

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY27 Chehalis and Pasco Mx Pole Replacements

PP&A No.: 7161

Project Manager: Marty Flansburg – TISS-TPP-4

Location: Multiple counties, WA

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to replace 13 failing wood poles and associated hardware in multiple BPA districts. The specific structures include Chehalis-Mayfield No 1 2/9, 3/4, 10/9, 16/1, and 16/7, Naselle-Tarlett No 1 10/6 and 17/4, Naselle-Tarlett No 2 3/6, 14/7, 15/1, 15/10, and 16/4, and Franklin-Hedges No 1 1/9. The work would include removing the existing wood pole and replacing it in kind in the same location. Trucks and equipment would be staged in a work area about 50 feet by 50 feet at the structure replacement location. Existing access roads would be used to access the work areas and no additional ground disturbance beyond the existing pole holes is proposed. Fire wraps would also be added. No helicopter use would be required.

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/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel Date: September 24, 2026

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 project is located on private land in multiple areas across Washington State. The surrounding areas are a mix of private timber, commercial, and rural residential.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA Cultural Resource Staff have determined that, pursuant to the *Nationwide Programmatic Agreement Among the Bonneville Power Administration, the Southwestern Power Administration, the Western Area Power Administration, the National Conference of State Historic Preservation Officers, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Regarding Routine Transmission Operations and Maintenance Undertakings Associated with Existing Transmission Facilities and Access Roads Throughout the United States*, the proposed FY27 MX Poles project will result in no adverse effect to historic properties as **Appendix G Condition B.1** is met, which states that transmission structures being replaced (no greater than 25% taller) are not within any known historic property or unevaluated cultural resource except for any historic transmission line and will be replaced within a no greater than 5-foot disturbance radius around the existing structure, or on hillsides of greater than 20% slope verified by the CRS to have an existing landing.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized soil disturbance within the previously-excavated hole would occur during wood pole replacements. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Little to no disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. If vegetation would be impacted, it would be crushed in place. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species are anticipated. 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.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. All work on Naselle-Tarlett No 1 and 2 would take place after September 23, which is after the marbled murrelet nesting season. The project would have no impacts to state or federally listed sensitive species or their designated critical habitat.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not impact water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed or state special-status fish. Erosion control best management practices combined with the distance to the nearest waterbody (about 100 feet) would ensure that sedimentation would not enter into any water body.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Structure replacements would occur within suspected wetlands and about 5,000 square feet of wetlands would have vegetation crushed to safely set up equipment for pole replacement. About 25 square feet of wetlands would have permanent fill. All wetland impacts would be consistent with the Clean Water Act and permitted through a Nationwide Permit. Pole wraps would be installed to prevent wood pole preservative from entering the environment. No access road work or landing work is proposed. Crews would utilize wetland mats in the event that roads or landings are not adequate.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed. Maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface, which would not intersect groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur. No specially-designated areas are present in the work area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-way. 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.

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: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would help maintain reliable power 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 the landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Jonnel Deacon Date: September 24, 2026

Jonnel Deacon

Physical Scientist (Environmental)