

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Springfield Utility Board Transmission Line Structure Replacement and Fiber Installation near Alvey Substation

LURR Nos.: 20150146, 20150153, and 20150152

Project Managers: James Hall

Location: Lane County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to allow Springfield Utility Board (SUB) to replace transmission line structures and install fiber on BPA fee-owned land adjacent to BPA's Alvey Substation in Lane County, Oregon. Structure replacement would provide additional clearance between SUB conductors and those of an Eugene Water and Electric Board transmission line. Fiber installation would provide communications redundancy within SUB's and BPA's transmission systems in the Eugene area.

SUB would replace a total of nine wood pole structures with taller steel structures within existing right-of-way across BPA land. Two of the structures would be replaced along SUB's Alvey-10th transmission line—structures 1/2 and 1/3 would be replaced within 10 feet of existing structures. Seven structures would be replaced along SUB's Alvey-Springfield line—structures 1/1, 1/2, 1/3, 1/6 and 1/7 would be replaced within 10 feet of the existing structures and structures 1/4 and 1/5 would be replaced 70 feet north and 40 feet south of the existing structures respectively.

New structures would be about 5 feet taller than the existing structures. All poles would be directly embedded using a standard utility digger derrick truck. Existing conductor and overhead groundwire on both lines would be transferred from existing to new structures. New structures would be grounded by attaching a wire from the pole base to three ground rods around the pole. Guy wire and screw anchors would be replaced and installed on new structures. The existing wood pole structures would be removed.

Existing access roads would be used to access all structures. However, about 135 feet of road accessing the Alvey-Springfield structure 1/3 would be improved because soil erosion from upslope has narrowed the road—improvements would disturb about a 0.03 acre area.

Existing fiber on the Alvey-10th line would be reinstalled to the two new structures. New fiber would be installed on the Alvey-Springfield line beginning at an existing BPA fiber vault adjacent to BPA's Eugene-Alvey No. 2 structure 13/8. From the vault, fiber would be placed underground in a trench about 10 feet long, 18 inches wide, and 36 inches deep (about 0.001 acre of soil disturbance). Fiber would then go overhead from a new pole installed at the east end of the trench to the new Alvey-Springfield structure 1/1. From here the fiber would proceed to structure 1/2, where it would transfer to a position just below the overhead groundwire by means of a riser conduit. Fiber would be attached to all subsequent new structures in a position just below the overhead groundwire.

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/ Tish Eaton

Tish Eaton
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 14, 2015

Attachment(s): 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

The fee-owned property is located adjacent to the west side of Alvey Substation. Multiple transmission lines and access roads cross the property. Structure replacement areas are located upslope from the substation and the fiber installation area is located in a flatter area adjacent to the west substation fence. A small (about 0.05 acres) wetland area is located within the general fiber installation area. Existing vegetation elsewhere consists primarily of grasses with some shrubs and many weeds. Small patches of trees (coniferous and deciduous) are present along the south and west edges of the Alvey-Springfield transmission line.

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> OR SHPO concurrence with no adverse effect determination 10/5/15. No response from consulted tribes: Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians.</p> <p>In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead so that a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Oregon SHPO, and the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies may be notified. • Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering and ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access. 		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance, erosion control measures would be used. Poles would direct embedded so no crane landings are required. Staging areas and pulling tensioning sites are not required. Conductor and overhead groundwire would be transferred to new structures and tensioned using a hoist attached to the utility truck.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. About one half acre of grasses and shrubs (mostly non-native or invasive species) removed or disturbed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reseed disturbed areas with a regionally appropriate seed mix and apply mulch. • Clean and inspect all construction vehicles and equipment for weeds prior to accessing the project site. 		

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

Explanation: No special-status species or designated habitat present. Project area has been previously disturbed for construction of multiple transmission lines and associated access roads.

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

Explanation: None present.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: The wetland area would be avoided by installing the fiber pole northeast of the wetland and by keeping all trenching north of the wetland.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No new wells or use of ground water proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 5 feet;

- Ensure spill containment and cleanup materials are readily available at the project site, staging areas, and in construction vehicles and equipment. Replace any used spill response material within 24 hours.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation: None present.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The new taller steel structures would be more visible than the existing wood structures until the galvanized steel weathers. In the interim, the new structures would likely blend in with existing steel lattice structures also present on the slope west of Alvey Substation. Views to the west from Interstate 5 and Highway 99S would be brief and primarily viewed with Alvey Substation in the foreground. Southbound travelers along McVay Highway and Interstate 5 would briefly view structure 1/7 although there are four other sets of transmission structures in this wide right-of-way. There is one private home located 100 feet west of structure 1/7; a row of tall conifers at the west edge of the right-of-way between 1/7 and the home screens the structure and cleared right-of-way.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: SUB would remove all pieces of the old poles and haul them to their pole dumpster in Eugene for disposal.

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

No notification – All work is on BPA-fee owned property and no visual or other effects to adjacent landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Tish Eaton
Tish Eaton/KEC-4

Date: October 15, 2015