



Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621



December 19, 2025

To: Alla Kirsanova – TELP-TPP-1
From: Adrienne Wojtasz – EPR-Bell-1
Subject: Categorical Exclusion (CX) Determination – FY22-FY24 Bell Priority Poles

Attached to this letter is BPA's CX Determination for the FY22-FY24 Bell Priority Pole Replacements. Also included is the CX evaluation that supports this determination.

The CX checklist identifies mitigation measures required to help your project meet environmental laws or CX criteria. The EP environmental lead that will help facilitate implementation of required mitigation measures is Adrienne Wojtasz.

Please be aware that if project changes are necessary that involve new locations to be disturbed not analyzed as part of the CX (such as landing pads, relocations, access road widening, tree clearing, new structures, etc.), you need to immediately contact me, the EP environmental lead, at 509-468-3096 to determine if additional environmental review is required.

/s/ Adrienne Wojtasz
Adrienne Wojtasz
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY22-FY24 Bell Priority Pole Replacements

PP&A No.: P05681

Project Manager: Alla Kirsanova – TELP-TPP-1

Location: Spokane, Pend Oreille, Stevens Counties Washington; Bonner, Boundary Counties Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform in-kind replacement of one hundred twenty one wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g. cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along the Addy-Cusick No. 1, Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No. 1, Bronx-Sand Creek No. 1, Bell-Addy No. 1, Bell-Boundary No. 3, Bell-Usk No. 1, Libby-Bonniers Ferry No. 1, Priest River Tap to Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No. 1, Sacheen-Albeni Falls No. 1, Sand Creek-Bonniers Ferry 1&2 No. 1 and Sand Creek-Bonniers Ferry 1&2 No. 2 transmission lines. Replacement poles would be placed in or adjacent to existing holes following removal of current pole structures and may be re-augured to assure proper depth placement. The proposed project would improve and repair approximately 16.8 miles of access roads, one ford, along with installation of water bars, drain dips, and minor maintenance along existing access road prisms. Access road maintenance may include blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and placing surface rock on the existing road prisms. Seventy-two new landings (typically sized 50 feet by 50 feet), seven gates, eight culverts, and one approach would also be constructed. General equipment used for this type of work includes graders, rollers, bulldozers, brush hogs, excavators, and dump trucks. No unauthorized construction activities would occur in any water body including streams, ponds, or wetlands.

Wood pole replacement locations are listed in Attachment 1.

The proposed action would maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be done in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA Standards. 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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange

Date: December 19, 2025

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.*

CC:

A. Wojtasz – EPR-Bell-1
C. Browning – EPR/Covington
A. Lunde – TELF-Bell-1
C. Sullivan – TELP-TPP-1
A. Raymond – TERR-Bell-1
R. Piche – TFWK-Grand Coulee
Official File – EP (EQ-15-CX)

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(NEPA)\CX\FY22-24 Bell Priority Poles\CX_FY22-24 Bell Priority Poles.docx

Attachment 1

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County, State
Addy-Cusick No 1	8/5	T33N R40E SEC23	Stevens, WA
	10/5	T33N R41E SEC19	Stevens, WA
	23/2	T33N R42E SEC25	Pend Oreille, WA
	25/8	T33N R43E SEC32	Pend Oreille, WA
	26/3	T33N R43E SEC28	Pend Oreille, WA
Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No 1	24/9, 24/10, 24/11, 24/12	T57N R2W SEC30	Bonner, ID
	25/1, 25/2, 25/3, 25/4, 25/5	T57N R2W SEC19	Bonner, ID
	25/6, 25/7, 25/8, 25/9, 26/1	T57N R2W SEC20	Bonner, ID
	26/3	T57N R2W SEC17	Bonner, ID
	29/7, 29/8, 29/9, 30/2	T57N R2W SEC3	Bonner, ID
Bronx-Sand Creek No 1	7/1	T57N R2W SEC20	Bonner, ID
	10/6	T57N R2W SEC3	Bonner, ID
Bell-Addy No 1	1/6	T26N R43E SEC16	Spokane, WA
	5/2	T26N R43E SEC3	Spokane, WA
	5/4	T27N R43E SEC34	Spokane, WA
	5/6, 6/2	T27N R43E SEC33	Spokane, WA
	17/10	T28N R42E SEC10	Spokane, WA
	18/2	T28N R42E SEC3	Spokane, WA
	23/6, 23/7	T29N R42E SEC18	Stevens, WA
	24/4, 24/5	T29N R41E SEC13	Stevens, WA
	25/3	T29N R41E SEC12	Stevens, WA
	25/8	T29N R41E SEC11	Stevens, WA
	26/4, 26/5, 26/6, 26/7, 27/1	T29N R41E SEC2	Stevens, WA
	27/4	T30N R41E SEC35	Stevens, WA
	27/8	T30N R41E SEC34	Stevens, WA
	29/4, 29/5	T30N R41E SEC27	Stevens, WA
	29/6, 29/7, 29/8, 29/9	T30N R41E SEC22	Stevens, WA
	31/2, 30/10	T30N R41E SEC16	Stevens, WA
	31/8, 32/3, 32/4	T30N R41E SEC9	Stevens, WA
	32/6, 32/7	T30N R41E SEC4	Stevens, WA
	33/2, 33/6	T30N R41E SEC5	Stevens, WA
	34/2, 34/4	T31N R41E SEC32	Stevens, WA
	34/6, 35/4	T31N R41E SEC29	Stevens, WA
	35/7, 36/3	T31N R41E SEC19	Stevens, WA
Bell-Boundary No 3	6/3, 6/4	T27N R43E SEC28	Spokane, WA
	6/6	T27N R43E SEC29	Spokane, WA
	8/10	T27N R43E SEC18	Spokane, WA
	23/2	T29N R41E SEC13	Stevens, WA

