Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Monroe Substation Maintenance Project

Project No.: P-03623

Project Manager: Rob Moriarty, TEPP-TPP-1

Location: Snohomish County, Washington

Categorical Exclusions Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.7 Electrical equipment; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities; B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action:
Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace and update electrical equipment at the existing Monroe Substation located about 3.2 miles northeast of the City of Monroe in Snohomish County, Washington. BPA would upgrade four 500/230-kilovolt (kV) transformers and a 230-kV shunt reactor along with new concrete footings, disconnect switches, oil containment system upgrades, and associated equipment updates. BPA would also install upgrades to the communication system inside the substation control house and upgrades to the station service equipment that provides power to the control house.

BPA would replace all four existing 500/230-kV single-phase transformers with higher capacity units. BPA would install the new transformers on new 50-foot by 32-foot concrete pad footings with oil containment systems around each unit. To accommodate the new equipment and layout, BPA would install new voltage transformers (VTs), motor-operated disconnects, overhead bus, concrete footings, and steel support structures. BPA would also move and reuse some of the existing VTs and arresters, which would require new concrete footings and supports. BPA would replace the existing 230-kV shunt reactor with a new three-phase reactor along with a new power circuit breaker, three new VTs, and a new surge arrester.

The replacement of oil-filled equipment in the yard would require oil containment and stormwater system upgrades to accommodate modifications to equipment sizes and locations. BPA would remove and relocate sections of existing stormwater drainage pipe, a manhole, conduit, sidewalk, and switchyard roads to accommodate new footing and oil containment locations. The containment liners around each single-phase 500/230-kV transformer would be designed to cover an area inside the rocked yard approximately 78 feet by 81 feet and 2-feet deep, and the containment liner around the 230-kV shunt reactor would be slightly smaller, 63 feet by 66 feet and 2 feet deep. The containment liners and conveyance pipes for existing equipment would be removed during construction and entirely replaced for the new equipment. The new liners would connect into the existing vault system with new conveyance piping, and no new outfalls or work outside the substation yard would be required.

BPA would replace the station service transformer, emergency generator, and associated equipment to maintain reliable station service at the existing control house. The communication system inside the control house would be updated with new electrical monitoring and communication systems for

relaying, station service, and panelboards, including three new telecommunications fiber optic circuits and a new GPS antenna on the outside of the control house.

The project would maintain equipment to meet current and future operational requirements. 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 1021.102 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]

/s/ *Anthony Gibson*
Anthony Gibson, EPI-4
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ *Katey Grange*
Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer Date: *October 28, 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 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: Monroe Substation Maintenance Project

Project Site Description

The proposed action would occur entirely within the existing, fenced yard at the BPA Monroe Substation located about 3.2 miles northeast of Monroe in Snohomish County, Washington within Township 28N, Range 7E, Section 22. The roughly 30-acre substation yard has been heavily disturbed and consists of compacted, non-native rock and is maintained clear of vegetation.

The surrounding area is primarily characterized by forested lands, dispersed rural residential properties, small neighborhoods and maintained BPA transmission line right-of-way. Multiple wetlands and streams exist within 1 mile of the project area. The closest mapped perennial water body is a tributary to Woods Creek located 0.5 miles east of the exterior fence surrounding the Monroe Substation yard.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All ground-disturbing activities would occur within the previously-disturbed Monroe Substation yard. The substation has been determined not eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the proposed project would not alter the integrity or eligibility of the property. Therefore, the proposed project would have no potential to cause effects on historic properties. Per stipulation I.D.4 of the *Programmatic Agreement Among the Bonneville Power Administration, the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, the Montana State Historic Preservation Office, the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office, the Washington State Historic Preservation Office, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation to Implement the Bonneville Power Administration Manual for Built Resources,* no further consultation regarding potential effects is required.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Localized ground disturbances would occur during construction within the substation. Installation of the new footings and upgrades to the existing oil containment system would involve limited excavation into native soils below the substation yard fill material. The project could generate excess excavation spoils beyond what could be used as backfill. Standard erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sediment migration off site. Any excess soil remaining after construction would be disposed of according to local, state, and federal regulations.

