

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Access Road Easement Acquisitions and Relinquishments through 2030

Project No.: Multiple

Project Manager: Multiple locations in Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.24 Property Transfers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to transfer access road easements on lands not owned in fee by BPA. Easement acquisitions would occur for access to existing transmission facilities where needed. Existing access road easement relinquishment would occur where easements are no longer needed to access transmission facilities. These easement acquisitions or relinquishments would be for existing roads and pathways (e.g., foot trails or agricultural field) throughout the BPA service territory that are typically being used to access BPA facilities for operation and maintenance activities such as routine inspections, equipment repair, and emergency repairs.

If any road work (including upgrades, modifications, installation of gates, or new construction) would be required, additional environmental review would be conducted as needed to consider potential impacts. Acquisitions and/or relinquishments would occur through 2030.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.102 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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures* (dated June 30, 2025), BPA has determined the following:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
- 2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
- 3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.¹

Jeremy Doschka
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ 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 the interim final rule to revise DOE NEPA regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 and NEPA Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), 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: Access Road Easement Acquisitions and Relinquishments through 2030

Project Site Description

Existing access roads and pathways in urban and rural locations throughout BPA's service territory including Idaho, Oregon, Washington, Montana, California, Nevada, Utah, and Wyoming. Existing roads and pathways could be graveled or paved; cross public, private, or tribal lands; cross farm fields; or be private driveways or a foot trail system.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishments of easements would not have the potential to affect historic and cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect plants or their habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect wildlife or their habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect land use and specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect existing visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to cause noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because no ground disturbance or change in use would occur, the acquisition or relinquishment of easements would not have the potential to affect human health and 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: Acquisition or relinquishment of easements for roads or pathways will be directly negotiated with the landowner.

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

Signed:

Jeremy Doschka, ECT-4
Environmental Protection Specialist