

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Beaverton Underground Fiber Installation

**Project No.:** LURR20250293

**Project Manager:** Darin Smith – TERR-CHEMAWA

**Location:** Washington County, Oregon

**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 MCI Metro for Verizon to install two underground conduits for fiber optic cables within a BPA fee-owned right-of-way (ROW). An east-west bore would be conducted north of structure 12/8 on the Keeler-Oregon City No. 2 transmission line ROW in Washington County, Oregon. The bore would cross the entire width of the ROW (approximately 100 feet) at a minimum of 36 inches deep. Since buried utilities exist crossing the ROW in the same location, up to 10 vacuum-created potholes may be excavated in order to ascertain the depth and location of the existing utilities. Eight-inch cores may need to be taken out of the sidewalk pavement to accomplish the pothole excavations. The potholes and sidewalk cores would be re-filled with native material and pavement respectively when project actions are completed.

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.

Jessica A. Heppler  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Evaluation

# 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:** Beaverton Underground Fiber Installation

## **Project Site Description**

Project site is within BPA fee-owned Keeler-Oregon City No. 2 transmission line ROW in Washington County, Oregon (T1S R1W SEC20). Ground cover within the site consists of concrete sidewalk and managed native and non-native shrubs and herbaceous species. Outside of the ROW the surrounding area may be characterized as medium-density residential. The National Hydrography Dataset indicates no surface waters in the project area. The survey data from the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the National Wetland Inventory indicates the project site has no hydric soils or wetlands present.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: On November 24, 2025, background research followed by an intensive field survey of the area of effects (APE) was conducted. Based on the results, BPA determined that the proposed activities would not result in any historic properties affected. On December 18, 2025, the SHPO concurred with the determination. The 30-day response period expired on December 24, 2025, with no other comments received from consulting parties.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project activities would involve some soil disturbance. Efforts to locate previously buried utilities would temporarily remove soil and pavement cores in some locations followed by boring for conduit and fiber installation. However, all actions are in an area previously disturbed by installation of underground utilities. Effects to soil are expected to be minimal, and geology is not anticipated to be affected.

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

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Use of vehicles and equipment could result in removal of herbaceous ground cover. The disturbed areas are expected to revegetate after project completion. No additional tree or vegetation removal is proposed. 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: There are no water bodies, floodplains or fish habitat at or near the project location.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project is not near or within a wetland.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Project activities are unlikely to reach depths where groundwater or aquifers could be affected.

## **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: Some visual quality effects would be anticipated due to the need to conduct pot-hole and coring efforts to locate underground utilities. However the visual effects are expected to be temporary; the pot-holes and sidewalk cores would be refilled when project actions are completed.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Depending on the vehicles and equipment used, temporary and minor dust and vehicle emissions could increase in the local area during project implementation. There would be no long-term impact to air quality following completion of the project.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No.

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. Temporary noise would be consistent with the background noise generated by vehicle traffic and other activities associated with urban commercial and residential development. 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: Project actions 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 project site is on BPA fee-owned land and would not require any additional landowner notifications, involvement or coordination.

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