

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fort Rock Revenue and Power Quality Meter Addition

Project No.: N0865

Project Manager: Kody Fullerton, TPCF-TRI CITIES RMHQ

Location: Lake County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.7 Electronic Equipment, B1.31 Installation or relocation of machinery and equipment

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) to install a new BPA-owned Revenue and Power Quality (PQ) meter and associated equipment panels and racks within the Midstate Electric Cooperative (MEC)-owned Fort Rock Substation Control House. To facilitate meter installation, BPA would fund MEC to install a concrete pedestal, and three current transformers (CTs) and three potential transformers (PTs) on an existing LaPine-Fort Rock transmission line structure within the substation. Cabling from the CTs and PTs would be run inside the control house to the metering rack. Equipment installed outside in the existing fenced substation yard, which includes the CT's and PT's, and the concrete pedestal would be enclosed within a new fence. All work would occur within the existing control house and substation yard perimeter.

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

Jessica A. Heppler
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Evaluation

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 evaluation 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: Fort Rock Revenue and Power Quality Meter Addition

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located at the MEC Fort Rock Substation located in Lake County, Oregon (T27S R15E Section 2). All project actions would occur within the existing substation footprint, which is graveled and fenced. All ground disturbance would occur within compacted gravel fill that is maintained to be clear of vegetation. The area around the MEC Fort Rock substation is characterized by working agricultural fields, sparse residential, and educational facilities. No water bodies or wetlands are present in or near the project site.

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 implementing regulations 36 CFR 800, BPA initiated consultation with the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Fort McDermitt Paiute-Shoshone Tribe, the Klamath Tribes, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on September 29, 2025. BPA determined that the Fort Rock Substation is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no other historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and BPA found that the project would result in no historic properties affected. On September 29, 2025, the Klamath Tribes responded that they have no concerns with the project as described. The Oregon SHPO confirmed receipt of the consultation materials on September 30, 2025 (SHPO Case 25-2233). No other responses were received.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: All project activities would be conducted within the area of the substation yard, in areas permanently graveled. There would be temporary, minor soil disturbance from the construction of the new fence, pedestal, and trenching. Geology is not anticipated to be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There would be minor ground disturbance anticipated as part of this project, however there are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species, or plant species protected under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) occurring at the project site. All project actions would be within the Fort Rock substation in graveled areas maintained for no vegetation.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of special-status wildlife species or suitable habitat present in the project area. Minor and temporary disturbance of common wildlife species could occur from elevated noise during construction. Because the work would be occurring with a fenced and currently operating substation yard, any wildlife present are likely used to human presence and noise.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project area has no nearby waterbodies, is not in a floodplain, and would not affect fish species.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The project action area is not within or near a wetland.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project actions would not reach depths that could impact aquifers and groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: There would be no change in land use or specially designated areas as a result of this project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: The addition of the fence, meter, and associated equipment is expected to be a minor alteration to visual quality and would remain consistent with the overall visual characteristics of the site.

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: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected for this area as a result of this project.

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 MEC. BPA has been in coordination with MEC. 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