

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Olympia-St. Clair Emergency Impairment Remedy

Project Manager: Lee Webb TFOF

Project No.: PP&A 3146

Location: Thurston County, Washington

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: Two spans of the Olympia-St. Clair 230 kV transmission line between structures 12/1 to 12/3 have been identified as having a significant impairment to the line. The ground to conductor clearance in these locations is such that it poses an immediate risk to the surrounding public and significantly increases the possibility of an outage due to ground or vegetation contact.

BPA's proposes to construct two new wood pole transmission structures, one at each location in the center of the current transmission line spans, to raise the conductor to a safe distance under current standards. Each structure would consist of placement of two wood poles tied together by cross arm supports and other necessary hardware. No guy wire supports are planned. The poles will be placed in the ground by excavating with a backhoe, placing the poles, and backfilling with crushed rock.

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/ Phil Smith for

Greg Tippetts KEPR/Olympia
Olympia District Environmental Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 16, 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.

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Project Site Description

Project is located within a transmission line utility ROW that is managed to maintain low-growing vegetation. Vegetation within the ROW is dominated by grasses and forbs; the edge of the ROW is lined with conifers. The adjacent land use is low-density residential.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The subject areas are covered with heavy, low growing, ground vegetation. No historic or cultural resources were noted during the initial site investigation on 3/4/15. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work will cease and the appropriate archaeological resources (BPA and WA DAHP) will be contacted. Section 106 consultation will continue after the emergency construction activity has been completed.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No site development or changes to the project topography are planned as part of this project. BMPs will be used as needed to prevent erosion and control runoff.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No species with special-status are known to occur at the sites. Disturbed areas would be reseeded and restored.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA has initiated consultation with the US FWS Washington office for the proposed emergency project. Given the determination of an emergency project, FWS has agreed to the necessary work and required continued consultation throughout and post construction of the project.</p>		

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish**
(including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: The sites do not include any water bodies or nearby connection to any waterbodies.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The sites are not wetlands, nor do they exhibit any characteristics associated with wetland habitats.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be present on site during construction. Project would not result in any ground water withdrawals nor provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

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



Explanation: Habitat for Mazama pocket gophers has been set aside by Thurston County adjacent to the 12/1 to 12/2 project location. The area designated as habitat by Thurston county will not be affected by the construction activities. BPA is in consultation with USFWS for the project sites in relation to the potential presence of the threatened species.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The structures would be part of an existing transmission line within a corridor occupied by multiple transmission lines. Addition of the two structures would not noticeably alter the appearance of the corridor.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Minor temporary localized impacts from dust and exhaust caused by normal construction equipment activities.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Normal construction equipment activities causing localized increases in noise at the site during construction.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Completion of this emergency project will significantly increase public and BPA worker safety within the project corridor.

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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA ROW Easement.

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

Signed: /s/ Phil Smith for
Greg Tippetts KEPR/Olympia
Olympia District Environmental Scientist

Date: March 16, 2015