



# U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: Crossman Peak Communication Site Lease and Communication System Upgrades at Five Existing Facilities

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration/ Desert Southwest Region

Location(s) (City/County/State): La Paz, Maricopa & Mohave Counties, AZ; San Bernardino County, CA; Clark County, NV

Proposed Action Description:

Western plans to lease portions of an existing communications tower and building located near Crossman Peak east of Lake Havasu City, Arizona and upgrade microwave and radio equipment at five existing Western facilities (Christmas Tree Pass, Metal Mountain, Pete Smith Peak, Topock, White Tanks) situated in western Arizona, southeastern California, and southern Nevada. Western's purpose for the action is to maintain the safety and reliability of the bulk electric system. The newly leased communication site will create an interference-free microwave path in the 7125-8025 MHz band between Metal Mountain and Topock. The new site and upgraded equipment will allow Western to free up portions of the 2320-2345 MHz band for the President's 500 MHz initiative. Western will be able to send and receive more signals among these facilities due to the bandwidth increase.

The Crossman Peak facility is located on private land in Section 13, Township 14 South, Range 19 West on the Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian (GSRBM). Christmas Tree Pass is situated on U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land in Section 17, Township 31 South, Range 65 East on the Mount Diablo Baseline. Metal Mountain occurs on BLM land in Section 32, Township 3 North, Range 27 East on the San Bernardino Baseline. Topock is located on BLM land in Section 31, Township 18 North, Range 20 West GSRBM. Pete Smith Peak is situated on BLM land in Section 1, Township 8 North, Range 11 West GSRBM. White Tanks occurs on Maricopa County park land in Section 28, Township 3 North, Range 3 West GSRBM.

See Continuation Sheet

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.19 - Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (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 or facilities; (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 unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) 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 listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Date Determined: 6.2.14



## **Categorical Exclusion Determination Form – Continuation Sheet**

### **Proposed Action Description (continued):**

Western proposes to lease an existing facility near Crossman Peak until either a new Western owned facility is constructed or a long-term lease that addresses Western's security requirements can be negotiated. Western anticipates leasing the existing facility for 2 to 10 years.

At Crossman Peak, Western plans to add 2, 8-foot-diameter gray solid parabolic dishes approximately 20 or 50 feet above ground surface. A black 2-inch-diameter cable connects the dishes to newly added equipment located inside the adjacent communication building. Access road improvements are not planned. Pickup trucks and crews trucks will likely be used during installation. At the end of the lease, Western will remove its dishes and equipment.

In support of the new equipment placed at Crossman Peak, Western plans the following changes at existing facilities. New construction or road work is not planned.