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County, State
	34/4	T31N R41E SEC29	Stevens, WA
	34/8, 35/1, 35/5	T31N R41E SEC19	Stevens, WA
	37/9	T31N R40E SEC12	Stevens, WA
	38/3	T31N R40E SEC1	Stevens, WA
	46/5	T32N R40E SEC5	Stevens, WA
	55/7	T34N R39E SEC35	Stevens, WA
	60/4	T34N R39E SEC4	Stevens, WA
	68/7, 68/8	T36N R39E SEC36	Stevens, WA
	71/5	T36N R40E SEC20	Stevens, WA
	78/8	T37N R40R SEC22	Stevens, WA
	82/3	T37N R41E SEC7	Stevens, WA
Bell-Usk No 1	48/5, 48/7, 49/1	T32N R44E SEC6	Pend Orielle, WA
	49/4	T32N R44E SEC5	Pend Orielle, WA
	50/2, 50/3, 50/4, 50/5	T32N R44E SEC8	Pend Orielle, WA
Libby-Bonnors Ferry No 1	50/1	T61N R3E SEC10	Boundary, ID
	52/6	T62N R3E SEC32	Boundary, ID
	53/6	T62N R3E SEC29	Boundary, ID
	54/1, 54/9	T62N R3E SEC30	Boundary, ID
	58/1	T62N R2E SEC27	Boundary, ID
	58/7	T62N R2E SEC33	Boundary, ID
	60/2	T62N R2E SEC31	Boundary, ID
	62/7, 62/11	T62N R1E SEC35	Boundary, ID
Priest River Tap to Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No 1	2/14, 2/15, 3/3, 3/4	T56N R4W SEC18	Bonner, ID
	3/6, 3/10, 3/12, 3/13	T56N R4W SEC7	Bonner, ID
Sacheen-Albeni Falls No 1	1/1, 1/2	T31N R44E SEC20	Pend Orielle, WA
Sand Creek-Bonnors Ferry 1&2 No 1	1/6, 2/4	T58N R2W SEC25	Bonner, ID
	12/4	T59N R1W SEC9	Bonner, ID
	13/3	T59N R1W SEC3	Bonner, ID
Sand Creek-Bonnors Ferry 1&2 No 2	1/7	T58N R2W SEC25	Bonner, ID
	11/8, 12/1	T59N R1W SEC9	Bonner, ID

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: FY22-FY24 Bell Priority Pole Replacements

