

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: South Tacoma Substation Security Fence Installation

Project Manager: Christopher Ross, NWMS-1

Location: Pierce County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.11 Fencing, B1.3 Routine Maintenance.

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to add security fencing and gates at South Tacoma Substation in Pierce County, WA. The action is proposed to increase substation security, following reoccurring trespassing and instances of rocks being thrown at substation equipment.

One fence would run approximately 88 feet from the southwest corner of the existing fence around the energized substation yard, to the corner of an existing fence further to the southwest, crossing an existing access road. The fence would be an 8-foot-tall security fence, with approximately eight new concrete footings requiring excavation, and would include two, 10-foot-wide gates installed across the access road.

The second 8-foot-tall security fence installation would span approximately 55 feet, connecting the northeast corner of the substation to the southwest corner of a neighboring Seattle City Light transmission facility to the northeast. Access to this facility would not be impacted by the proposed fence installation. The fence would include excavation for approximately 6 concrete footings. This fence would cross a compacted dirt access road between the substation yard and the neighboring transmission facility.

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.

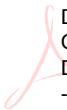
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Environmental Protection Specialist



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NEPA Compliance Officer



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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: South Tacoma Substation Security Fence Installation

Project Site Description

South Tacoma Substation is located in Township 19N Range 3E Section 36, within Pierce County, WA. The land is BPA-owned property and consists primarily of maintained gravel substation yard, gravel and compacted dirt access roads, mowed grass and low shrubby vegetation. The surrounding area to the west and north is residential, with industrial development to the east and south beyond the BPA right of way. The closest documented waterbody is Clover Creek, located approximately 0.8 miles to the north of the substation. The work area is in a gently sloping upland location and does not contain wetlands.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and implementing regulations 36 CFR 800, BPA initiated consultation with the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Nisqually Indian Tribe, and the Puyallup Tribe of Indians on August 10, 2026. BPA has previously determined that the South Tacoma Substation is not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places with DAHP concurrence. DAHP concurred with the Area of Potential Effect and the finding of no historic properties affected on August 10, 2026, and the Nisqually Indian Tribe concurred with the determination of no historic properties affected on September 3, 2026. No other responses were received within 30 days.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural resources or historic properties are inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA will require that work be halted 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 with conditions.

Explanation: Fence and gate post footings would require excavation. Soil composition within the project area ranges from imported gravel to gravely, sandy loam according to USDA Web Soil Survey. Excavated soil would be left on site and redistributed along the fenceline. No offsite disposal would be required. Project activities are not expected to impact site geology.

Notes:

- Utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) to limit soil transport by wind and water during construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would occur within BPA South Tacoma Substation perimeter areas, which are a mix of managed and mowed grasses and gravel or compacted dirt access roads. Vegetation in the area consists of herbaceous species including mowed grasses and woody shrubs including Scotch Broom. Grass or shrubs adjacent to the proposed fenceline would be removed and naturally recruited vegetation would be allowed to grow along the new fenceline. The substation is in the historic range for two Washington State listed sensitive species, Torrey's peavine (*Lathyrus torreyi*) and bog clubmoss (*Lycopodiella inundata*). However, the last confirmed sightings were approximately 3.3 miles away from the substation, near Spanaway Lake in 1891 and 1902, respectively. Since then, the area has been developed and there have been no known occurrences in South Tacoma Substation. No ESA listed plant species are known to occur in the area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat or known sightings for any State or Federal special-status species. There would be no effect for any ESA-listed species in the area. Temporary disturbance to common wildlife species may occur due to noise and construction. Because work would be occurring in the proximity of an operational substation, any wildlife in the area is likely to be tolerant of noise and human presence.

There was a documented sighting of a Taylor's checkerspot (*Euphydryas editha taylori*) approximately 2.4 miles south in 1986. There have been no documented sightings in the vicinity since then. There are documented Western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*) nests approximately 3.5 miles to the west and streaked horned lark nests (*Eremophila alpestris strigata*) approximately 5.2 miles to the northwest. Noise from the project area would not exceed background noise over these distances and would therefore the work would have no effect on special-status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area has no surface water features and is not in a floodplain. The nearest waterbody is Clover Creek, to the north, approximately 0.8 miles away and is separated by multiple ditch lines and housing developments. Though Clover Creek supports ESA-listed migrating steelhead and coho salmon, the project would not affect fish species because of the minor extent of excavation and the distance to the creek.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are documented within the project area. The nearest wetland is part of Clover Creek, 0.8 miles distant.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The depth of excavation would likely be too shallow to impact groundwater or aquifers. Standard spill prevention and remediation BMPs would be in place to prevent any potential groundwater infiltration of hazardous substances.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur within a BPA-owned parcel and on BPA facilities and would not result in any change to land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The additional fencing would be consistent with the existing visual appearance of the substation and would result in only a minor alteration to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project may cause a minor and temporary localized increase in emissions from vehicle and equipment use. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours and would be consistent with noise generated in the industrial area. No other temporary or ongoing noise would occur.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Workers would be required to follow all applicable state and Federal safety standards. No material would be disposed of offsite, and the project would not lead to any permanent public health or safety hazards.

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 construction would be on BPA fee owned land, and access to the neighboring Seattle City Light Facility would not be impacted.

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

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Signed: **MCCREADY**

Aidan McCreedy

Environmental Protection Specialist

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