



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: Blythe-Knob 161-kV Transmission Line, Structure Maintenance 0-1 to 6-8

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

Location(s) (City/County/State): Blythe, Riverside County, California

Proposed Action Description:

Western proposes to conduct structure maintenance on the existing Blythe-Knob 161-kV transmission line south of Blythe, Riverside County, California. Numerous cross arms on existing wood H-frame structures have become deteriorated and lost their structural integrity. The purpose of the project is to replace damaged infrastructure, thereby ensuring the continued safe and reliable operation of the bulk transmission system. The project is on private lands and lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM, Palm Springs/South Coast Field Office). Public Land Survey System information is included in Table 1 (refer to Continuation Sheet).

Western proposes to replace failing wood cross arms on a number of structures located between the Blythe substation and structure 6/8. Structures identified for cross arm replacements are 0/4, 1/1, 1/2, 1/3, 1/4, 2/4, 2/5, 2/6, 2/8, 3/2, 3/4, 4/6, 4/7, 5/2, 6/7, and 6/8. In addition, crews may conduct additional structure maintenance and repair within the project segment, as on-site assessments warrant. Structure repair work will be conducted by staging equipment (e.g., bucket trucks) within a 150-foot by 100-foot area, centered at the structure and within the existing 100-foot right-of-way (ROW). Equipment needed to conduct the proposed work includes bucket trucks, line trucks, and crew trucks. No pad work or road work is required.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.3 - Routine maintenance

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: *Andra Maurer*

Date Determined: *1.9.15*

Blythe-Knob 161-kV Transmission Line
Structure Maintenance, 0-1 to 6-8
Categorical Exclusion Continuation Sheet

Project Description

The project is located in the following sections:

Township, Range*	Section	Land Ownership
6 South, 22 East	32, 33	Private
7 North, 22 East	5	Private
7 South, 22 East	7, 8, 18	BLM
7 South, 21 East	13, 24, 26	BLM
7 South, 21 East	25	Private
<i>*San Bernardino Meridian</i>		

The proposed work will begin no sooner than January 12, 2015. The work will be completed in stages, dependent on scheduled outages.

Special Conditions

1) BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- a) Project activities will be conducted outside the breeding bird season, as feasible. If ground- or vegetation-disturbing project activities will occur during the breeding bird season (generally February 15 to August 31), a qualified biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys for nesting birds. Project activities may not disturb an active bird nest.
 - i) If an active bird nest is located on or adjacent to the project limits, a qualified biologist will designate and flag an appropriate buffer area around the nest where activities will not be permitted. The buffer area will be based on the bird species and nature of the project activity.
 - ii) If an active bird nest is located such that it cannot be avoided, the qualified biologist will immediately notify Western's on-site inspector. An active bird nest may not be disturbed or removed without a permit from the USFWS; Western will review the need for and obtain any necessary permits relative to migratory birds.
- b) Project activities will be scheduled between November 1 and February 28, as feasible.
- c) For all project activities occurring during the tortoise activity season (March 1 to October 31), a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction surveys for Mojave desert tortoise in suitable habitat.
- d) No tortoises will be handled during project activities. If tortoises are found in the work area, activities will be modified by an on-site biologist to avoid injury or harm. Tortoise burrows and other sensitive features identified during the pre-construction survey shall be flagged and monitored, as determined by Western Environmental Affairs.
- e) At the end of each work day, crews will leave work areas and adjacent habitats to minimize disturbance to actively foraging animals, and remove food-related trash from the work site in closed containers for disposal. Workers will not deliberately or inadvertently feed wildlife.

- f) Vehicles shall not exceed a speed of 25 miles per hour within the project area or on any unposted dirt access roads.
- g) All trash and food items will be promptly contained within closed, raven-proof containers. These shall be regularly removed from the project site to reduce the attractiveness of the area to ravens and other tortoise predators.
- h) No pets will be allowed on site.

