

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Access Road Easement Acquisition along Midway-Moxee and Midway-Grandview Transmission Lines

Project Manager: Chad Hamel - TEP-TPP-1

Location: Benton and Yakima counties, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.24 Property Transfers

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is proposing to acquire easements for access roads to existing transmission line structures along BPA's Midway-Moxee and Midway-Grandview 115-kilovolt transmission lines. Easement acquisition is needed because BPA does not have adequate legal access to wood-pole transmission line structures for ongoing operation and maintenance activities and emergency maintenance in some areas along the existing lines.

Easement acquisition would occur at various locations along the two transmission lines—most of the easements would be for use of existing roads across privately-owned lands, as well as some across US Bureau of Reclamation administered lands. A total of about 12 miles of road easement would be acquired, ranging in width from 20 feet to 50 feet.

Any access road improvement or construction that may be needed would have further environmental review.

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/ Kimberly St.Hilaire

Kimberly St.Hilaire

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Date: April 21, 2015

Katherine S. Pierce or Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

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: Access Road Easement Acquisition for Midway-Moxee and Midway-Grandview Transmission Lines

Project Site Description

Easement acquisition would be on privately owned lands and federal public land. The land uses include a mix of existing access road, private driveways, ranching, agriculture (vineyards, hops, wheat, and orchards), undeveloped land, and rural 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation:

No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation:

No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only

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

Explanation:

Acquisition of easement rights would not substantially change existing land use or ownership

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation:

No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation:

No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only

11. **Noise**

Explanation:

No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation:

No ground disturbance proposed; acquisition of easement rights only

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.

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

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.

- 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.

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty Specialists worked with landowners to explain the need for BPA to obtain legal access to transmission line structures and to negotiate easements.

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

Signed: /s/ Kimberly St.Hilaire

Date: April 21, 2015