Standard construction best management practices (BMPs) and a regulatory Erosion and Sediment Control Plan (ESCP) would minimize erosion, sedimentation, and fugitive dust. In-yard work areas would be returned to pre-existing conditions following completion of the project.

Notes:

- Develop and implement an ESCP.

- Spill containment and cleanup materials shall be stored in construction equipment, staging areas, and work sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work is located within the existing substation yard; no plants present/disturbed. No federal- Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed plants or designated critical habitat occur within the geographic area of the Monroe Substation; therefore, would not be impacted by the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A project-specific species list was generated from the USFWS ECOS-IPaC website on June 13, 2025, pursuant to Section 7 of the ESA to review if any species which are listed, proposed to be listed, or candidate species may be present in the vicinity of the proposed action. The list identified six ESA-listed species may occur in the project area including marbled murrelet (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), northwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (*Bombus suckleyi*), and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*).

No terrestrial or aquatic habitat exists within the disturbed, rocked Monroe Substation yard that is maintained free of vegetation. A review of the list of species and other resources for the surrounding area found that the proposed action would have no potential to effect ESA-listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species; designated or proposed critical habitat; candidate species; state special-status species of concern; or priority habitats. Minor increases in noise and human presence during construction could have the potential to affect wildlife in proximity of the site, if present; however, these impacts would be temporary and not significant.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish-bearing streams are present within the Monroe Substation fence. The nearest waterway with federal-listed species is Woods Creek, approximately 0.5 miles east of the project area. According to the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Fisheries, Woods Creek is also listed as Designated Critical Habitat for the Distinct Population Segment (DPS) of Puget Sound steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) and Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*). The Skykomish river, which Woods Creek is a tributary of, is the nearest mapped critical habitat for Bull Trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) and is also listed as Designated Critical Habitat for DPS of Puget Sound steelhead and chinook salmon. Standard construction BMPs would prevent indirect impacts to water bodies, floodplains, and special-status fish. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitats.

Notes:

- Develop and implement an ESCP.
- Standard erosion control measures and construction BMPs should be implemented to prevent any potential sediment migration off site.
- Any excess spoils generated during project activities shall be hauled off site for disposal.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) maps multiple freshwater wetlands near but not within the project area. Standard work area isolation and erosion and sediment control BMPs would be implemented during project construction. Work proposed would have no impact on adjacent wetlands.

Notes:

- Develop and implement an ESCP.
- Standard erosion control measures and construction BMPs should be implemented to prevent any potential sediment migration off site.
- Any excess spoils generated during project activities shall be hauled off site for disposal.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: According to the US Geological Survey (USGS) National Water Information System, the nearest well, located approximately 1 mile northeast, has a historic groundwater depth of 38 feet. Additionally, the Snohomish County Planning and Development Services Portal maps the project area as moderate aquifer susceptibility, with varying depths of 40 to 100 feet. There are no critical aquifer recharge areas, well heads, surface water or groundwater protection areas that occur within or adjacent to the project area. Project activities would not reach assumed groundwater depths below the substation yard. Standard construction BMPs and the use of a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures Plan would reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. 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 current surrounding land uses, and the project site is not located in a specially designated area. These disturbances would also occur on BPA fee-owned property.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The equipment replacements are similar in size and appearance to existing equipment and the associated footing modifications in the substation yard would not have a noticeable impact on the baseline visual quality at the site.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in dust and emissions in the local area from general construction activities. Standard construction BMPs would suppress dust. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities could produce noise at levels higher than current ambient conditions. The proposed project site is in a forested area with minimal development. Construction-related noise could be audible from properties located near the substation. Noise impacts would be temporary and intermittent and would occur only during typical working hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout project construction, and standard construction BMPs would minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact 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: The proposed action would occur on BPA fee-owned property. BPA would notify and coordinate with the adjacent landowners prior to the start of construction, as appropriate.

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

Signed: /s/ *Anthony Gibson*
Anthony Gibson, EPI-4 Date: *October 28, 2025*
Physical Scientist (Environmental)