

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Wireless Communication Upgrades at Various Sites in Western Washington

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian—TELP-TPP-3

Location: King, Snohomish, and Thurston Counties, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to allow AT&T and Sprint to upgrade their antennas and equipment at seven existing wireless sites on BPA transmission towers in western Washington. The work would consist of removing antennas and replacing those with new antennas. In some cases, the number of antennas on the towers would increase from the original installation and/or the antenna configuration would change. Additionally, remote radio units (RRUs) or tower-mounted amplifiers (TMAs) would be added to the antenna mounts and new coaxial cable would be installed, connecting the RRUs or TMAs to existing equipment located on the ground at the tower base. One of the projects below includes installation of a small microwave dish. To ensure safety, BPA workers and their subcontractors would complete the wireless antenna and coaxial cable installation work. The projects would not involve any ground excavation.

The upgrades would occur at the following locations:

AT&T's Aquatic Center site: King County, WA. Section 19, Township 21 North, Range 4 East. Tacoma-Covington No. 3 & 4 Transmission Line.

AT&T's Covington Creek site: King County, WA. Section 11, Township 21 North, Range 5 East. Covington-White River No. 1 Transmission Line.

AT&T's I-5 and 320th site: King County, WA. Section 9, Township 21 North, Range 4 East. Tacoma-Covington No. 3 Transmission Line.

AT&T's Lake Alice site: King County, WA. Section 25, Township 24 North, Range 7 East. Echo Lake-Monroe No.1 Transmission Line.

AT&T's Snoqualmie Ridge site: King County, WA. Section 1, Township 23 North, Range 7 East. Echo Lake-Monroe No.1 Transmission Line.

Sprint's Treen Lake site: Snohomish County, WA. Section 26, Township 27 North, Range 6 East. SnoKing Tap-Echo Lake-Monroe No. 1 Transmission Line.

Sprint's Violet Prairie site: Thurston County, WA. Section 18, Township 16 North, Range 2 West. Paul-Olympia No. 1 Transmission Line.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) 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, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Staffing & Recruiting

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad Hamel FOR

Nancy Wittpenn
Acting Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 5, 2018

Attachment: Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist 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

Antenna equipment replacements would occur on existing transmission structures located within existing transmission line rights-of-way. The structures are located in urban and rural residential areas. The sites have existing access roads to the tower bases. All of the sites have had prior ground disturbance.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA Cultural staff have reviewed the proposed activities and determined that there is no potential to affect historic properties because the locations are in areas that have had extensive ground disturbance as a result of the development of the areas with roads, housing, utility corridors, etc. Additionally, the structures are easily accessible by paved and graveled access roads. No further review under the National Historic Preservation Act is required.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed projects do not involve ground disturbance. Some insignificant compaction of soils may occur from bucket trucks driving around the site.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project locations have been previously disturbed and native plant communities are not present. The project would have no impacts to any special-status plants.</p> <p>To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles would be required to be cleaned before entering a new project location.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species or habitats are present at the project locations. The projects would have no impacts to special-status wildlife.</p> <p>If any active nests are found on the structures prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied.</p>		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project areas do not have any water bodies, floodplains, or listed fish species; therefore, there would be no impacts to these resources.</p>		

6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The projects are not in or near wetlands; therefore, there would be no impact to wetlands.		
7. Groundwater and Aquifers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project does not involve any ground disturbance; therefore, there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.		
8. Land Use and Specially Designated Areas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no change to land use at the project locations. There are no specially designated areas at any of the locations.		
9. Visual Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the utility corridor.		
10. Air Quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.		
11. Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.		
12. Human Health and Safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There would be no impact to 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, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project proponent is responsible for acquiring and maintaining easements for their facilities from underlying landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Staffing & Recruiting

Date: October 5, 2018