

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Allston-Driscoll Structure 15/4 Slide Repair

**Project No.:** P04153

**Project Manager:** Rob Moriarty, TEGB-CSB-2

**Location:** Columbia County, Oregon

**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 repair slide damage adjacent to, and downslope of, structure 15/4 of the Allston-Driscoll No. 2 Transmission Line. This work is necessary to reinforce the terrain surrounding structure 15/4 and restore safe access to the structure for future maintenance and operations.

To repair slide damage, BPA would remove soil and rock from an existing roadway, regrade the slope, install an ecology block (recycled concrete block) retaining wall at the toe of the slope, and reinforce the top of the slope with rip rap. Repairing the slide area would generate approximately 60 cubic yards of excess material. Excavated material would be distributed in an approximately 1600-square-foot area around structure 15/3 of the Allston-Driscoll No. 2 Transmission Line and recontoured to match the existing topography. Once work is completed, the slide repair area and the material deposition area would be hydroseeded.

Additionally, drainage would be improved along the spur road leading to structure 15/4. Three existing drain dips would be made wider, deeper, and lined with rock.

General equipment used for the proposed slide repair includes bulldozers, excavators, and dump trucks.

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 the current *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Procedures*, 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.

Laura Roberts  
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: Allston-Driscoll Structure 15/4 Slide Repair

### Project Site Description

The project area is located within an existing transmission line right-of way on privately owned land in northwestern Oregon at Township 7N, Range 5W, and Section 10. Structure 15/4 occurs on a narrow ridge with steep slopes on three sides and has moderate to poor soils. Vegetation consists of mostly shrubs and grasses. The project area is surrounded by forest lands managed for timber. No surface waters occur within the project area.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

#### 1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation in support of the Allston to Astoria Rebuild Project on May 3, 2022 with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, the Oregon Department of Forestry, Clatskanie People's Utility District, Clatskanie Rural Fire Protection District, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). On March 15, 2024, BPA sent determination letters to the consulting parties that the implementation of the proposed project would result in no adverse effect on historic properties and no adverse effect to the Allston-Driscoll No. 2 and Driscoll-Astoria No. 1 transmission lines. BPA received Section 106 concurrence from SHPO on April 11, 2024. No other comments were received during the 30-day response period.

The location of the slide repair area is within the previously consulted on Area of Potential Affect and no cultural resources were identified at the location during survey. The slide repair work area has a low probability for containing buried cultural resources and no further consultation is necessary.

Notes:

- Implement the Post Review Discovery Protocol in the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during implementation. Discontinue all ground-disturbing activity in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

#### 2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor impacts, such as movement and compaction, to geology and soils would occur from slide repair work. Appropriate Best Management Practices (BMP) would be implemented prior to initiating work to minimize further erosion. In the long term, there would be an improvement as the stabilization measures are designed to prevent further slides at the structure.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status plant species or habitats occur within the project area. Impacts to plants would be minor and would consist of approximately 1600 square feet of temporary vegetation loss from spreading of material at the deposition area. Appropriate BMPs

would be implemented prior to initiating ground-disturbing activities and areas of soil disturbance would be stabilized and hydroseeded upon project completion.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No Federal/state special-status wildlife species or habitats occur in the project area. The project would have temporary noise and disturbance impacts to local wildlife species related to construction equipment noise and human presence. Impacts would be temporary and suitable habitat occurs adjacent to the project area accessible to wildlife during construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Surface waters do not occur within the project area; therefore, the slide repair would have no impact to surface waters.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands do not occur within the project area; therefore, the slide repair would have no impact to wetlands.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to groundwater or aquifers are anticipated as the proposed excavation would not be deep enough to penetrate 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 the slide repair.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is on private land, not accessible to the public or visible from public places. Slide repair would have minor impacts to visual quality, mostly resulting from installation of the ecology block retaining wall and rip rap. Following slide repair, visual quality of the slope and the road would be similar to that which existed prior to the slide. Visual impacts from material deposition would be temporary and consistent with the surrounding landscape.

#### **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions would occur during slide repair. However, there would be no substantial change to air quality from what was occurring previously when the road was passable.

#### **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours from the proposed slide repair. Future noise levels are not expected to increase as a result of the project.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During slide repair 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 Realty is in communication with the private landowner.

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

Signed:

Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist