

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Hilltop-Warner #1 Wood Pole Replacement

Project No.: PP&A Project No. 3151

Project Manager: Richard Heredia

Location: Modoc County, California

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to replace one deteriorating wood pole on its Hilltop-Warner #1 230-kV transmission line to ensure continued operational reliability. The proposed maintenance involves replacement of structure 4/3 and associated structural/electrical components (i.e. cross arms, insulators, guys and guy anchors, etc.). The existing wood poles will be mechanically removed from the ground. The replacement structure would be in-kind, having the same height as the original.

The work may include creating a 50- by 50-foot earthen landing adjacent to the structure to allow equipment staging for pole removal and replacement. The new poles for the structure would either be placed back in the existing holes, or an auger attached to a backhoe would be used to drill new holes approximately five feet ahead or back-on-line from the existing poles. This would allow for the new pole holes to be drilled before the line outage, since this process can be time consuming and the outage is of limited duration. During the line outage, the existing poles would then be removed and the new poles installed in the existing or pre-drilled holes.

Ground disturbance for the pole replacement would not extend beyond a 100-foot radius around existing pole structure. No access road improvements will be needed for this project.

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/ Aaron Shurtliff
Aaron Shurtliff
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason
Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *April 7, 2015*

Attachment(s):
Environmental Checklist
Effects Determination

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:

Project Site Description

The project is located in the Modoc National Forest with relatively sparse vegetation and flat topography.

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"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Comments were received from SHPO in a letter dated 10/2/14, that specified work restrictions that would be needed to avoid impacting the site located to the east of tower 4/3. Brian O’Donnchadha confirmed by phone call to SHPO that work would be conducted only from the west side of the tower to avoid impacts. No further consultation needed. Consulted with the Fort Bidwell, Burns-Paiute, Cedarville, Klamath, Pit River, and Warm Springs tribes – no response.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No sensitive or protected plant species		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No sensitive or protected wildlife/habitat		
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 waterbodies		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No wetlands

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: n/a

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

Explanation: consistent with existing land use

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: No change to visual quality, tower replacement in-kind

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Some temporary construction dust

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: n/a

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: Coordination with Modoc National Forest, including Section 106 consultation.

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

Signed: /s/ Aaron Shurtliff
Aaron Shurtliff

Date: April 7, 2015