

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sammamish-Maple Valley No. 1 19/1 Floating Dead-end Structure

Project No.: P03386

Project Manager: Charla Burke, TEPS-TPP-1

Location: King County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Appendix B, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B.4.11 Electrical power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to remove the three suspension assemblies on existing structure 19/1 on the Sammamish Maple Valley No.1 transmission line. The removed assemblies would be replaced with floating dead-end assemblies. This would thereby convert structure 19/1 from a suspension structure to a floating dead-end structure. BPA would place gravel/rock at the base of the tower to resist uplift forces. Although irregularly-shaped, the project area is at its maximum 200 feet long and 200 feet wide. The conversion of the structure to a dead-end structure would not create other ground disturbance as all of the work would occur on the transmission lines supported by bucket trucks parked on the graveled access road/landing.

This work would allow Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to interconnect its proposed Grand Ridge Substation to BPA's existing Sammamish-Maple Valley No. 1 230kV Transmission Line. PSE is constructing 2 new tap lines which would connect their substation to the BPA transmission line. Each tap would go to a different side of structure 19/1 (BOL vs AOL).

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

Christopher H. Furey
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.

Proposed Action: Sammamish-Maple Valley No. 1 19/1 Floating Dead-end Structure

Project Site Description

The project is located in northwest Washington in King County. The project area is comprised of mostly gravel area with an access road and adjacent raised garden beds. The project is located at structure 19/1 of the Sammamish-Maple Valley No. 1 transmission line. The surrounding area is comprised of mostly suburban residential development and greenway areas. No wetlands were identified within 150 feet or within the broader vicinity of the project area. The North Fork Issaquah Creek is located over 3,000 feet north of the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA archaeologist reviewed the proposed activities and determined that these activities at the project area do not have potential to cause effects to historic or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited to no impacts to soils by use of bucket trucks in the access road and disturbed gravel area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited impacts to plants by use of bucket trucks in the access road and disturbed gravel area. Vegetation around the structure footings would be lost due to the placement of gravel. Vegetation loss would be small and limited to structure footings.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur using bucket trucks and an existing access road during daytime hours to access the transmission line with no expected impacts to wildlife.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no impacts to water bodies by use of bucket trucks in the access road and disturbed gravel area.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no impacts to wetlands by use of bucket trucks in the access road and disturbed gravel area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no groundwater disturbance by use of bucket trucks in the access road and disturbed gravel area.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur. Work would occur from bucket trucks on existing access and there would be no disruption to right-of-way users, such as community gardeners.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The new floating dead-end transmission structure would be a minor change to the visual character of the existing transmission line. No change in the overall visual character would occur.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation. There would be small, sporadic increases in vehicle exhaust during periods of active work at the transmission structure.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, intermittent noise associated with increased vehicle traffic and equipment use would occur during installation.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Workers on the project would be required to follow all applicable state and/or Federal safety standards.

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: BPA Transmission is in coordination with PSE and City of Issaquah.

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

Signed:

Christopher H. Furey
Environmental Protection Specialist