

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Dixie Substation Pole Structure and Equipment Upgrades (Update to previous CX determination issued on October 24, 2024)

Project No.: P02480

Project Manager: Cynthia Rounds, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Elmore County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities; B1.11 Fencing

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to remove and replace structure 1/1 which is a three-pole wood structure on the Anderson Ranch-Mountain Home No.1 115kV transmission line and would include additional equipment and structural updates in BPA's Dixie Substation in Elmore County, Idaho. BPA's transmission wood pole structure replacement and substation yard updates would help address failing wood structures, improve and support the existing 115kV transmission line, and produce efficient access to the facility. This CX determination was revised in August 2026 to include additional exterior fence replacement and gate and bollard installation.

The proposed project would remove the existing 1/1 three-pole wood pole structure and replace in-kind with a single structure consisting of three 65-foot-tall steel poles and five guy wires for steel pole structural support. The new steel poles would be buried approximately 10 feet below ground within a 3-foot by 10-foot metal culvert and filled with 1-1/4-inch crushed rock for proper drainage. Guy wires would be buried according to specifications and would involve an approximate disturbance area of 40 feet by 40 feet for proper subsurface installation.

Transmission support and equipment upgrades would include the permanent removal of six existing wood support poles and replacing them with a total of six new concrete poured foundation footings with supports to accommodate the installation of a new 25kV rack system, two 115kV disconnect switches, and three new 115kV surge arresters. The dimensions of the new footings would be approximately 12-feet by 14-feet-wide and 4-feet-deep for the 25kV rack, 15-feet by 9-feet and 1-foot-deep for the 115kV disconnect switches, and three 4-feet by 4-feet-wide and 1-foot-deep for the 115kV surge arrester support footings. All footings with surface level equipment supports would be buried approximately 3-feet-deep below ground level.

Other actions inside the substation would include trenching a 3-foot-deep, 2-foot-wide, 140-foot-long trench to bury a new power feed from the customer-based Idaho Power public utility substation located next to the Dixie Substation. The new power feed would connect to BPA's secondary transformer located in the Dixie Substation yard. This action would require the permanent removal of two existing wood pole structures currently used to support the main power feed. The existing feed would be removed, replaced, and installed within a 4-inch conduit

approximately 3-feet below the ground level. A new electrical access vault would be installed at ground level for access to the new underground power feed, this vault would be located approximately halfway along the 140-foot length of the new power feed.

The existing fencing surrounding the Dixie Substation would be updated by removing approximately 125 feet of BPA's interior fencing which currently separates BPA's substation yard and Idaho Power's public utility substation yard. In addition, the existing guardrail fence on the north end of the Dixie Substation would be removed and replaced with a new 8-foot-tall, 75-foot-long chain-link fence with support poles. The new fence would match the existing fence line and provide better security and access for BPA's substation yard and equipment. A new double-access swing gate would also be installed with the new fence along with updated grounding for the entire BPA fenced-in substation yard.

BPA proposes to remove and replace about 300 additional linear feet of its existing exterior fencing and support poles in-kind. The replacement would consist of a new 8-foot-tall chain-link fence with support poles, one new double-access swing gate and proper mesh grounding mat, and one new single swing gate. This new fencing and gate configuration would align with the existing fence line to improve security and utility access for the substation yard and equipment. Additionally, four new steel bollards would be installed adjacent to the catchment basin inside the substation yard to mitigate vehicle safety hazards. These bollards would stand approximately 4 feet above ground level and would be buried approximately 3 feet below grade.

Ground disturbance would occur with this project and would involve, but not be limited to, the removal of multiple wood pole structures; installation of new concrete footings, steel pole structures and associated guy wires; fence post removal and installation; trenching of the new power feeds and electrical vault installation; grounding mat updates within the substation yard; and material and equipment staging area. The anticipated temporary disturbance area for all proposed work would be approximately 0.5 acres. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to avoid soil erosion concerns with the adjacent waterway. General equipment used for the removal and installation of the new steel pole structures and line work would include line trucks, bucket trucks, excavator, auger truck, dump truck, light duty vehicles, power tools, hand tools, and reeling equipment.

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.

Sylas Daughtrey
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.

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Project Site Description

The BPA Dixie Substation and project site is located in Elmore County, Idaho Township 1 South, Range 8 East, and Section 1. The surrounding area and land use consists of Bureau of Reclamation managed land; the Anderson Ranch rockfill dam, powerhouse and reservoir; Idaho Power Substation; and the South Fork Boise River. The general construction area and project site consists of a compacted gravel access area, and a large fenced in area adjacent to the dam and Boise River.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), the Shoshone Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation, and the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation on July 24, 2024. On July 25, 2024, SHPO concurred with the proposed Area of Potential Effects (APE) and noted that the BPA Dixie Substation and transmission line would need to be evaluated to see if they contribute to the Anderson Ranch Dam Historic District. Also on July 25, 2024, the Shoshone Bannock Tribes responded with a phone call request for additional information. The BPA project archaeologist responded on July 26, 2024, providing additional information about the project scope of work and setting. No additional responses were received.

BPA determined that removal and replacement of transmission structures and equipment would occur within a non-eligible BPA Substation and non-eligible transmission line that are not contributing resources of the Anderson Ranch Dam Historic District, and that implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in no adverse effect to historic properties. BPA sent the determination in a letter to consulting parties on September 19, 2024. Idaho SHPO concurred with BPA's determination on October 9, 2024. No other responses were received within the 30 days.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be a moderate amount of soil disturbance for the removal of 9 wooden pole structures, the existing guard rail and fencing, and the installation of 3 new light-duty steel transmission poles, gate, bollards, and concrete structural support pads. Once the 3 existing wood pole structures are removed, the 3 new steel poles would be installed at the same location with a maximum depth of disturbance of 10 feet deep and 3 feet wide for the proposed installation. The area of ground-disturbing activities would take place in and around previously disturbed areas. These previously disturbed areas include rocked, graveled, paved, and/or compacted soils. The project site area is located on Bureau of Reclamation managed land and is adjacent to the South Fork Boise River. Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as silt fencing or wattles would be implemented during and following construction to minimize erosion, sedimentation, and fugitive dust.

Temporarily disturbed soils would stabilize following completion of construction. The proposed action would not impact the current geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species, including plants listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat would be permanently impacted.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction of the proposed project would be in established BPA property and is expected to occur during daytime hours with limited to no effect to any listed, non-listed, or special-status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Boise River flows west along a large rock-filled embankment and is located approximately 40-feet south of the established substation footprint and fenced enclosure. Erosion controls such as silt fencing or wattles will be implemented for BMPs. No in-water work would be conducted for this project.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands at the proposed construction site. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The shallow digging and trenching proposed would have no impact to groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in land use and specially-designated areas as a result of the project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Visual changes would be limited to the project area and surrounding environment due to the installation and removal of fencing, removal of wooden structures, installation of concrete footings, updated power feed, bollards, a gate, and new equipment. All proposed equipment additions would blend with current visual conditions. Disturbed areas would be stabilized and returned to previous visual conditions.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to air quality are anticipated as a result of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. 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: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated from the result of this project.

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: Coordination, notification, and involvement from BPA with The Bureau of Reclamation and Idaho Power have been conducted for the following project.

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

Signed:

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist