

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: TransAlta Short-Term Capacity Sale Contract

Project Manager: Annamarie Weekley, PTL-5

Location: Portland, OR; Calgary, AB; and Centralia, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.1 Contracts, policies, and marketing and allocation plans for electric power; B4.4 Power marketing services and activities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes entering into a short-term contract with TransAlta Corporation (TransAlta) to provide 3 megawatts (MW) of capacity (non-spinning contingency reserves). BPA has the authority to enter into contracts for the sale of surplus capacity pursuant to section 5(f) of the Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act (Northwest Power Act) (16 U.S.C. § 839c(f)).

TransAlta would use this capacity to meet reserve requirements when called upon by the Western Power Pool for the continued operation of the Centralia Power Plant, a coal-fired power plant owned and operated by TransAlta located near Centralia, Washington. The contract term would begin on September 1, 2026, and run through October 31, 2026.

BPA would transmit up to 3 MW of power when requested in order to provide additional contingency reserves during qualifying contingency events within the Western Power Pool. Power would be supplied by BPA's existing hydroelectric generating projects operating within normal operating limits and transmitted using the existing transmission system. No new construction would be required as part of this contract.

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.

Thomas DeLorenzo
Environmental Policy Analyst

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: TransAlta Short-Term Capacity Sale Contract

Project Site Description

BPA is a federal Power Marketing Administration headquartered in Portland, Oregon that markets the power generated by 31 federally operated hydroelectric projects in the Columbia River Basin, one non-federal nuclear plant, and a small collection of other non-federal resources. BPA additionally owns and maintains more than 15,000 circuit miles of transmission lines and associated substations, interconnections, and other infrastructure across the northwestern United States.

TransAlta Corporation is a power generation and wholesale power marketing company headquartered in Calgary, Alberta. TransAlta owns and operates the Centralia Power Plant located near Centralia, Washington. The Centralia Power Plant is a 730 MW nameplate coal-fired power plant that began construction in 1968 and was first commissioned in 1972.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that has no potential to cause effects on historic and cultural resources. If called upon, power would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on historic and cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not require any ground disturbance that could affect geology and soils. If called upon, power would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect plants, including any Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plant species that are present throughout BPA's service territory. If called upon, power would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on plants.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect wildlife, including any ESA-listed wildlife species present throughout BPA's service territory. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on wildlife.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect waterbodies and fish, including any ESA-listed fish species present throughout BPA's service territory. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on waterbodies and fish.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect wetlands. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect groundwater and aquifers. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on groundwater and aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No actions are proposed which would involve the transfer, sale, or change in use of any real property. Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect land use, ownership or specially-designated areas. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on land use, ownership, or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative task that would not have any potential to affect the aesthetic visual quality of the region. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing generation resources and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on the visual quality of the region.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect air quality. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing hydropower generating projects and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on regional air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would not have any potential to affect local noise levels. If called upon, capacity reserves would be provided using BPA's existing generation resource and transmitted using BPA's existing transmission system. All projects would continue to operate within normal operating limits. As a result, providing capacity reserves to TransAlta would not have any potential to cause significant effects on local noise levels.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Executing a contract is a purely administrative action that would have no effect on human health and safety. All personnel would use best practices to ensure human health and safety during generation and transmission of capacity reserves, if called upon.

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 would coordinate with TransAlta as appropriate.

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

Signed:

Thomas DeLorenzo
Environmental Policy Analyst