

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: PacifiCorp Lyons Loop Upgrade

Project No.: LURR 20230352

Project Manager: Darin Smith, TERR-CHEMAWA

Location: Linn County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow PacifiCorp to construct a new 69kV transmission line and bury an existing overhead distribution line across BPA fee-owned right-of-way (ROW) that includes the Santiam-Lyons UHV Xfmr No. 1, Detroit-Santiam No. 1, and Jones Canyon-Santiam No.1 transmission lines in Linn County, Oregon.

The new transmission line would include installing two new wood poles: one pole between BPA structures 1/4 and 1/5 of the Santiam-Lyons UHV Xfmr No. 1 transmission line (PacifiCorp structure 1/1) and the other pole between BPA structures 23/3 and 23/2 of the Detroit-Santiam transmission line (PacifiCorp structure 2/2). The poles would be installed approximately 20 to 25 feet east of Sub Station Drive SE.

PacifiCorp structure 1/1 would be a 75-foot-long pole embedded to a depth of 23.5 feet and structure 2/2 would be a 60-foot-long pole embedded to a depth of 8 feet. After installation, the new poles would be approximately 52 feet in height. Additionally, new conductor, guy wires, and anchors would be installed. The entire structure footprint at each installation site, including poles, guy wires, and anchors, would be approximately 60 feet by 40 feet.

The existing overhead distribution line would be buried across the BPA ROW along the same alignment as the new PacifiCorp 69kV transmission line and within 5 feet of the new poles. The approximately 540 -foot-long portion of the line would be buried in a trench no deeper than 5 feet deep and approximately 3 feet wide. Two existing wood poles from the overhead distribution line would be removed by cutting the poles off at the ground surface.

An approximately 2,500 square-foot temporary staging area would be located on the east side of Sub Station Drive SE in a paved/graveled area. Equipment used would include light duty trucks, auger truck, and bucket truck.

BPA authorizes the use of and manages its fee-owned lands pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act. 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f).

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 Evaluation

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 located on BPA fee-owned ROW in Township 9 South, Range 1 East, Section 23. Vegetation consists of low-growing shrubs, grasses, forbs, and several conifer trees along Substation Drive SE. Surrounding land uses consist of electric transmission infrastructure, low-density residential, and agriculture interspersed with patchy forested areas. No wetlands or water bodies are mapped within or immediately adjacent to the project site.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation on February 13, 2025 with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Grande Ronde Community of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon. On March 14, 2025, the Oregon SHPO concurred with the area of potential effects (APE) and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon responded stating that they concurred with the proposed methodology and had no further records for the area. No other responses were received.

Background research and archaeological field survey conducted in 2025 indicated that no previously recorded archaeological resources were identified in the APE. BPA has determined June 18, 2025 (BPA CR Project No.: OR 2024 004; SHPO Case No.: 25-0285) that the implementation of the proposed project would result in no historic properties affected. No comments were received.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural resources or historic properties are inadvertently encountered during the implementation of the project, BPA would 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: The proposed action would cause temporary and permanent soil impacts from trenching and pole installation activities. Minor soil compaction would likely occur due to vehicle and heavy equipment use and staging of materials and equipment. Excavated soils from trenching would be temporarily sidecast, then backfilled and returned to original contours. Temporary disturbed soils would be reseeded with a regionally-appropriate seed mix following completion of construction. Standard construction best management practices (BMPs) would be used to minimize soil erosion, sedimentation, and fugitive dust. No impacts to geology are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would temporarily remove, crush, or cover shrubs, grasses, and forbs from staging, trenching and pole installation activities. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species, including plants listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat would be permanently impacted.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior and wildlife displacement could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, there would be little permanent impact to wildlife habitat, and temporarily disturbed or displaced wildlife would likely reoccupy the site following completion of the proposed action. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species, including wildlife listed under the Federal ESA near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

Notes:

- If tree removal is required during the nesting season (March-August), a nest survey must be conducted prior to tree removal. If occupied nests are identified, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the nest until it can be inspected and assessed by BPA.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish-bearing streams are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies, floodplains, or fish would occur.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance:

Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Geotech borings in the project site extended to a depth of 40 feet and did not encounter groundwater. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is consistent with existing land use at the project site and would not impact adjacent land uses. The project site is not located in a specially-designated area. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the presence of equipment and general construction activities, including vegetation disturbance, would cause temporary visual impacts. The new poles

would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area, and the project site is not located in a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary, minor fugitive dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction. No long-term changes to air quality would occur. No significant impact to air quality is expected from the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary noise from equipment and vehicles would occur during construction and during daylight hours. No significant impact from noise is expected.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No hazardous materials would be used during construction of the project. No impact to human health and safety is expected.

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 would occur 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:

Jeremy Doschka
Environmental Protection Specialist