

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Boardman to Hemingway Interconnection at Longhorn Substation

Project No.: P05421, L0515, LURR20260327

Project Manager: Charla Burke, TIPS-TPP-1

Location: Morrow County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.7 Electrical equipment; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities; B4.7 Fiber optic cable; B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way; B4.11 Electrical power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to add and modify equipment and structures within the Longhorn Substation, install fiber and fiber vaults outside of the substation fence, and allow Idaho Power Company (IPC) to string conductor on their structures previously installed on BPA fee-owned land. These actions would support the proposed interconnection of IPC's new 500-kilovolt (kV) Longhorn-Maverick No. 1 transmission line, which is part of the IPC's Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) project.

The following actions are proposed to be completed by BPA within the Longhorn Substation yard and control house:

- Modify and install electronic systems required for operation and maintenance of the transmission grid and substation equipment, including Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), Remedial Action Scheme (RAS), and additional communications equipment. The equipment would be installed in racks inside the control house.
- Remove existing light poles, foundations, and bus pedestals from Bays 4 and 5.
- Install new 500-kV substation equipment and associated stands, foundations, and bus pedestals in Bays 4 and 5. Such equipment would include power circuit breakers (PCB), motor-operated disconnect (MOD) switches, current transformers (CT), voltage transformers (VT), and surge arresters.
- Construct an approximately 114-foot-tall 500-kV steel lattice dead-end transmission structure in Bay 4.
- Install an approximately 100-foot-tall lightening protection structure near Bay 4.

The proposed actions above would occur entirely within the existing Longhorn Substation yard, and no ground disturbance would extend beyond the perimeter of what was previously disturbed during the original construction of the substation.

In addition, BPA would install fiber optic cable, conduit, and vaults to support the new substation equipment. The following actions are proposed:

- Install four new 4-by-4-foot or smaller vaults immediately west and outside of the Longhorn Substation yard at the base of the last 500-kV transmission structure on Longhorn-Maverick No. 1. One new vault would also be installed within the substation yard. Installation of the new vaults would require excavations of up to 7 feet deep.
- Install new fiber optic cable in 4-inch-diameter conduit in two separate trenches from the new vaults outside of the Longhorn Substation yard to the new vault within the yard and to existing fiber paths in the yard. Installation of the new cable and conduit outside of the substation yard would require excavation of approximately 1,300 feet of trench between 2 feet and 5 feet deep and 1 foot wide.
- Install approximately 1,200 feet of new cable and conduit within the Longhorn Substation yard. The conduit would be installed within a trench excavated between 2 feet and 5 feet deep and 1 foot wide.

IPC has already constructed the final two, 500-kV steel lattice transmission structures of Longhorn-Maverick No. 1 on BPA fee-owned property west of Longhorn Substation. BPA would allow IPC to complete construction of the transmission line and would grant an approximately 165-foot-wide right-of-way for operation and maintenance of the transmission line. The following actions are proposed to be completed by IPC on BPA-owned property:

- Establish temporary pulling and tensioning sites to stage equipment necessary to install conductor and fiber optic cable to the nearest structure immediately adjacent to the substation yard. The pulling and tensioning sites would temporarily disturb approximately 2.4 acres of previously disturbed lands west of the substation.
- Install a temporary guard structure on BPA property near the railroad property south of the IPC project site. Installation of the guard structure would temporarily disturb up to approximately 0.2 acre.

IPC would be responsible for construction stormwater management and vegetation restoration activities on BPA property for soil disturbances resulting from IPC action.

Overall, the proposed action would temporarily disturb approximately 2.7 acres adjacent to the substation yard. Of the total 2.7 acres of temporary disturbance, 2.6 acres would be attributed to IPC's actions on BPA property, and 0.1 acres would be attributed to BPA's actions. An additional approximately 0.4 acres would be temporarily disturbed inside the substation yard. Approximately 70 square feet of existing vegetated ground surface outside the substation yard would be permanently converted to impervious surface with the installation of the fiber optic communication vaults. BPA would utilize an existing 3-acre fenced and graveled staging area on BPA fee-owned property adjacent to the west of the substation and areas within the existing fenced substation yard for material laydown and equipment staging during construction. These areas are heavily disturbed and consist of compacted, non-native rock and are maintained clear of vegetation. The proposed action would be performed using a variety of standard construction 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)). Further, BPA processes requests for interconnection and provides interconnection services under the terms of an open access transmission tariff adopted

by the Administrator in accordance with section 212(i)(2)(A) of the Federal Power Act. (16 U.S.C § 824k(i)(2)(A)). BPA also authorizes the use of and manages its fee-owned lands pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act. 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f)."

