

memorandum

DATE: April 15, 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO : Emmanuel Jaramillo
Project Manager, TEP-TPP-1

Proposed Action: Celilo Fiber System

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable

Location: East of The Dalles, Wasco County, Oregon in T 1 N, R 14 E, Sec 6 and T 2 North, R 14 East, Sec 31

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to install fiber optic cable, and associated vault between three substations (Big Eddy 230-kilovolt (kV) Substation, Big Eddy 500-kV Substation, and Celilo Substation) that are located in the same general vicinity on BPA owned property. See attached map. The fiber optic cable would be about 13,000 feet long.

The fiber optic cable would be strung on approximately 25 new 40-foot tall wood poles that would be erected underneath existing transmission lines that traverse the property. Each wood-pole structure would require augering a 2 ½-foot diameter hole, and then backfilling the hole with gravel. Additionally, about 13 of the poles would require one to four guy lines anchored about 60 feet from the pole.

One new 4-foot by 4-foot vault would be installed underground on the property to connect the fiber to the substations, and about 500 linear feet of new conduit would be trenched for the project.

Total earth disturbance would be about 500 square feet. The project is expected to be constructed between May 2013 and fall 2013 over a period of about 14 work days. Project equipment may include, but would not necessarily be limited to, the following: augers, excavator(s), crane(s), support vehicles, and dump trucks. The fiber is needed to improve transmission system communications between the substations.

Findings:

The project area is on an upland hillside that is largely devoid of vegetation. The substations themselves are graveled surfaces while the remainder of the BPA property is located on dry rolling hills consisting mainly of bare ground with some scrubby brush and very sparse trees. The surrounding land uses outside of the project area consist mainly of orchards, grain crops, narrow riparian areas, rural residential properties, and dry shrublands.

There are no streams or wetlands in the project area and the nearest surface water bodies are Fifteenmile Creek located 0.25 miles to the north of Big Eddy 230-kV Substation and an unnamed tributary to Threemile Creek, located approximately 0.2 miles to the south of Celilo Substation.

Because of the previous disturbance on the BPA property, the minimal scale of the impact, and the lack of suitable habitat, there would be no effect to ESA-listed species or designated critical habitat.

A cultural resources survey conducted at the site (April 20 and April 23, 2012) found no evidence to indicate any effects to cultural resources would occur as a result of this project. BPA consulted with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, the Nez Perce Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, and the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation regarding the proposed undertaking. BPA did not receive responses from either the SHPO or the Tribes.

The project is located within the boundary of the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, but because the parcel designated as an "Urban Area," the project is exempt from review under the Scenic Area Management Plan.

BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211.

Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, (iv) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, or (v) 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.

This proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Michelle Guay
Michelle Guay
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer, KEC-4

Date: *April 15, 2013*

Attachments:
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Celilo Fiber System

Work Order #: 297510

This project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on the following environmentally sensitive resources. See 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B for complete descriptions of the resources. This checklist is to be used as a summary – further discussion may be included in the Categorical Exclusion Memorandum.

<u>Environmental Resources</u>	<u>No Potential for Significance</u>	<u>No Potential, with Conditions (describe)</u>
1. Historic Properties and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Floodplains or wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Areas of special designation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Health & safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Prime or unique farmlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Special sources of water	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Other (describe)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Signed: /s/ Michelle Guay

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