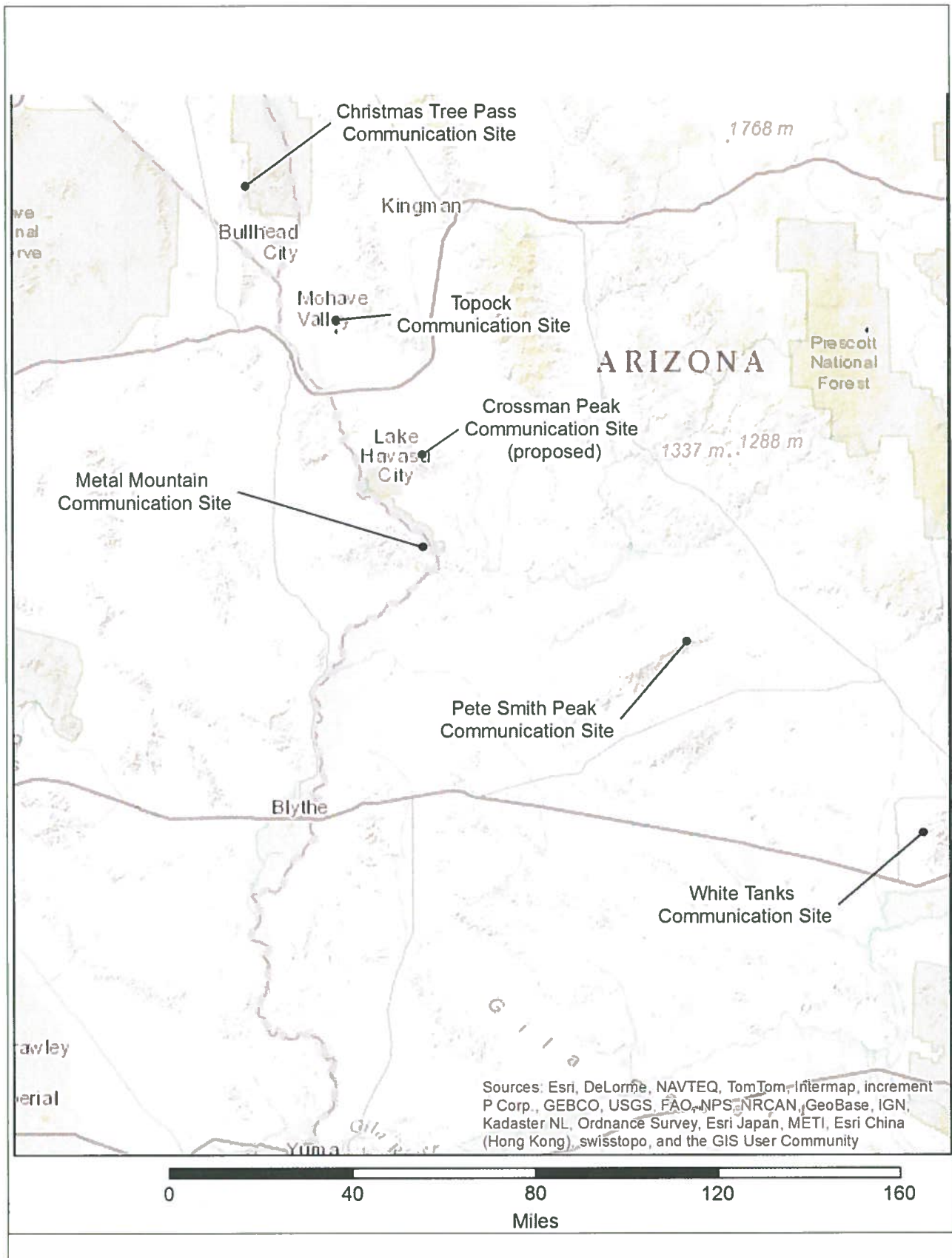
- 1) Christmas Tree Pass: Option 1: add new equipment in the communications building and keep the old equipment. Option 2: add new equipment in building and remove the old equipment and remove the 10-foot-diameter dish pointing to Metal Mountain. Both options entail workers driving one pickup truck to the site. A capstan will be used to lower the dish to the ground under Option 2.
- 2) Metal Mountain: Add a 6 or 8-foot-diameter dish and add or change equipment in communication building.
- 3) Pete Smith Peak: Remove 2, 8-foot-diameter dishes and replace with 2, 10-foot-diameter dishes, and add or change equipment in the communication building.
- 4) Topock: Add an 8-foot-diameter dish, and add or change equipment in the communication building.
- 5) White Tanks: Remove a 6-foot-diameter dish and replace with a 10-foot-diameter dish, and add or change equipment in communication building.

