



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

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Proposed Action Title: Urgent Herbicide Application at 15 Substations located in Arizona, California, and Nevada

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

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

Proposed Action Description:

Western plans apply pre-emergent, post-emergent, UV Inhibitor herbicides, which will include spray marking dyes, at 15 substations (see attached list for locational information). This work is urgently needed to maintain the reliability and safety of the bulk electric system. For example, live or dead vegetation sticking up through a grounded work platform adjacent to energized equipment may circumvent the grounding protection resulting in an injury to a worker standing on the platform.

Western will apply herbicides either using either hand tools or vehicular-mounted equipment within the substation and extending 5 feet outside the perimeter fence where possible. Vegetation may be cut or pulled to achieve a bare earth standard. Pulled vegetation will be removed off-site and disposed of properly. Western plans to conduct this maintenance action between 3/3/2015 and 4/3/2015.

Special Conditions:

See attached continuation sheet for special conditions.

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:

Date Determined:

3.3.15



Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
(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>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>UNKNOWN</b>
(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	X		

	designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or 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		

## Categorical Exclusion Determination Form – Continuation Sheet

**Project Description:**

<b>Substations Selected for Herbicide Application.</b>					
<b>Substation</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Legal Description</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>State</b>	<b>Land Jurisdiction</b>
COOLIDGE	±35.27	S09 T05S R08E GSRBM	Pinal	AZ	western
DAVIS	±5.92	S19 T21N R21W GSRBM	Mohave	AZ	BOR
DEL BAC	±1.89	S11 T15S R13E GSRBM	Pima	AZ	western
GILA	±17.49	S01 T09S R22W GSRBM	Yuma	AZ	western
GRIFFITH	±3.78	S06 T19N R17W GSRBM	Mohave	AZ	western
HENDERSON	±4.35	S13 T22N R62E MDBM	Clark	NV	western
KOFA	±3.61	S29 T06S R20W GSRBM	Yuma	AZ	DOD
LIBERTY	±90.05	S19 T01N R02W GSRBM	Maricopa	AZ	western
MEAD	±108.89	S28 T23S R64E MDBM	Clark	NV	BLM withdrawn
McCONNICO	±5.36	S4&9 T20N R17W GSRBM	Mohave	AZ	western
PARKER DAM	±8.42	S04 T02N R27E SBBM	San Bernardino	CA	BLM withdrawn
PINNACLE PEAK	±24.5	S10 T04N R04E GSRBM	Maricopa	AZ	western
RATTLESNAKE	±1.74	S14 T12S R11E GSRBM	Pima	AZ	BOR
SUNDANCE	±4.7	S02 T06S R07E GSRBM	Pinal	AZ	western
WELLTON MOHAWK PUMPING PLANT #1	±.38	S21 T08S R20W GSRBM	Yuma	AZ	BOR/ WMIDD
Notes: BLM – U.S. Bureau of Land Management; BOR – U.S. Bureau of Reclamation; CNF – Coconino National Forest; DOD - Department of Defense; GSRBM – Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian; MDBM – Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian; SBBM – San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian; WMIDD – Wellton Mohawk Irrigation and Drainage District. Land jurisdiction is based on a review of Western's GIS database; contact Western's Lands staff for more information if needed.					

## Special Conditions for Urgent Herbicide Application at 15 Substations:

### A. General

1. Workers applying the herbicides shall follow the manufacturer's instructions located on the label, and all applicable Federal, State, Tribal and local codes and regulations.
2. Workers applying the herbicides shall be licensed or certified for such work by the appropriate jurisdiction.

### B. Biology

1. Western's Maintenance Representative for the herbicide application shall notify Western's Environmental Section at least 7 days prior to the start of on-site activities in any location to coordinate biological survey and monitoring activities. Using the schedule, the Environmental Section will provide available biological information for upcoming substations.
2. Due to their known adverse effects to some wildlife, Western shall not use 2,4-D or 2,4,5-T herbicides at any substations located in California or Nevada.
3. Western's Maintenance Workers receive annual environmental awareness training.
4. Per Western's communication with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), a qualified biologist shall be present for project activities occurring at substations with the potential to impact listed or sensitive species (See #5 below). The duties of the qualified biologist shall include the following:
  - a) Conduct a survey of all work areas for tortoises, nesting birds, and other sensitive species prior to the start of on-site project activities;
  - b) Inspection and monitoring of any tortoises, burrows, active nests, or other sensitive species that were located during the on-site survey ([a], above);
  - c) Regular inspection of the work areas, including access routes and other areas related to project activities, for desert tortoise;
  - d) Regular inspection beneath vehicles and equipment to ensure that they do not present potential hazards to wildlife, including desert tortoises.
5. A qualified biologist shall be present for the following:
  - a) All on-site project activities occurring at Mead Substation, at any time of the year;
  - b) On-site project activities occurring at Parker Substation between April 1 and May 31, and between September 1 and October 31.
6. Workers shall not cause injury or death to nesting birds, active nests, eggs, or nestlings. In general, breeding birds and active nests are likely to be encountered between February 15 and August 1. If evidence of a nesting bird is discovered in the project area:
  - a) Workers shall immediately stop work within 40 feet of the nest and notify the Western's Environmental Manager with the location and nature of the findings. Workers shall not work in the avoidance area until directed to do so by the Environmental Manager.