

memorandum

DATE: June 20 2013

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Joan Kendall
Project Manager – TERR-3

Proposed Action: Lexington-Delameter 115-kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Sale

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.24 Property Transfers

Location: Cowlitz County, Washington

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA)

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to transfer ownership of a portion of its existing Lexington-Delameter 115-kV transmission line to Cowlitz County Public Utility District No.1 (Cowlitz PUD) in Cowlitz County, WA. BPA would sell the first four spans of the line, from BPA's Lexington Substation to approximately 2,000 feet northwest to structure 30/8, to Cowlitz PUD. The remaining 5.6 miles of the line would be de-energized.

Cowlitz PUD, a BPA network integration customer, currently leases, operates, and maintains BPA's Lexington-Delameter line to transmit power to its service area through the Point of Delivery (POD) at BPA's Lexington Substation. Cowlitz PUD is upgrading their transmission system and would maintain their existing POD at Lexington Substation using the purchased portion of the Lexington-Delameter line and a new Cowlitz PUD 115-kV line. The upgrades will help improve reliability and enhance Cowlitz PUD's capacity to serve increasing load within their service area.

The transfer of line ownership would not change the use of the four-span portion of the Lexington-Delameter 115-kV transmission line, and the load levels experienced at BPA's Lexington Substation would remain unchanged.

Resource Review: BPA reviewed potential impacts to vegetation, wetlands and floodplains, water, federally listed species and critical habitat, and cultural resources by the proposed project.

Existing Environment. The project site is located in Cowlitz County, WA, on existing BPA right-of-way (ROW) along the Lexington-Delameter transmission line corridor approximately three miles north of the City of Longview, WA. The site is located adjacent to BPA's Lexington Substation and consists of transmission lines, wood pole and steel lattice towers, and dirt and paved access roads for operation and maintenance activities. Vegetated areas of the project site are previously disturbed with evidence of fill and grading. The area surrounding the project site

includes mixed conifer and broadleaf forest and a developed suburban neighborhood with residential and scattered commercial uses. An unnamed perennial stream flows through the northern half of project site.

Vegetation. Existing vegetation within the Lexington-Delameter transmission line corridor is mechanically and chemically controlled, and consists primarily of non-native grasses and weeds. The proposed project would not disturb or remove existing vegetation. No sensitive or federally-listed plant species would be affected.

Water, Wetlands, and Floodplains. The National Wetland Inventory (NWI) database lists several jurisdictional wetland complexes in the project area, and a 100-year flood plain lies approximately 0.3 mile northeast of the project site. An unnamed perennial streams flows northeast between structures 30/8 and 30/9 of the Lexington-Delameter 115-kV transmission line approximately 1.0 mile to the Cowlitz River. The proposed project would not affect water resources within or near the project site.

Federally Listed Wildlife Species and Critical Habitat. The proposed project would have no effect on these species or their critical habitat located in Cowlitz County because suitable habitat does not exist within the project area.

Cultural Resources. On February 21, 2013, BPA initiated Section 106 consultation with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), the Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. Based on background research and a cultural resource survey, BPA determined the proposed project would have no effect on cultural resources or historic properties. The Washington State DAHP subsequently concurred with BPA's determination in a letter dated May 22, 2013.

Findings: 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.

Based on the provisions identified on the attachment, the 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/ Zachary R. Gustafson
Zachary R. Gustafson
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Stacy Mason
Stacy Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 20, 2013

Attachments:
Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions
Provisions

PROVISIONS

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

Cultural Resources

In the event any archaeological or historical material is encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:

- Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Washington State DAHP, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies.
- Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Lexington-Delameter 115-kV Transmission Line Sale

Work Order #: 184006 Task 01

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

List supporting documentation attached (if needed):

Signed: /s/ Zachary Gustafson

Date: June 20, 2013