

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Wautoma-Ostrander No. 1 Upgrade Project

Project No. (if applicable): 2361

Project Manager: Nathan Mullen, TELP-TPP-3

Location: BPA Tri-Cities District in Yakima County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3, Routine maintenance; B4.6, Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to address a surface impairment that was identified on the Wautoma-Ostrander No. 1 transmission line, where the conductors do not have adequate clearance from the ground surface for operation at 100°C. Removing the surface impairments would allow BPA's Wautoma-Ostrander No. 1 transmission line to meet current National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards for operation at 100°C. The project would also include modifying two transmission structures to transpose the electrical phasing of the transmission line, thus increasing power transmission efficiency. Table 1, below, details project activities. Project areas are located in agricultural and grazing lands on the Yakama Indian Reservation. BPA has coordinated with the Yakama Nation.

Following the excavation and placement of soil and/or other construction activities, all disturbed areas would be stabilized for erosion and sediment control, and seeded with an appropriate seed mix.

Equipment that would be likely to be used for this project, and would be likely to disturb the ground, would include a combination of the following: dump trucks, a bulldozer, backhoes, excavators, cranes, bucket trucks and work trucks.

Span or Str.	County	TRS	Activity
22/4	Yakima, WA	T10N R21E SEC 26, 27, and 34	Replace middle arm on tower 22/4 and relocate conductors. May need to use a crane to place carts on conductor at 23/3 and 22/5 to remove spacers. Vegetation clearing is also necessary around the base of the structure.
25/2 - 25/3	Yakima, WA	T9N R21E SEC 5	Remove approx. 80 cubic yards of soil and place within the ROW to the west or northeast of the impairment. No planned road improvements.
42/5	Yakima, WA	T9N R21E SEC 1, 6, 11, and 14	Relocate conductors. No Structure modifications. May need to use a crane to place carts on conductor at 42/4 and 43/1 to remove spacers.

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/ Oden Jahn
Oden Jahn
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce
Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 2, 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:

Project Site Description

The proposed project is located in the BPA Tri-Cities District in Yakima County, Washington. The project activities would be conducted at selected locations along the 162-mile, 500-kilovolt Wautoma-Ostrander No. 1 transmission line between Wautoma Substation and Ostrander Substation. Project areas are located in agricultural and grazing lands on the Yakama Reservation.

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> Cultural resources were identified in the project areas. BPA will avoid and minimize work at these locations, and provide a tribal monitor at all three project locations during ground-disturbing activities. BPA determined the project will have no adverse effect to historic properties. The Yakama THPO concurred with this determination on August 31, 2015.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities. Excess material would be contoured to match surrounding terrain, seeded and mulched.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Federal/state special-status plant species are not known to occur in the project area.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Federal/state special-status wildlife species are not known to occur in the project area.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Other than the work site at structure 22/4, there are no water resources in the vicinity of the work sites. Structure 22/4 is within the Yakima River Flood Plain; however, all work would be above ground.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> All work is in upland areas.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs.

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



Explanation: The project areas are on the Yakama Reservation. No changes to current land uses are anticipated.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The tower modifications would not significantly change the appearance of the towers. Project areas are located away from any public roads or residences.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Fugitive dust or vehicle emissions generated during project implementation would be temporary and negligible.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: The project is located away from any populated areas and places of residence. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities during working hours, and be for a short duration.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The proposed action would not impact human health or safety.

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 notified landowners along the corridor, and obtained the proper permissions prior to entering properties. Coordination with landowners would continue through the completion of the project.

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

Signed: /s/ Oden Jahn
Oden Jahn, KEPR-4

Date: September 2, 2015