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; and 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.

**WILLIAM
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Walker Stinnette, ECT-4
Environmental Protection Specialist



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Concur:

**KATEY
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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: Boardman to Hemingway Interconnection at Longhorn Substation

Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property associated with BPA's existing Longhorn Substation near Boardman, Morrow County, Oregon (Township 4 North, Range 26 East, Section 7). The project area is flat and includes the existing Longhorn Substation and lands adjacent comprised of shrub-steppe habitat, with a mix of native and non-native vegetation common to the Columbia Plateau Ecoregion. No surface water drainages or streams occur on the project site. The closest waterbody is the West Extension Irrigation Canal located approximately 0.25 mile south of the substation. The surrounding area is characterized primarily by rural residential and agricultural land use interspersed with warehouses, aggregate mining, industrial areas, military operations areas, and the maintained BPA transmission line right-of-way.

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 36 CFR Part 800, BPA initiated consultation with the following parties:

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation
- Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon
- Nez Perce Tribe
- Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)

BPA conducted background research and reviewed 10 previous archaeological surveys that have covered the Area of Potential Effects (APE) or portions of the APE. No cultural or historic resources were identified within the APE. Therefore, on August 19, 2026, BPA simultaneously initiated consultation with the above parties and determined per 36 CFR Part 800.4(d)(1) that the proposed interconnection (Project No.: OR 2026 110) and land use agreement (Project No.: OR 2026 123) would result in no historic properties affected. No comments were received from the consulting parties.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA's Post-Review Discovery of Cultural Material Procedure would be followed. Work would be halted in the vicinity of the finds, and BPA would be contacted for further required notifications. The integrity of the site and materials would be protected until further instructions are provided.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Localized ground disturbance would occur during construction in the existing rocked yard and immediately outside the rocked yard. Installation of the new footings would involve shallow excavation into native soils below the substation yard fill material. The

project would generate excess material beyond what could be used as backfill. Standard erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sediment migration off site. Excess spoils generated during project activities would be hauled off site for disposal at an approved location. Total temporary soil disturbance area would be 2.9 acres.

Notes:

- Develop and implement Best Management Plans (BMPs) for erosion and sediment control.
- Haul excess spoils generated during project activities off site for disposal.
- Upon construction completion, regrade and stabilize disturbed soils.
- Store spill containment and cleanup materials in construction equipment and at work sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The proposed action would temporarily crush, strip, or bury up to approximately 2.7 acres and would permanently remove up to approximately 70 square feet of common, native and non-native herbs, forbs and shrubs. Temporarily disturbed areas would eventually return to near pre-existing conditions following completion of the proposed action. No special-status plant species, including plants listed under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), are present within or near the project site.

Notes:

- Disturbed areas would be reseeded with a native seed mix after construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA conducted field surveys in May 2022 as part of the Longhorn Substation construction project. Biologists documented observances of burrows likely created by rodents such as mice (*Microtus* spp.), kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys* spp.), or voles (*Microtus* spp.). One yellow-billed curlew (*Numenius americanus*), a state-sensitive species, and red-tailed hawks (*Buteo jamaicensis*) were also observed near the project area prior to substation construction. Construction could temporarily displace wildlife in the work area due to noise, habitat disturbance, and visual disturbance from equipment operation and human activity. No special-status wildlife species, including wildlife listed under the federal ESA, and no designated critical wildlife habitats are present within or near the project site.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish species are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance is unlikely to reach depths to groundwater, and no new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. Standard construction BMPs would reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be consistent with existing land use, which is a transmission substation and transmission line rights-of-way, and the project site is not located in a specially-designated area. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in a perceptible change in the appearance of the project site. During construction, the presence of construction equipment and general construction activities would cause temporary visual impacts. New equipment within Longhorn Substation and buried fiber optic cable would not be overtly noticeable from adjacent properties. IPC's new conductor and fiber optic on its two transmission structures would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area. The project site is not located in a visually sensitive area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in dust and emissions in the local area from vehicles, equipment, and general construction activities. Standard construction BMPs would suppress dust. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would result in minor and temporary noise from vehicles, equipment, and general construction activities, which could intermittently exceed current ambient conditions. However, there are no private residences or other noise-sensitive properties or land uses within 0.25 miles of the project site. Noise would be temporary and intermittent and would only occur during typical working hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the proposed action.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout implementation of the proposed action to minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact human health and safety.

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: The proposed action would occur on BPA fee-owned property. Therefore, no landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: WILLIAM STINNETTE
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