2) CULTURAL RESOURCES

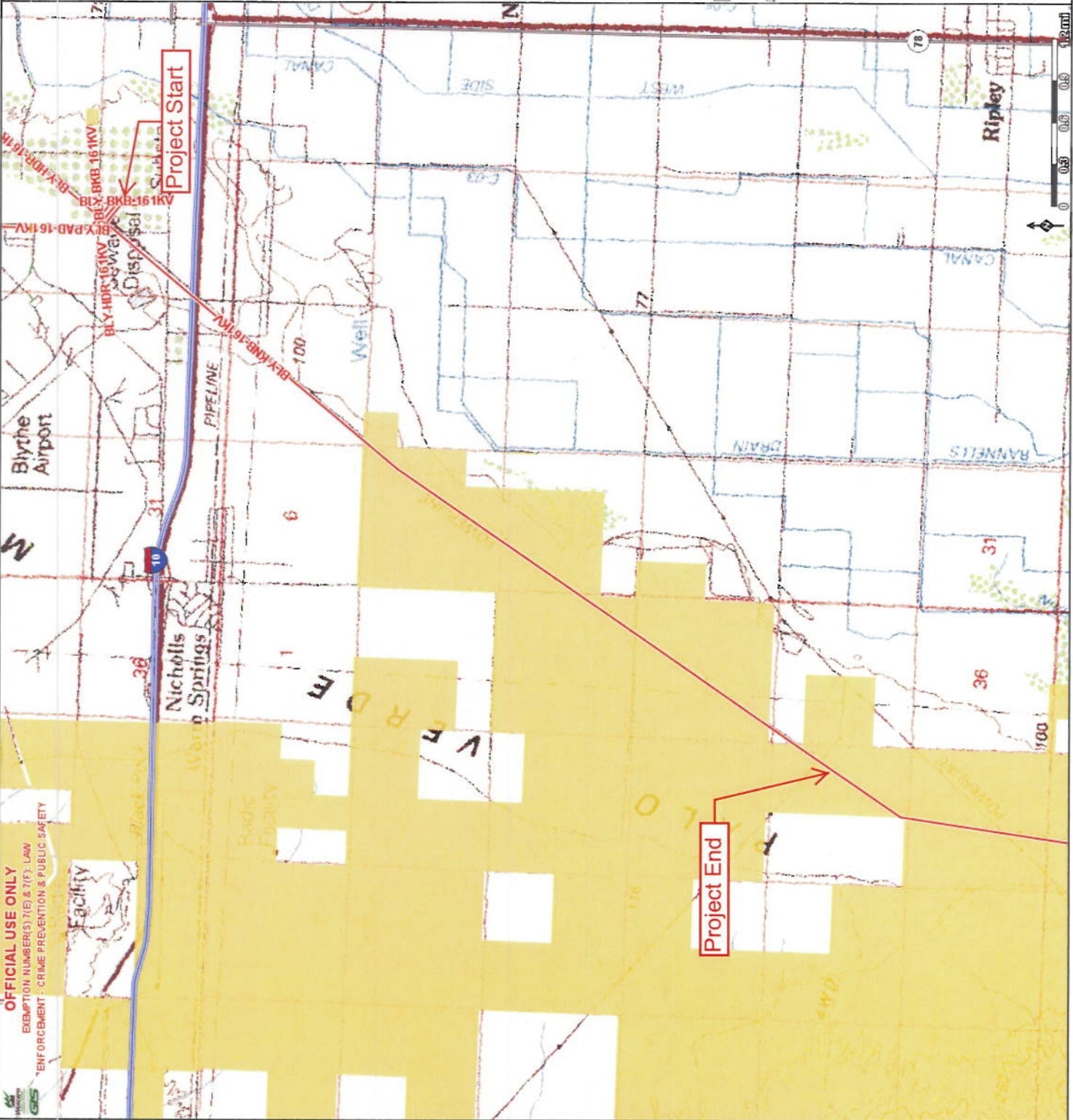
- a) In the event of archaeological discoveries or discoveries of human remains during ground-disturbing activities, these activities must cease in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and Western's Regional Preservation Officer (RPO; 602-605-2842) must be notified immediately. If human remains are found on federal lands, the federal land-managing agency must also be notified immediately, followed by written notification of the discovery of human remains to the agency within 24 hours. Western's RPO, and the federal land managing agency's archaeologist, will consult with the SHPO and tribes to determine the appropriate course of action.

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)	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. 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, 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 property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;	X		
(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		

OFFICIAL USE ONLY
EXEMPTION NUMBER(S) 7(E) & 7(F), LAW
ENFORCEMENT - CRIME PREVENTION & PUBLIC SAFETY



Desert Southwest Region

Western Area Power Administration
An Agency of the U.S. Department of Energy

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1/9/2015 11:03 A.M.

- Complete T-Line
- Complete T-Line DC
- Incomplete T-Line
- Distribution Line
- Underground T-Line
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- MAJOR HIGHWAY (US/STATE)
- Federal Lands (Unofficial) ...
- BLM
- BIA
- NPS
- USFS
- USFWS
- BOR
- STATE
- DOD
- DOE
- COE
- PRIVATE / OTHER
- States
- Counties
- USGS 100K Topo-Quads