

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Andresen Road Comcast Fiber Installation

Project No.: LURR20240392

Project Manager: Billie Woodman, TERR-ROSS MHQA

Location: Clark County, Washington.

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way; B4.7 Fiber optic cable

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Comcast Cable Communications (Comcast) to install two underground conduits for fiber optic cables within BPA fee-owned right-of-way (ROW). The fiber would connect to a fiber vault located outside the BPA ROW. A north-south bore would be conducted between structures 33/7 and 33/6 on the North Bonneville-Ross No. 2 transmission line, and structures 33/6 and 33/5 on the North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 transmission line in Vancouver, Clark County, Washington. Comcast would excavate a bore pit outside the northern edge of the ROW and conduct a north-south directional bore west of Andresen Road. The bore would cross the entire width of the ROW (approximately 350 feet) at a minimum of 36 inches deep. Comcast would then install two 2-inch diameter conduits in the bore hole and run fiber optic cable through the conduit. No surface ground disturbance would occur within the BPA fee-owned ROW.

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

Jessica A. Heppler
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 within the BPA fee-owned North Bonneville-Ross No. 1 and No. 2 transmission line ROWs, in Vancouver, Clark County, Washington (T2N R2E Section 30). Project activities would be carried out to the west of Andresen Road where it passes through the ROW. Ground cover within the project site consists of regularly managed native and non-native herbaceous species. Outside of the ROW, the surrounding area is a mix of urban commercial, residential, and recreational land uses, with additional wooded areas associated with Burnt Bridge Creek. According to the National Wetland Inventory, there are no wetlands mapped within the project site. Soil survey data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service indicates that the project site is characterized by Lauren gravelly loam, which is not hydric. The National Hydrography Dataset indicates that the closest perennial surface water body is Burnt Bridge Creek, which is located approximately 700 feet to the north of the project site.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: No ground disturbance is proposed within the BPA ROW. Comcast proposes to begin the directional boring outside of the BPA fee-owned ROW, and they do not intend to trench within the ROW to receive the conduit or fiber, additionally, the vault would also be placed outside of the BPA ROW. Based on the information provided, BPA has determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: No bore-pits would be excavated on BPA property, and the bore would be completed without any additional soil disturbance. The proposed project would not impact geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Due to the lack of ground disturbing activities, there are not anticipated to be any effects to plants at the proposed project site. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species or plant species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Therefore, the proposed project would result in No Effect to protected plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during project implementation. However, wildlife species that could be present in the area are likely already habituated to human activity, including vehicle traffic and other activities associated with urban commercial and residential development. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the federal ESA, and no such species or suitable habitat are expected to occur at the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would result in No Effect to protected wildlife species.

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 are present in the project area. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies or floodplains and would have no effect on fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project site is not within a wetland, nor are there hydric soils present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Boring efforts are unlikely to reach depths that could affect groundwater or aquifers. Comcast would be responsible for implementing standard construction BMPs to reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. 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 would not require a change in land use, and the project site is not located in a specially-designated area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: All boring efforts would be underground and would not change the visual quality of the proposed project site from its current state.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in emissions in the local area from vehicle and equipment use. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project-related noise would be temporary and intermittent and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change from current ambient conditions.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. No impact to human health and safety is expected as a result of project activities.

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 land owned by BPA. No additional 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:

Jessica A. Heppler
Environmental Protection Specialist