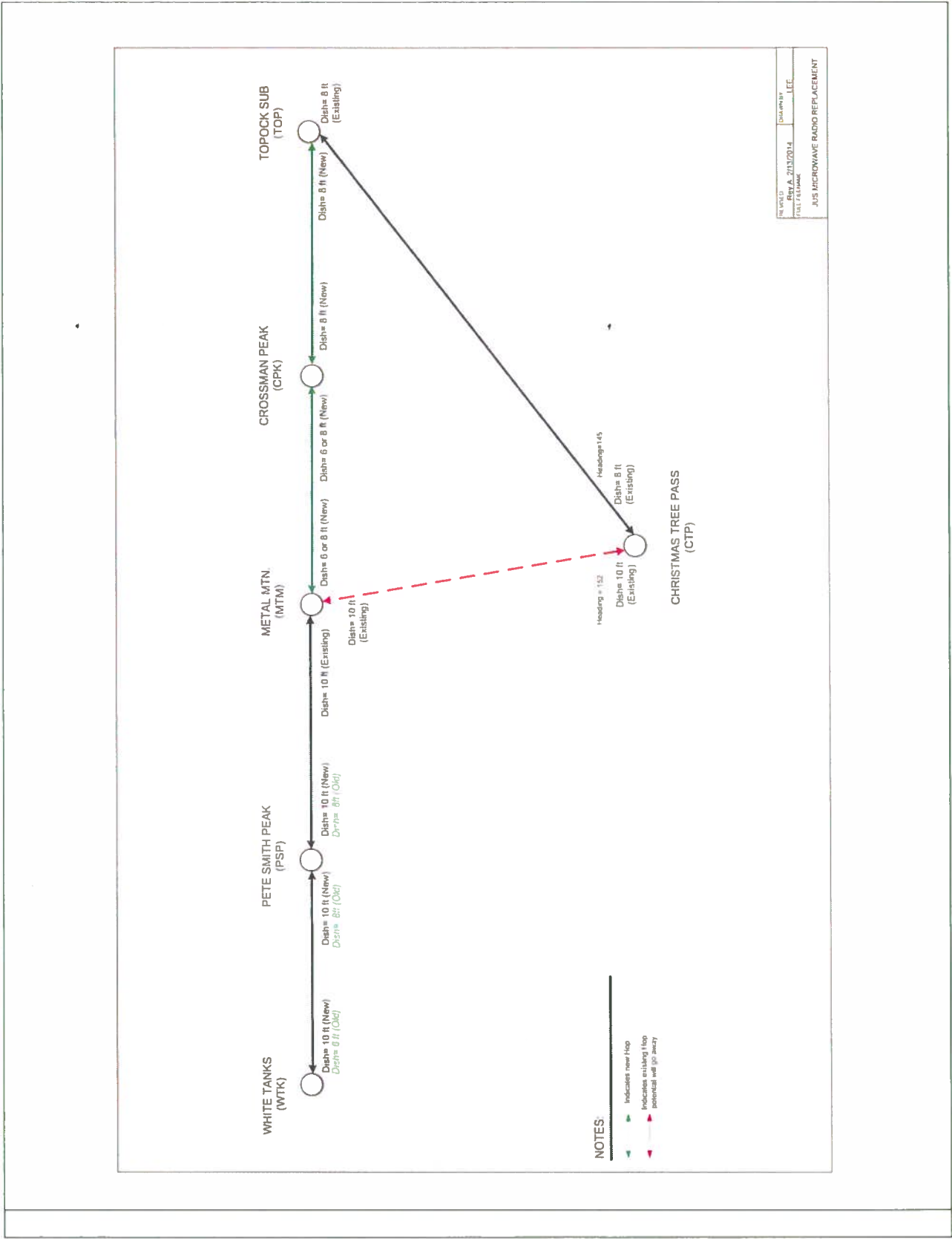
Western plans to conduct the work at Crossman Peak, Metal Mountain, Pete Smith Peak and White Tanks in July 2014. The work at Christmas Tree Pass and Topock has not yet been scheduled.

### **Special Conditions:**

- 1) To the extent possible, project activities should be scheduled when tortoises are inactive (typically November 1 to March 1).
- 2) Workers shall complete an environmental awareness education program, provided by Western's Environmental Section, prior to conducting project activities on-site. The education program will include discussions of the following:
  - a. The legal status of the tortoise;
  - b. A brief discussion of tortoise life history and ecology;

- c. Conservation measures designed to alleviate impacts to tortoises; and
  - d. Protocols to follow if a tortoise is encountered on-site, including contact points.
- 3) Vehicles shall be limited to existing access routes.
  - 4) Except on county-maintained roads, vehicle speeds shall not exceed 20 miles per hour through desert tortoise habitat. Driving speed shall be such that vehicle occupants are able to scan the road and avoid desert tortoises and other wildlife.
  - 5) Workers shall promptly contain all trash, construction waste, and food items within closed and sealed containers. These shall be regularly removed from the project site to reduce the attractiveness of the area to ravens and other tortoise predators.
  - 6) Workers shall regularly check under vehicles and within work areas for tortoises. If a tortoise is found in a project area, work activities will halt and the tortoise will be allowed to move away from the work area on its own accord. If at any time a desert tortoise is seen within or near any work area (including access road, turnouts, staging areas, etc.), workers shall immediately notify Western's on-site inspector or Western's Contracting Officer's Representative.
    - a. **In California and Nevada: Desert tortoises may NOT be handled. Any unauthorized handling of a Mohave desert tortoise could constitute "take" as defined in the Endangered Species Act.**
    - b. In Arizona: Sonoran Desert tortoises may only be handled if a tortoise is in imminent danger. Tortoises will be handled only by persons and in situations as approved by Western's Biologist (602-605-2640). Tortoises in Arizona will be handled in accordance with the Arizona Game and Fish Department's *"Guidelines for Handling Sonoran Desert Tortoises Encountered on Development Projects,"* revised October 23, 2007 (or the latest revision).





Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix A or B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
<b>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B. :</b>	NO	YES	UNKNOWN
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	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 or facilities;	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 unpermitted releases;	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:	X		
(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or	X		

	property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;			
(ii)	Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally- proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii)	Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);	X		
(iv)	Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v)	Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions,   or its successor;	X		
(vi)	Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii)	Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests.; or	X		
(5)	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.	X		