

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Burns Communication Site Upgrade

**Project Manager:** Vincent C. Majors, TEP-CSB-2

**Location:** Harney County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to upgrade its Burns Communication Site, located in Harney County, Oregon, by replacing existing analog communication equipment with digital equipment and installing an engine generator (EG). BPA is in the process of replacing outdated radio equipment to ensure communication and power system reliability, and to maintain compliance with Western Electric Coordinating Council requirements. The analog equipment at Burns Communication Site is obsolete and the associated 2 GHz government frequencies currently used by the site will no longer be available, necessitating installation of digital radio equipment. The EG is needed to provide redundancy in the event of equipment failure.

To complete the upgrade, BPA would remove the existing analog radio and install a digital radio in the same rack space inside the communication building, remove the existing antenna and install a new antenna on the existing radio tower, and remove the existing waveguide and install a new waveguide to connect the new antenna with the new digital equipment.

BPA would also install an EG, the associated controls and ventilation system, propane tanks, and underground propane lines that connect the tanks to the EG. BPA would install one 2,000-gallon propane tank on the western side of the communication site yard. Installation of the new tank would require creating two concrete footings to support the tank. Workers would place these footings in excavated trenches measuring 4-feet-wide by 2-feet-deep by 2-feet-long. They would remove the existing footings and backfill the holes with crushed rock. BPA would install new piping from the tanks into the building, and connect the piping to the new EG. To install the underground piping, workers would dig a trench measuring 1-foot-wide by 2-feet-deep by 25-feet-long from the propane tank to the communication building. Work needed inside the communication building to accommodate the EG and associated controls and ventilation would include cutting in two new doors and several wall openings.

The proposed project area is located within the fence of the existing communication site yard. During the original construction of the communication site, the entire area within the fenced yard was excavated, leveled, and rocked.

**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/ Hannah Sharp

Hannah Sharp  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
CorSource Technology Group

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 13, 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.

**Proposed Action:** Burns Communication Site Upgrade

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### Project Site Description

All work would take place within the previously disturbed gravel yard of the Burns Communication Site on BPA fee-owned property, located in Harney County, Oregon. The project site is situated on a hilltop surrounded by Bureau of Land Management land.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> OR SHPO concurrence on no adverse effect determination 12/2/14. Burns Paiute Tribe consulted—no response.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance. All work within previously disturbed communication site yard.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> All work in existing communication site yard; no plants present.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> All work in existing communication site yard; no habitat present.		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> None present.		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: None present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No new wells or use of ground water proposed; maximum depth of disturbance would be about 2 feet.

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

Explanation: All work in existing communication site yard.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: New equipment would not be noticeably different from existing conditions.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction. EG not anticipated to run outside weekly exercise cycle of 20-30 minutes, and Harney County is not a nonattainment area for air quality.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. EG would create negligible operational noise of 18 to 32 dbA, and operation of EG would be rare (not anticipated that EG will run outside weekly exercise cycle of 20-30 minutes). No houses or other structures in the vicinity of the project area.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions at project location.

### **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:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

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

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

Signed: /s/ Hannah Sharp

Hannah Sharp

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

CorSource Technology Group

Date: January 13, 2015