

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Ferry Butte Communication Facility Upgrades

**Project Manager:** Vincent Majors TEP-CSB-2

**Location:** Bonneville County, Idaho

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to upgrade its communication tower at the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Ferry Butte Communication Facility where BPA leases communications space. The upgrade would create a new beam path between BPAs existing communication facilities in Idaho. The project would include extending the existing 50-foot tall tower by 15 feet and adding two microwave antennas to the tower extension. Additional communications equipment would be added within the existing communication building to support the new microwave antennas.

An existing wave guide bridge, which is a structure that supports the cables connecting the antennas and transmitters, would be relocated between the communication building and the tower. Holes for two posts to hold the wave guide bridge would be hand dug, approximately 1 foot wide and 3 feet deep (one near the tower and one near the building). All activities would take place within the fenced and graveled area.

**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/ Justin Moffett

Justin Moffett

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason      Date: December 10, 2015

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: Ferry Butte Communication Facility Upgrades**

---

### Project Site Description

The existing FAA Ferry Butte Communication Facility is located on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation in Bingham County, Idaho. The project area is fenced and rocked. Immediately surrounding the communication site are heavily disturbed native grasses and sage brush.

### 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> Fort Hall Indian Reservation THPO concurrence on no adverse effect to historic properties 12/9/2015.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. No vegetation removal proposed.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present.		
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> 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: No change to existing land use; not a specially designated area.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The communication tower extension would be visually consistent with the adjacent communication towers (which are within the same height range) and would not be located in a visually sensitive area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours.

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:

---

**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA has been working with the FAA and Fort Hall Indian Reservation to lease facilities at Ferry Butte. FAA leases the site from the Fort Hall Indian Reservation.

---

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

Signed: /s/ Justin Moffett  
Justin Moffett

Date: December 10, 2015