

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Wheatridge East Interconnection Project

Project No.: P05402/G0362 and G0738

Project Manager: Lisa Casey, TEPP-3

Location: Morrow County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install communications and control equipment at BPA's Dittmer and Munro control centers, and install new SCADA equipment, metering systems, racks, wiring and appurtenances at the patch panel and relay inside of NextEra Energy Resources Interconnection Holdings, LLC (NextEra)'s control house. BPA would not fund or carry out any ground-disturbing activities or substation structural modifications.

The BPA activities would facilitate interconnection of the NextEra wind generation facility to BPA's Federal Columbia River Transmission System. The 204-megawatt wind generation system facility would interconnect at BPA's Morrow Flat Substation via a Umatilla Electric Cooperative distribution 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.

Becky Hill
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
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 inside of NextEra's control house, which is located in OR T1S, R28E Section 7, in Morrow County, Oregon. The area surrounding the NextEra substation and control house is comprised of rolling hills, drainages, and some deep canyons. The NextEra substation is west of Little Butte Creek Road, and a Umatilla Electric Cooperative distribution transmission line, which parallels narrow wheatfields and Little Butte Creek, all of which run north-south within the long, narrow valley.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA archaeologist and historian reviewed the proposed action and determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that the undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present. BPA issued a No Potential to Cause Effect memorandum on November 18, 2024.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance to implement the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, plants would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, wildlife and wildlife habitats would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, wetlands would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, groundwater and aquifers would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: NextEra and BPA own and operate the facilities where the proposed action would be implemented. No other lands or specially-designated areas are involved for implementation of the proposed action.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, the visual quality of the area would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during project implementation. However, there would be no substantial changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project implementation may create low-level, temporary noise inside of existing buildings. However, the noise would be intermittent, would only occur during daylight hours, and would likely only last for one to two days. Operating noise would not increase due to equipment installation. Therefore, the noise impacts to the surrounding areas would be virtually negligible.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project implementation, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Therefore, implementation of the proposed action would not impact human health or 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: BPA is coordinating with NextEra and Umatilla Electric Cooperative.

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

Signed:

Becky Hill
Environmental Protection Specialist