

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Leslie Road-Reata Transmission Line Interconnection Project

**Project No.:** P03038 – L0408

**Project Manager:** Meadow Nelson - TEPL-TPP-1, Rasha Kroonen - TEPS-TPP-1

**Location:** Benton County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.11 Electrical power substations and interconnection facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to rebuild approximately 0.2 mile of its Leslie Road-Reata No. 1 transmission line between structures 3/14 and 4/5. The rebuild would have temporary disturbance at each of the 5 structure work locations of approximately 5,000 square feet (0.01 acre) each, along with the potential for minor temporary disturbance at other locations within the limits of the approximately 1.75 acre right-of-way (ROW). The rebuild would include replacement of four wood-pole structures (4/1-4/4), conductor and shield wire, insulators, hardware, and installation of switch, fall protection, guy wires, and counterpoise. Structure 4/1 and 4/4, currently a monopole structure and a two-pole structure, would be replaced with galvanized steel three-pole structures. Structure 4/1 would also have a steel-lattice switch stand and switch added that would require minor excavation for installation. Structure 4/2, currently a monopole, would be replaced with an engineered-tubular galvanized steel pole. Structure 4/3, currently a two-pole structure, would be replaced with a wood monopole. All poles would be direct-embed, except 4/2, which would have a drilled-shaft and an approximately six-foot diameter concrete pier footing. New poles would be approximately 0 to 15 feet taller than the existing poles and sited within 20 feet of their original locations. Concrete blocks would also be placed at guy anchors on either side of structure 4/3, for visibility and safety due to proximity of the adjacent road. Excavation and minor trenching would be required for installation of guys and counterpoise. Existing guys would be cut two-foot below ground level and removed. Excess soil would be hauled off site.

To support the proposed line work, installation of temporary guard structures, minor access road improvements, use of protective matting, equipment landings, and pulling/tensioning sites would be required. Ground vegetation would be disturbed by construction activities and removal of approximately 25 small to medium-sized residential trees, for proper pole and conductor clearance, would be required. One staging area, measuring approximately 1.5 acres, has been identified for use on the line portion of the project and is located on Benton PUD's Reata substation property. The proposed staging area would require some site development including matting and fencing, and potentially minor grubbing, grading, or rocking.

All the Badger Canyon substation yard, a new 115-kV breaker with a 8- by 8-foot footing, a new line disconnect switch with a 8- by 13-foot footing, and a new capacitor voltage transformer with a 7- by 7-foot footing would be installed. To accommodate the new equipment, three pedestal footings, totaling approximately 200 square feet, would be removed. The project would also require work within the substation control house and would include installation of electronic equipment consisting of new SCADA circuits and new rack relays. The proposed substation work would not require major exterior building modification.

Additionally, BPA proposes to replace the approximately 4-acre Badger Canyon substation yard rock, as age and deposition of impurities have the potential to reduce the rock's electrical safety properties. This process would include removing the top three inches of rock, resurfacing the existing substation yard roads with the addition of a new vehicle turnout, and lastly installing new rock electrically rated to BPA's standards. All work would be conducted within the existing substation fence.

All of this work would support the interconnection of the joint Richland Energy Services' (RES) and Benton County Public Utility District's (PUD) new 115-kV Reata-Dallas Road transmission line to BPA's Leslie Road-Reata No. 1 115-kV transmission line. The interconnection would allow RES and Benton County PUD to energize their new Dallas substation and to provide needed capacity and reliability for new and existing customers in the Badger Canyon area.

BPA would also install a new revenue meter with cell modem connection at Benton County PUD's Dallas Road substation.

General equipment used for this type of work includes: line truck, crane, augur truck, excavator, mower/vegetation trimmer, puller/tensioner, grader, loader, and dump truck.

