

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sammamish-Maple Valley Urgent Structure Replacements and Road Improvements

PP&A No.: 5110

Project Manager: Jodie Anderson, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: King, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to replace two steel lattice towers on the Sammamish-Maple Valley #1 transmission line (15/5 and 23/1) that were damaged in the bomb cyclone that occurred in the Seattle, Washington region in early 2025. The old, damaged structures would be dismantled and removed and new structures would be rebuilt in similar locations. To support the structure replacements, BPA proposes to conduct access road improvements to both structure locations. The work would consist of improving (grading and/or adding gravel) the entire length of both roads, improving the landings at both structures, constructing four cross drain culverts, one drain dip, constructing two new landings (60 feet by 40 feet in size), realigning approximately 75 feet of an existing structure road, decommissioning the old road, and conducting minor bridge repair. All work would be above the ordinary high-water mark and no in water work is proposed.

To accomplish all of the work listed above, light-duty trucks, bulldozers, dump trucks, excavators, graders, cranes, and other equipment may be used.

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.¹

/s/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 24, 2025

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 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: Sammamish-Maple Valley Emergency Structure Replacements and Road Improvements

Project Site Description

Work would occur in and adjacent to the BPA right of way (ROW) in western Washington. The project area and surroundings are primarily forested while in the Cascade foothills. Small portions of the line pass through rural and suburban communities.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and 36 CFR 800, BPA initiated consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, the Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe on May 13, 2025. DAHP concurred with the APE and the determination of no adverse effect on June 9, 2025, the Snoqualmie Tribe responded on May 14, 2025, and asked that they be notified at the start of construction. No other responses were received within 30 days.

In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA will require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Stormwater best management practices (BMPs) would be used as needed during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion. Disturbed sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Vegetation would be permanently removed in new landings. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor and temporary disturbance areas would be revegetated. No special status species are known to exist in this location.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wildlife would be temporarily disturbed by construction work while conducting access road work, building landings, and removing impairments. Wildlife would be expected to relocate to adjacent habitat and return upon completion of construction activities. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor. No special status species are known to exist in this location.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: One bridge would be repaired above the ordinary high water mark. No in water work would occur. Appropriate stormwater BMPs would be used during the project as needed to control runoff or erosion. Work areas would be stabilized upon completion of project activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A wetland delineation was completed in 2023 for the project area. No work within wetlands is proposed for this project.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are unlikely to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private wells or springs. Any spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notification.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No specially-designated areas are present. Project locations are within existing transmission line corridors and would not change existing land uses. The bridge is privately owned and is utilized by three landowners. The repairs have been coordinated with the landowners, would be short in duration, and should not impact traffic or access.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed improvements are consistent with the surroundings and existing transmission line and access roads and would not significantly change the existing visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project has a short construction duration and involves normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities and would be for a short duration.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No hazardous conditions are known to exist.

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: Underlying and surrounding landowners would be notified and coordinated with in advance of the proposed project.

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

Signed: /s/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: July 24, 2025