

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Bellingham Substation Upgrades

Project Manager: Dino Zeppetalla, TEPO-CSB-2

Location: Whatcom 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: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes upgrades to its Bellingham Substation, in the control house and in the substation yard, within BPA's existing fee owned right-of-way. Bellingham Substation was assessed and found to have several deficiencies including asbestos containing materials; energy inefficiency; temperature spikes in the existing heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) system; an outdated fire protection system; nonpotable water; and inadequate earthquake protection.

In order to address these problems, upgrades to the control house interior and exterior include:

- Asbestos abatement and painting
- Window and door replacements
- Mechanical systems (HVAC replacement)
- Electrical systems (new lighting)
- Fire protection warning system
- Plumbing system (new fixtures in interior, drill new water well, add associated piping for new well, and decommission existing well)
- Septic system (decommission existing system that is approximately 2,000-square feet, and install new tank, pump chamber, transport piping, and drainfield in the same location)
- New landscaping (septic system is under existing landscaping and will need to be replaced)
- Addition of a 30 foot by 16 foot modular storage building inside the substation yard (remove existing concrete slab and replace with a new one)
- Seismic hardening (installation of strongbacks to reinforce walls, bracing light fixtures, etc.)

The proposed activities will not require yard expansion. All ground disturbing activities will occur where previous disturbance has occurred.

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/ Elizabeth Siping

Elizabeth Siping
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Adecco Engineering & Technical

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 10, 2015

Attachment: 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: Bellingham Substation Upgrades

Project Site Description

The project site is at BPA's Bellingham Substation on Dewey Road in Bellingham, Washington. Bellingham Substation is located in a rural, residential area. Proposed activities would occur to the control house and adjacent to the west and north in areas that are landscaped and have previously been disturbed.

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"/>

Explanation: Design changes were made in order to remain consistent with the guidelines outlined in the Multiple Property Documentation for the Bonneville Power Administration Pacific Northwest Transmission System (Kramer 2010). Washington State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence with no effect determination May 5, 2015. The Lummi Tribe was consulted; no response received.

Mitigation:

In the event any archaeological or historic materials are encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:

- Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead (Mike Henjum) and the BPA archaeologist (Shelby Day). Appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Washington SHPO, and the appropriate county, state, and federal agencies should also be notified.
- Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.
- Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.

2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Explanation: Approximately 10 foot by 10 foot soil disturbance for domestic well installation, which will occur in a landscaped area next to the driveway. Approximately 20 foot by 100 foot soil disturbance for septic system removal and replacement, which will occur west of the control house within the substation yard. Some additional work would occur inside the substation yard within yard rock areas.

Mitigation:

- Existing septic system will be decommissioned per Washington State Department of Health and City of Bellingham's administrative code.
- Erosion and sediment control best management practices will be implemented.
- Soil generated during well installation will be hauled off site.
- Soil will not be stockpiled for longer than one week.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation: No special status species present. Vegetation impacted would all be in currently landscaped areas.

4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: No special status species present. All work would occur in previously disturbed areas.

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



Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish are present.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: A wetland delineation was completed during project design. Existing wetlands surrounding the substation would be avoided.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: A new domestic water well and associated piping is proposed to the north of the control house. The existing water well that is inside the substation yard will be decommissioned per Washington State Department of Health and City of Bellingham's administrative code.

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



Explanation: All work would occur on existing BPA fee-owned right-of-way.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The proposed modifications to the control house and the new landscaping were designed to maintain the original public viewshed from Dewey Road, including replicating the original muntin pattern on the control house windows. A minor change will be the addition of ballards to protect the new water well. The new storage building will be located to the east of the control house and is barely visible from Dewey Road.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions during septic system replacement and water well installation.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary increase during septic system replacement and water well installation.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Proposed activities will have a net positive impact to human health by providing safe drinking water and potentially protecting occupants due to seismic upgrades to the building and a new fire protection system.

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: Asbestos abatement and removal of heavy metal laden components will be conducted in compliance with state and federal laws.

- 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: All work on BPA fee-owned property and would have no permanent impact on adjacent landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Elizabeth Siping
Elizabeth Siping – KEC-4

Date: June 10, 2015