

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Approval of Land Use Review Request for Fiber Installation in BPA right-of-way in Skamania County, Washington

**Project Manager:** Laura Loop TERR-3

**Location:** Skamania County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.9 Multiple is of powerline rights-of-way

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to allow Astound Broadband to trench for new fiber conduit beneath BPA's Underwood Tap-Bonneville PH1 and North Bonneville-Midway No. 1 lines near tower 10/3. The approximately 450 foot-long trench would run parallel to the east side of Smith Beckon Road. Soils would be excavated a minimum of 3 feet subsurface to place the new 2 inch conduit. The trench conduit would be secured with rock and then the trench would be backfilled with offset soils. All ground disturbing activities would occur within the boundaries of a previously disturbed BPA fee-owned transmission line right-of-way.

**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/ Claire McClory

Claire McClory

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce or Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 6, 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.

**Proposed Action:** Approval of Land Use Review Request for fiber installation in BPA right-of-way in Skamania County, Washington.

## Project Site Description

The project is located on BPA fee-owned property in Skamania County, Washington. The proposed trench is located within the road prism of Smith Beckon Road on the east side and within a portion of an existing horse pasture. The area is primarily surrounded by grass. Low density residential housing is adjacent to BPAs right-of-way.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

| Environmental Resource Impacts   | No Potential for Significance       | No Potential for Significance, with Conditions |
|--|-------------------------------------|--|
| 1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u> DAHP concurrence on no adverse effect determination 6/30/15. No response from consulted Confederated Tribes and Bands of Yakama Reservation. |                                     |  |
| 2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u><br>Minimal soil disturbance, erosion control measures would be used.   |                                     |  |
| 3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u><br>No special-status species present. About 0.03 acres of grasses removed or disturbed.  |                                     |  |
| 4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u><br>No special-status species of designated habitat present. About 450 linear feet of low-quality horse pasture would be disturbed.           |                                     |  |
| 5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u><br>None present.   |                                     |  |
| 6. <b>Wetlands</b>   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>                       |
| <u>Explanation:</u>  |                                     |  |

None present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation:

None present.

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



Explanation:

Project is located in Columbia River National Scenic Area designated Urban Area which is exempt from consistency review. Temporary impacts to pasture during construction. About 0.03 acres of prime farmland temporarily removed from potential production.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation:

No impact.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation:

Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

No impact.

### **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:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Not applicable.

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

Signed: /s/ Claire McClory  
Claire McClory

Date: August 6, 2015