

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Zayo LLC Southwest Washington Fiber Decommissioning

**Project No.:** 23TP-12800

**Project Manager:** Erik Lane - TPCV-TPP-4

**Location:** Cowlitz, Lewis, Pierce, and Thurston Counties, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way; B1.27 Disconnection of utilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to authorize Zayo Fiber, LLC (Zayo) to decommission their In Line Amplification (ILA) facilities on BPA fee-owned property located near BPA's Lexington, Chehalis, Olympia and South Tacoma substations. Proposed decommissioning activities of the ILA facilities would include removal of all Zayo assets, which includes the shelter buildings, utility cabinets, buried vaults (4 feet x 4 feet surrounded by imported fill gravels), generators, propane tanks, and perimeter fencing. This would also include the removal of the concrete pads that the assets sit on as well as any utility power connections and underground conduits that run between the building and the utility cabinet, which are buried in existing shallow utility trenches. The Zayo ILA facilities were constructed in the 1990s, are located on BPA fee-owned land, and are outside of BPA's South Tacoma, Olympia, Chehalis, and Lexington substations. Additionally, at South Tacoma, an existing customer fiber optic vault would be removed. The buried vault, which measures 4 feet x 6 feet is located near the ILA facility. Also, at Lexington, the existing dirt access road leading to the ILA facility may need regrading following the decommissioning work. Following removal of equipment, site remediation may include regrading the ground surface and re-graveling or hydroseeding as appropriate and as determined by BPA.

**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/ Doug Corkran

Doug Corkran  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel                      December 2, 2022

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:** Zayo LLC Southwest Washington Fiber Decommissioning

## **Project Site Description**

Lexington - The project site is located to the southwest of the Lexington Substation immediately adjacent to the fenced substation yard. The ILA station is located at the eastern base of a small steep forested hill containing large areas of weed species (blackberries) and a mix of conifer and deciduous forest. The substation and ILA sit in the relatively flat Cowlitz River valley, with a large area of cleared ROW surrounding it and single family residential developments to the north and east. Access to the site is through the Lexington Substation yard and along a short dirt road.

Chehalis - The project site is located to the northwest of the Chehalis Substation across and next to Old Highway 63. The ILA station is located on level ground in cleared ROW on a large graveled area extending to the north and east and next to a small patch of conifer forest to the northwest. The surrounding area is gently rolling rural residences and small farms. Access to the site is from a short gravel drive off the main highway.

Olympia - The project site is located on the southeast corner of the substation immediately north of SW 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue on flat ground within cleared ROW. The area surrounding the ILA site is part of the manicured substation grounds. The surrounding area is flat with some small hills to the north and is mostly rural residences and small farms, with some light industry and higher density residential areas nearby. Access to the site is from a short gravel drive off the main paved road.

South Tacoma - The project site is located just to the north and east of the South Tacoma substation, immediately south of East 180<sup>th</sup> Street. The ILA station is on flat gravelly ground covered with weedy species including Scotch broom. Surrounding areas are a mix of rural residential, small farms, and rapidly developing industrial and greater density single family residential areas. Access to the site is from a short gravel drive off the main paved road.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

**Explanation:** BPA archaeologists reviewed the ILA sites and determined the project would not affect historic resources. The sites were surveyed by the AECOM cultural resources team and no historic properties were identified within the project APEs. BPA consulted with the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Tribes of the Chehalis Reservation, and Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). Responses were received from DAHP, the Squaxin Island Tribe and the Confederated Tribes of the Chehalis Nation; and they concurred with BPA's determination of No Historic Properties Affected during the consultation period, which ended on November 20, 2022. No impacts are expected to historic and cultural resources.

## 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor grading of soils at each ILA site is expected to return the site to pre-construction conditions; however, each site is on level ground with little chance of erosion or soil movement. Only minor impacts to geology and soils are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The ILA sites are all located in areas of no or low-growing weedy and grassy vegetation. No rare plants or special-status species are documented near any of the ILA sites. No trees would be removed as part of the ILA station removal, but some grasses and shrubs may be. Only minor impacts to common plant and weed species are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ESA-listed or special-status wildlife species are documented in or adjacent to the ILA sites. Northern Spotted Frog critical habitat is located approximately 1,000 feet from the Chehalis ILA site, but would not be affected by the project. Common wildlife species may be affected by the ILA and vault removal activities, but very little habitat removal would occur. All work would take place in previously disturbed areas. Only minor impacts to common wildlife species are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Chehalis ILA site is adjacent to the Cowlitz River floodplain (protected by levees) and sits just outside the flood risk area. The remaining three ILA sites are located in upland areas on flat ground away from streams and rivers. No impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish are expected.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The ILA sites are all in upland areas with no wetlands. No wetlands have been identified near the sites. No impacts to wetlands are expected.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Removal of the ILA sites and concrete pads is not expected to result in any releases of materials or changes in water movement that could affect groundwater or aquifers. No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are expected.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Existing land uses (substation property, transmission line ROW) would remain; no changes to land use would result from the project.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The structures, fencing, and equipment associated with the ILA stations would be removed, thus slightly altering the view of the site from surrounding areas. Only minor impacts to visual quality are expected

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor fugitive dust and emissions from vehicles and equipment would occur during removal of the ILA sites. Only minor, temporary impacts to air quality are expected.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor noise from vehicles and equipment would occur during construction, but long-term noise impacts are not expected. Only minor temporary noise impacts are expected.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None of the ILA sites are located in areas with documented or suspected hazardous waste. The project would not create conditions that could impact human health and safety. No impacts to human health and safety are 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: All work would take place on BPA fee-owned land. No notification of nearby property 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/ Doug Corkran</u>	<u>December 2, 2022</u>
Doug Corkran, ECT-4	Date
Environmental Protection Specialist	