**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/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

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: Leslie Road-Reata Transmission Line Interconnection Project**

## **Project Site Description**

The proposed Leslie Road-Reata Transmission Line Interconnection Project would occur in the city of Richland, in Benton County, Washington. The project is located in Township 08 North, Range 28 East, Sections 01, 04, and 09. The project would occur in existing transmission line right-of-way (ROW), within a substation control house, and a rocked substation yard. Residential property, interstate highway, and agricultural lands occur in the general vicinity of the proposed project. The transmission line rebuild portion of the project occurs directly within residential yards. No waterways occur within the proposed project area.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA conducted Section 106 consultation with the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, the Nez Perce Tribe, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for the proposed actions on January 11, 2023. BPA received concurrence with our determination of no historic properties affected from Washington DAHP on April 11, 2023, with a stipulation for a post-review discovery procedure. The 30-day consultation period ended May 11, 2023. No other comments were received from the remaining consulting parties.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance is anticipated from the proposed project. Primarily, ground disturbing activities would be temporary and occur in the existing transmission line ROW and existing substation yard. Disturbed residential yards would be restored in accordance to land owners' preferences.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground vegetation disturbance from line rebuild construction activities is anticipated to be predominantly temporary and comprise a total of around 0.5 acre. Approximately 25 small to medium-sized residential trees would be permanently removed because of their interference with new structures and conductor. There are no Federal/state special-status plant species or habitats present in the project area. Following construction residential yards would be restored in accordance with residential land owners' preferences.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project may have temporary disturbance impacts to local wildlife species related to construction equipment noise and human presence. There are no Federal/state special-status wildlife species or habitats present in the project area.

Notes:

- Residential tree removal would occur between September 1st and January 30th, outside of bird nesting season.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish within the general vicinity of the proposed project. The proposed project would not impact these resources.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands within the vicinity of the proposed project. The proposed project would not impact these resources.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated as the proposed project ground disturbance would not be deep enough to penetrate groundwater.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no permanent change in land use or specially-designated areas as a result of the project. Portions of residential yards within the ROW would be excluded from use by residents for approximately 2 months. Construction schedule is anticipated to be daily from 7 am to 6 pm, Monday through Saturday for the duration of the line rebuild project. However, crews at any one site is anticipated to be periodic, as they would move from work area to work area in order to construct the project. Access to residential structures would be maintained throughout the duration of the project.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have minor impacts to visual quality. The Leslie Road-Reata transmission line rebuild work would occur in an existing ROW and would replace wood-pole structures with galvanized steel poles and a galvanized engineered-tubular steel pole, along with minor changes to their configuration, locations, and heights. The use of galvanized steel poles would be equivalent to those used on the interconnecting RES and Benton County PUD Reata-Dallas Road transmission line bordering the opposite side of Interstate-82. Twenty-five small to medium-sized residential trees would be permanently removed from landowners' yards. Proposed

work within the Badger Canyon substation yard would occur within the existing substation fence and would be consistent with the existing land use and transmission line corridor surrounding it.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of equipment emissions and dust may occur temporarily during construction. There would be limited earth disturbance for the line rebuild work and dust would be monitored and appropriate BMPs would be implemented for fugitive dust, should it occur.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours as a result of the proposed project. Occupied residences occur a minimum of 50 feet from the proposed line rebuild work areas. During working hours, elevated noise from construction activities could intermittently cause minor disturbance to those present in nearby houses. Working hours are anticipated to be from 7 am to 6 pm daily, Monday through Saturday, over a time period of approximately 2 months. Crew presence at any one site is anticipated to be periodic, as they would move from work area to work area in order to construct the project. The contractor would adhere to local area ordinance that restricts noise from 9 pm to 7 am. No ongoing noise increase is expected as a result of this project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated to result from the project. For the proposed line rebuild portion of the project, a full-time on-site superintendent would be present to monitor ingress/egress. Rope barriers and/or caution tape would be installed to cordon off work areas and the BPA ROW and all potential safety hazards would be secured at the conclusion of each working day. Additionally, the construction contractor would hold a preconstruction safety meeting with residential landowners and keep them informed on schedule throughout the duration of the project. Disposal of removed substation yard rock would be according to all applicable laws and regulations.

### **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: BPA Realty is in coordination with private landowners, Richland Energy Services, and Benton County PUD.

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

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts

Environmental Protection Specialist

2/6/2024

Date