Project Site Description

Proposed routine maintenance activities would be conducted along the Addy-Cusick No. 1, Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No. 1, Bronx-Sand Creek No. 1, Bell-Addy No. 1, Bell-Boundary No. 3, Bell-Usk No. 1, Libby-Bonniers Ferry No. 1, Priest River Tap to Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No. 1, Sacheen-Albeni Falls No. 1, Sand Creek-Bonniers Ferry 1&2 No. 1 and Sand Creek- Bonniers Ferry 1&2 No. 2 transmission lines. Proposed maintenance activities would be performed in the existing transmission line rights-of-way and access road easements which are located in agricultural and forested areas on privately owned, public lands managed by the Kaniksu Land Trust, state timber lands, and BPA-fee owned easements.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Coeur d'Alene Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, the Kalispel Tribe of Indians, the STI, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes, the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, the Washington State Department of Natural Resources, the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), and the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on November 1, 2024. BPA received a response from the Spokane Tribe of Indians (STI) on November 4, 2024, noting that the APE is in a high probability area, and requesting a Post-Review Discovery Plan Of Cultural Resources Procedure be present during construction. The Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) responded on November 5, 2024, and Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (Idaho SHPO) responded on November 15, 2024, concurring with the APE. No other responses were received. BPA sent a no adverse effect to historic resources determination on November 7, 2025, and Idaho SHPO concurred on December 15, 2025. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Notes:

- BPA's TLM and Access Road Contractor shall carry with them onsite BPA's Post-review Discovery Plan of Cultural Resources Procedure. They shall review the procedure prior to conducting the work.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacement and access road improvements. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal or no disturbance to vegetation is anticipated during structure replacement, relocation and access road improvements as the locations have been previously disturbed with minimal vegetation. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species is anticipated. Projects activities would be limited to already impacted access roads and transmission line rights-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant species.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any Federal or State special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted rights-of-way and would not substantially alter the footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be permanently affected. Minor elevated noise and human presence may occur during the work period to cause a temporary disruption to area wildlife.

Notes:

- Drive on existing access roads.
- Reduce work area footprint to the least necessary to safely do the work.
- Crush vegetation in place of removal.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: There is one ephemeral drainage in the project area with existing ford crossing present on Bell-Boundary No. 3 and several culverts on the Bell-Addy No. 1. State databases indicate that these waterways are not fish bearing. BPA proposes maintenance activities at this ford crossing location and culvert locations. No in water work is proposed and work would be performed during the summer period when the channel is dry. As ephemeral drainages and maintenance activities, these waterways are not regulated by the Clean Water Act; therefore, no Section 404 permitting would be required. Erosion control best management practices would be used to ensure sedimentation into any water body does not occur.

Notes:

- Locate refueling and servicing operations where spilled material cannot enter natural or manmade waterbodies and drainage conveyances (e.g., ditches, catch basins, ponds, wetlands, streams, and pipes). Use pumps, funnels, absorbent pads, and drip pans when fueling or servicing vehicles and equipment. Vehicle maintenance other than emergency repair may not be performed on site.
- The construction project would operate under a project specific erosion and sediment control plan (BPA ESCP plan or NPDES permit) to mitigate potential erosion and sedimentation into waterways and stabilize disturbed soils.
- During all sediment-generating activities, site-appropriate sediment transport minimization measures such as sediment curtains, fiber wattles, hay bales, sediment fences, or mulch will be fully functional prior to commencing work and maintained during sediment-generating activities to minimize unintentional erosion/sediment introduction into aquatic resources. Non-biodegradable materials, such as chicken wire, hog fencing, or plastic netting would not be used for soil stabilization.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present in the project area.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed and excavation would not extend to a depth that would intersect ground water.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No. 1 and Bonx-Sand Creek No. 1 are located within the Kaniksu Land Trust Pine Street Woods Community Forest. Work timing to be coordinated with trust personnel to limit impacts to community activities and day camp schedules. Access road improvement work was planned to not impact forest health and recreational uses such as skiing and hiking trails.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The replacement of wood poles on the Addy-Cusick No. 1, Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No. 1, Bronx-Sand Creek No. 1, Bell-Addy No. 1, Bell-Boundary No. 3, Bell-Usk No. 1, Libby-Bonnors Ferry No. 1, Priest River Tap to Albeni Falls-Sand Creek No. 1, Sacheen-Albeni Falls No. 1, Sand Creek-Bonnors Ferry 1&2 No. 1 and Sand Creek- Bonnors Ferry 1&2 No. 2 transmission lines and access road work, may change the existing visual character of the area; however, the area is currently a high voltage transmission corridor, and would remain so after project completion, so the overall appearance would not substantially change.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some minor, local impacts to air quality would occur due to the construction activity and vehicular traffic, however impacts would be temporary and insignificant. Work areas are generally located in remote places.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activity would generate noise. However, impacts would be local and relatively minor. All project activity would occur during daylight hours, and work areas are generally located in remote places.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line, which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power to the region.

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 Realty has coordinated with the underlying land managers and private landowners for this work.

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

Signed: /s/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: December 19, 2025