

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Wheatridge Surplus Generation Interconnection Projects

**Project No.:** G1062 and G1063

**Project Manager:** Cherilyn Randall, TPC-TPP-4

**Location:** Umatilla County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to update existing BPA electronic equipment and programs at Umatilla Electric Cooperative's (UEC) switchyard, at BPA's Longhorn Substation, and at control houses at Wheatridge generation facilities and the Blue Ridge Substation, which are operated by NextEra Energy Resources Interconnection Holdings, LLC (NextEra). Additionally, BPA would update electronic equipment at the Dittmer and Munro control centers. The equipment and program upgrades would allow BPA to monitor NextEra's surplus generation production, and trip breakers at the surplus generation facilities, when necessary, to prevent overloading the transmission grid. BPA electronic equipment installation would facilitate the interconnection of an additional 240 MW from solar and battery additions at the previously-interconnected Wheatridge generation project.

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.

Becky Hill  
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:** Wheatridge Surplus Generation Interconnection Projects (G1062 and G1063)

## **Project Site Description**

The activities associated with the interconnection projects would occur inside buildings and substations, specifically at BPA's Ditmer and Munro control centers, at NextEra's control houses, at UEC's switchyard, and at BPA's Longhorn Substation. The area surrounding the NextEra substation and control house is comprised of rolling hills, drainages, and some deep canyons.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA archaeologist and historian reviewed the proposed action and determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that the undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present. BPA made a No Potential to Cause Effect determination on January 5, 2026.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance when implementing the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, plants would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, wildlife and wildlife habitats would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, wetlands would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, groundwater and aquifers would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

## **8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: NextEra, UEC, and BPA own and operate the facilities where the proposed action would be implemented. No other lands or specially-designated areas are involved in the implementation of the proposed action.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur inside of existing buildings. Therefore, the visual quality of the area would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during project implementation. However, there would be no substantial changes to air quality during or after construction.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project implementation may create low-level, temporary noise inside of existing buildings. However, the noise would be intermittent, would only occur during daylight hours, and would likely only last for one to two days. Operating noise would not increase due to equipment installation. Therefore, the noise impacts to the surrounding areas would be virtually negligible.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project implementation, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Therefore, implementation of the proposed action would not impact human health or 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: BPA is coordinating with NextEra and UEC.

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

Signed:

Becky Hill  
Environmental Protection Specialist