

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Leaning Juniper Interconnection Regeneration

Project No.: G0917

Project Manager: Morgan Harris – TPCV-TPP-4

Location: Gilliam 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 a new 230kV power circuit breaker and associated power circuit breaker isolating disconnect switches, instrument transformers, meters, protective relaying, remedial action scheme equipment, communications, and controls at Jones Canyon substation in Gilliam County, Oregon. This work would support BPA's issuance of a new meter and interconnection agreement to facilitate the re-powering of an existing 230kV interconnection at BPA's Jones Canyon Substation. The re-power of the existing interconnection would maintain the contracted 90.3 MW interconnection limit.

The proposed re-power of the existing interconnection would involve no ground disturbance and all equipment and upgrades would be installed on existing racks within the substation.

Equipment used for the proposed project would likely include but not be limited to light duty trucks and power tools.

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.¹

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ BPA is aware of the November 12, 2024, decision in *Marin Audubon Society v. Federal Aviation Administration*, No. 23-1067 (D.C. Cir. Nov. 12, 2024). To the extent that a court may conclude that the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA are not judicially enforceable or binding on this agency action, BPA has nonetheless elected to follow those regulations at 40 Code Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) §§

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: Leaning Juniper Interconnection Regeneration

Project Site Description

The location of the site is on BPA fee-owned property with a legal parcel description at Township 2 North, Range 21 East, and Section 8. The proposed regeneration site at BPA's Jones Canyon Substation is surrounded by the existing substation yard, transmission structures, wind turbines, and low-lying maintained vegetation, primarily of degraded shrub-steppe habitat characterized by common, low-growing grasses, forbs, and weeds with a low density of shrub species. The project area has previous ground disturbance which includes graveled, paved, or compacted soils. No hydric soils are classified within the project site and no wetlands or water bodies are mapped within or near the project area. Surrounding land uses consist of agricultural lands and industrial properties incorporated with subverted and undeveloped shrub-steppe habitat.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would not include ground-disturbing activities; historian review has shown that the proposed project would have no potential to cause effect to historic properties or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance for the proposed regeneration interconnection project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No federally-listed, special-status species or habitats exist within the project area and all work would occur inside a building.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federal or state special-status species or habitats at any of the sites that would be impacted by the project and all work would occur inside a building.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No work would take place next to water bodies or floodplains. No impacts to water bodies, floodplains or fish are expected.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would take place within the Jones Canyon Substation. There are no wetlands at the existing site.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No areas of shallow groundwater or aquifers are known to exist within the project area. No disturbance or impacts to groundwater and aquifers are expected.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no specially-designated areas within the project area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no changes to the visual quality for the proposed regeneration project.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No changes in air quality impacts would occur.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Operation and needed construction installation noise impacts are expected to be low, occur inside a building, and not change from their current status due to the proposed project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not create any new safety hazards or use materials that could threaten human health and safety. No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

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 is located on BPA fee-owned property. 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:

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist