

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW for CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION
Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Alliance Substation Communication Building Installation
Box Butte County, Nebraska**

A. Brief Description of Proposal:

Western Area Power Administration (Western), an agency of the U.S. Department of Energy, plans to install a new communications building at the Alliance Substation in Box Butte, County, Nebraska. Western and Tri-State Generation and Transmission will share space in the new control building. The new control building will be a prefabricated building. Tri State's old control building will be removed after their equipment is transferred to the new building. Removing the old building and placing the new building within the substation will require a temporary road around the building for vehicles and equipment. The temporary road will be located on Western's property. Placing the building may require guy wires on structures outside of the substation to be relocated. The fence on the east side of the substation will be extended around the new building. Work is scheduled for fall 2011.

B. Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied: (See text in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D.)

B4.6. Additions or modifications to electrical power transmission facilities that would not affect the environment beyond the previously developed facility area including, but not limited to switchyard rock grounding upgrades, secondary containment projects, paving projects, seismic upgrading, tower modifications, changing insulators and replacement of poles, circuit breakers, conductors, transformers and crossarms.

C. Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b) (Refer to full text in regulation and Attachment A)

1.) The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D.

For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements; i.e. to fit within a class a proposal must not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, including DOE and/or Executive Orders;
- Require siting, construction, or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, but may include such categorically excluded facilities;
- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; or
- Adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources (including but not limited to those listed in paragraph B(1) (See attached checklist)

- 2.) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- 3.) The proposal is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CRF 1021.21
- 4.) The Project area was surveyed by Western's Archeologist. No cultural resources were discovered.

D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:

No construction or routine maintenance activities shall be performed during periods when the soil is too wet to adequately support construction equipment. If equipment creates ruts in excess of six inches deep, the soil shall be deemed too wet to adequately support construction equipment.

If any cultural resources or paleontological materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately; Western and the Nebraska SHPO staff shall be contacted, and the material evaluated by an archaeologist or historian.

If the scope of work for this project changes Maintenance Division staff must contact Western's Rocky Mountain Region Environment Division for additional environmental review.

If work is not completed within 3 years of the date of this signed document Maintenance Division staff must contact Western's Rocky Mountain Region Environment Division for additional environmental review.

E. Determination:

Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I determine that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from requirements for an EA or an EIS.


Signature

Date: 8/28/11

Gene Iley, Jr.
NEPA Compliance Officer
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region
Western Area Power Administration

- 1 All reviews and discussion supporting the "not adversely affect" determination have been completed.

APPENDIX A
Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination

Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix A or B to subpart D.		x	
2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effect of the proposal, (e.g. scientific controversy about environmental effects; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources (see NEPA 102(2)(E))		x	
3) The proposal is not connected (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1) to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(2)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211.		x	
Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B	NO	YES	UNKNOWN
1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, including requirements of DOE and/or Executive Orders ¹ .	x		
2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage disposal, recovery, or treatment actions.	x		
3) 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 intermittent releases; or	x		
4) Adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources. Including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by Federal, state, or local governments or property eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places 	x		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat), federally-proposed or candidate species or their habitat, or state-listed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wetlands regulated under the Clean Water Act and Floodplains; 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges and marine sanctuaries; 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prime agricultural lands; 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and 	X		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests. 			

¹Applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, including requirements of DOE and/or Executive Orders (in addition to those listed above)

Clean Air Act

Complies with U.S. DOE Clean Air Act Conformity Requirements

Department of Energy Floodplain and Wetland Regulations (10 CFR 1022)

Clean Water Act

- Complies with Section 404 requirements
- Complies with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permitting requirements

Complies with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994, with Presidential Memorandum)

Complies with Executive Order 13186, Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds. (January 10, 2001)