlands are present within the project area. BMPs would prevent direct impacts to off-site wetlands. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

Notes:

- Implement a BPA-approved ESCP that is guided by Washington Department of Ecology's Stormwater Management Manual for Western Washington
- Implement a BPA-approved SWPPP during construction.
- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on-site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance is unlikely to reach depths to groundwater and no new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. BMPs would prevent impacts from unintended spills to groundwater or aquifers. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

Notes:

- Maintain an oil/fuel spill kit on-site during construction to address containment, cleanup, and disposal in the event of a spill.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The installation of telecommunications equipment and fiber optic cable would not change the land use of the Ross Complex. The Ross Complex is an eligible Historic District, however, no historic properties or contributing resources would be impacted by the proposed action.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The majority of the installation of telecommunications equipment and fiber optic cable would be underground, and the above ground components would not be visible from properties outside of the Ross Complex. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. BMPs, such as turning off vehicles when not in use, would be implemented to limit the amount of emissions released in the local area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. However, noise impacts would be temporary and intermittent and would only occur during typical working hours (approximately 7am to 7pm). Construction-related noise would not be audible from residential properties surrounding the Ross Complex. There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Construction would be completed by trained professionals who would follow all applicable safety precautions as detailed in the site-specific Safety Plan, which would be maintained on-site during construction and updated, as needed. The general public and non-construction related workers would not have access to the construction area while work is ongoing unless they first attend a mandatory training or are escorted by a trained construction worker. Work areas would be secured when construction crews are not present.. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact human health and safety.

Notes:

- The new high frequency antenna would have a “Warning – Maintain 2 feet from Energized Antenna” sign installed on it as dictated per an analysis performed by BPA to determine the uncontrolled minimum approach distance.

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 proposed action would occur on BPA fee-owned property. Therefore, no landowner notification, involvement or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: <u>/s/ Becky Hill</u>	<u>May 6, 2022</u>
Becky Hill, ECT-4	Date
Environmental Protection Specialist	