

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** FY24 North Bend District Priority Pole Replacements

**Project No.:** 6733

**Project Manager:** James Barnhart, TEPL-TPP-1

**Location:** Coos, Curry, Douglas, and Lane counties, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance, B1.13 Pathways, short access roads, and rail lines, B1.33 Stormwater runoff control, B4.10 Removal of electric transmission facilities, B2.3 Personnel safety and health equipment

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to replace deteriorating wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g., cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) on multiple transmission lines in the North Bend district.

See table below for structure names and locations on the transmission lines.

Transmission Line/ROW	Structure #	County, State
Fairview-Bandon No 1	2/3, 12/4, 21/3, 24/8, 26/5, 26/7, 26/8	Coos, OR
Lane-Fairview Fiber System	94/2.1, 94/2.2, 94/2.3, 94/2.4, 94/2.5, 94/2.6, 94/2.7, 94/2.9	Coos, OR
Reedsport-Fairview No 1	3/2, 3/3, 12/4, 19/1, 23/3, 24/3, 24/4, 25/1, 26/5, 27/2, 28/1, 28/5, 28/7	Coos and Douglas, OR
Wendson-Tahkenitch No 1	12/2, 17/5	Douglas and Lane, OR

Replacement would be in-kind and would utilize the existing holes to minimize ground disturbance. If necessary, an auger would be used to remove any loose soil from the existing hole prior to new wood pole placement. Work areas would be about 100 feet by 100 feet at each of the structure replacement locations.

BPA also proposes to remove 3 deenergized conductors, approximately 1 mile each, and associated hardware from the Coos Tap to Reedsport-Fairview No 1 transmission line from structures 94/2.1 to 94/2.9 in Coos County, Oregon. A helicopter would be used to facilitate the removal from 94/2.9 to 94/2.7, over the Isthmus Slough. Traditional methods, including structure climbing and stringing pulleys, would be used to remove the remaining line. The fiber line would remain in operation and would remain part of the Lane-Fairview Fiber System. To facilitate decommissioning, the eight 2-pole H-framed and 3-pole wood structures would be replaced with single pole light duty steel structures at

94/2.1 – 94/2.7 and 94/2.9 up to 10 feet from the original location. A metal tower at 94/2.8 would remain in place and fall protection would be added.

One 24-inch-diameter corrugated steel culvert would be replaced on the access road on the Lane-Fairview Fiber System, between structures 94/2.1 and 94/2.2; this culvert provides for seasonal runoff and is not in a fish bearing waterbody.

BPA would improve about 12 miles of existing access roads (re-shape subgrade, re-grade surface, and place rock). All road maintenance would take place in the existing road prism. Additionally, BPA would construct/improve 30 equipment landings up to 100 feet by 100 feet in size.

The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line, which would help reduce outage times and maintain the safety and reliability of power infrastructure in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

**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.<sup>1</sup>

/s/ Steven D. Selser

Steven D. Selser

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 22, 2025

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

---

<sup>1</sup> BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*

# **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:** FY24 North Bend District Priority Pole Replacements.

## **Project Site Description**

Structures being replaced are in existing rights-of-way that are surrounded by a mix of agricultural, industrial, and forest land. One structure, Coos Tap to Reedsport-Fairview No 1 94/2.8, is on a sandbar in Isthmus Slough. One structure, Reedsport-Fairview No 1 26/5, is in a field that is designated as a wetland.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians; the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde; the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz; and the Coquille Indian Tribe on January 8, 2025. On January 30, 2025, SHPO concurred with the APE and assigned the project SHPO Case No. 25-0717. No other responses were received. BPA sent a no adverse effect to historic resources determination on March 10, 2025 and OR SHPO concurred on April 2, 2025. No additional response was received within 30 days.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacement and access road improvements. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted access road and transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise from construction

activities and helicopters and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state or federally listed sensitive species as none are located within the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The majority of the project area is not located within a floodplain and there are no nearby water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed fish. Erosion control best management practices combined with the distance to the nearest waterbody would ensure that sedimentation would not enter into any water body. The culvert replacement would occur during the dry season and no water is expected to be present during construction.

One exception to this is Coos Tap to Reedsport-Fairview No 1 94/2.8, this structure is in the middle of Isthmus Slough near Coos Bay, OR. A boat would be used as a safety vessel and a helicopter would be used to remove the conductor and assist with the installation of fall protection. There will not be any ground work or alteration to the wetland around the structure. Therefore, there should be no impact to salmonid species or their habitat.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: One structure, Reedsport-Fairview No 1 26/5, is in a field that is designated as a wetland. This structure would be replaced during the dry season and be contained within a culvert to prevent leaching to surrounding soil. Excavation would occur in previously-established holes, the structure would be accessed via existing access roads, and no landing improvements would occur in the wetland; therefore, the project would not result in new wetland fill or excavations.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed. Maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use. No specially-designated areas.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-way and access road prisms. Replacement of the wood pole and associated components would be in kind and replaced in the same location; therefore, there would not be a change to the visual quality of the area. At Coos Tap to Reedsport-Fairview No 1 transmission line 94/2.1 – 94/2.7 and 94/2.9, replacing the 2 pole H-framed and the 3 pole wood structures with single pole light duty steel structures would not significantly alter the viewshed as they would be in the same location as the current structures and be smaller structures than what is currently in place.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. The use of a helicopter would last one day during the conductor's removal. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

### **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 activities have been coordinated with landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Steven Selser  
Steven D. Selser  
EPR-CHEMAWA

Date: April 22, 2025