

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** FY21 North Bend Pole Replacement and Access Road Project (Update to previous CX determination issued on May 13, 2025)

**PP&A No.:** 6734

**Project Manager:** James Barnhart - TIPL-TPP-1

**Location:** Curry, Douglas, and Lane counties, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021:** B1.3 Routine Maintenance; B1.13 Pathways, short access roads, and rail lines

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to replace 3 deteriorating wood pole structures and associated hardware and guy wires on the Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 1 transmission line and the Rogue-Gold Beach No. 2 lines. This CX determination has been updated to reflect changes in project design, specifically new access road work, equipment landings, and culvert installation. The proposed project would include the following work elements:

- Replacement of two wood pole transmission structures (in-kind) on the Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 1 transmission line, structure 16/1 and Rogue-Gold Beach No. 2 transmission line, structure 4/2.
- Replacement of the wood pole structure, Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 1 transmission line, structure 4/1, with a light duty steel structure, of the same three pole configuration.
- Improvement of about 1.5 miles of existing access road (minor blading, grading, and rocking of access road segments that have become impassable.) All road maintenance would take place in the existing road prism.
- Improvement of 3 equipment landings (50 feet x 50 feet).
- Construct 5 equipment landings (70 feet x 100 feet).
- Construct about 0.25 miles of new access roads.
- Install 3 culverts along new access road to allow for seasonal runoff.
- Danger tree removal and side limbing would occur for access road maintenance to allow for vehicle access. Woody debris would be chipped and/or scattered onsite and allowed to decompose naturally.

If needed, additional project work may include: grading and shaping of existing equipment landings and roads, installation of geotextile material, placement of crushed rock, compacting road surface, and maintenance of drainage features.

The work would occur in the late summer of 2025 through the fall 2026 and would be done using conventional utility line and construction equipment and techniques. Work would not occur during the critical breeding season of Northern Spotted Owl and Marbled Murrelet (March 1 – August 5).

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.

/s/ Steven Selser  
Steven D. Selser  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange  
Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer      Date: June 17, 2026

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

# **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.

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## **Project Site Description**

The proposed project would be in Curry, Douglas, and Lane counties, Oregon. The proposed work locations are within BPA's easement of the Right-of-Way (ROW) which consists of low growing shrubs and trees adjacent to older forested land. The access road Wendson-Tahkenitch No. 1, structure 4/1, passes through private forestland and public forest managed by the US Forest Service.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with a no effect to historic resources determination to the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on May 25, 2023. The Coquille Indian Tribe provided concurrence with the determination via an email dated June 1, 2023. No additional response was received within 30 days. As a result of added work (new landings, access roads, and culverts), BPA sent a combined Section 106 Initiation and Determination of No Adverse Effect letter to the Oregon SHPO, Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Coquille Indian Tribe, on April 17, 2026. The Coquille concurred on April 23, 2026. No additional response was received within 30 days.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wood pole replacement would be in-kind and be placed in the same location as the existing structure. Minor auguring of the existing holes may be necessary. The proposed roadway improvements would reduce erosion and degradation of the existing access roads. Soil would be graded within the new landings and access road prisms. All disturbed soils outside of the road prism would be seeded with a native seed mix appropriate for the region, and mulched, to further stabilize soils. No prime or unique farmlands would be affected. Therefore, the proposed action would have limited temporary impacts to geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. The area of the new access road and landings is dominated by pastureland used for cattle grazing and there are no sensitive species or supporting habitat in the area. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species or their habitat. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species are anticipated. Most project activities would be limited to the already impacted access road and transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities. There will be some lost vegetation in the area where the new access road and landings would be located, but activities would not have a substantial impact on surrounding plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A species list for the project location was acquired from USFWS on April 18, 2025, and the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife's sensitive species list was reviewed. There are no known or modeled Northern Spotted Owl or Marbled Murrelet nest sites or core habitat within 110 yards of the project site, therefore no Threatened or Endangered or special status wildlife species or their habitat would be affected by the action. Temporary wildlife disturbance from noise would occur during maintenance activities.

One documented State of Oregon special-status species, the red tree vole, or habitat is present to the project area. However, no large trees would be removed; therefore, would not affect the species or its habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no waterbodies, floodplains, or fish habitat present within the proposed work area. The newly installed culverts would not be within any waterbody or waterway but would allow for drainage during seasonal rain events.

### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Project areas are located in uplands and project activities do not have the potential to impact wetlands.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur at depths that would intersect groundwater or aquifers.

## 8. Land Use and Specially - Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use is proposed as part of the project. No specially - designated areas were identified within the project limits. The project would not result in changes or impacts to land use or specially - designated areas.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-way and access road prisms. Replacement of the wood poles and associated components would be in kind and replaced in the same location; therefore, there would not be a change to the visual quality of the area. At Wendson – Tahkenitch No 1 transmission line 4/1, replacing the 3 pole wood structures with light duty steel structure would not significantly alter the viewshed as they would be in the same location and style as the current structure. The new access road would be under transmission lines, and the landings would be adjacent to existing wood pole structures so work would not substantially alter the visual quality of the area.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA personnel would develop a site-specific health and safety plan to address any hazards during the proposed work. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery in 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: All activities have been coordinated with landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Steven Selser  
Steven D. Selser  
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: June 17, 2026