

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Slatt Substation Expansion (Interconnection Request G0238-G0239)

**Project No.:** G0238-G0239

**Project Manager:** Jay Chester TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Gilliam County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.11 Electric Power Substation and Interconnection Facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to expand its existing Slatt Substation on BPA property in Gilliam County, Oregon and install electrical interconnection equipment to interconnect Avangrid's planned Montague Wind Power Project to BPA's Federal Columbia River Transmission System (FCRTS). The equipment to be installed at Slatt Substation would include four 230-kilovolt (kV) breakers, five 230-kV disconnect switches, two 230-kV lightning arrestors, line relays with transfer trip relays, a 230-kV shunt capacitor bank, and three 230-kV potential transformers. A new 230-kV dead end tower and a new ground pole would be located within the expansion area; each would be 70 feet tall. New metering, RAS, and communication equipment for the interconnection would be installed inside the existing substation control houses.

The expansion would add about 0.5 acre (220 feet by 150 feet) to the existing 27.5-acre Slatt Substation. The expansion area would be on already disturbed land within BPA's existing property boundary on the northeast side of the substation. In addition, about 1 acre of BPA property may be temporarily disturbed during construction activities.

The new substation equipment would be installed on concrete pads for stability, and the remainder of the expansion area would be covered in crushed rock. For security and public safety, the existing 7-foot high chain link substation perimeter fence and lighting would be extended to encompass the expansion area. To meet current stormwater management requirements, the stormwater management system perimeter ditch would be extended around the perimeter of the new fence line. All work would be in a previously disturbed area.

Avangrid's subsidiary, Montague Wind Power Facility LLC (Montague) will build, own, and operate the wind project. Avangrid has received a site certification for its wind project from the State of Oregon Energy Facility Siting Council (EFSC). BPA would enter into a Large Generation Interconnection Agreement (LGIA) with Montague to allow the interconnection but does not plan to purchase any of the power produced by the wind 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/ Claire McClory

Claire McClory

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: June 2, 2017

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:** Slatt Substation Expansion (Interconnection Request G0238-G0239)

---

### Project Site Description

The Slatt Substation is about three miles southeast of the Town of Arlington. The substation expansion area has been previously disturbed and reseeded during the original substation construction. Nearby land uses include farmland and rangeland that consists of open, undeveloped terrain surrounded by grassland and shrub-steppe.

### 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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA initiated consultation with the Oregon SHPO, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (Umatilla Tribe), the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation in January 2012. The Advisory Council on Historic Preservation concurred with BPAs finding of no adverse effect to cultural resources in March 2017.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> About 1 acre of temporary soil disturbance and 0.52 acre of permanent disturbance within substation expansion area.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion and sediment controls for soil stabilization would be implemented.</li> <li>✓ Vehicles would be limited to access roads and immediate work areas.</li> </ul>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Vehicles should be washed and free of soil and other debris prior to entering the site.</li> </ul>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species or designated habitat present.</p>		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No water resources present.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A Stormwater Pollution Prevention plan would be developed to control surface-water, ground-water, and runoff-water impacts during and following construction.</li> </ul>		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: None present.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater proposed. Spill prevention measures would be present on site.

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

Explanation: The Slatt Substation is situated within a larger parcel owned in fee by BPA. The limits of the BPA-owned parcel would not change as a result of the substation expansion and would not infringe upon nearby easements or adjoining properties.

Land use of the expansion area would change from vacant, undeveloped property disturbed by previous substation construction to developed substation property. Substation expansion would be consistent with adjacent land uses such as the ongoing operation and maintenance of the adjacent Slatt Substation and transmission line corridors.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: Substation expansion would be visually consistent with surrounding substation and transmission infrastructure.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Temporary dust and vehicle emissions would be created during construction of the expansion area.

- ✓ Construction contractor would implement BMPs for dust control during construction.
- ✓ Dust control methods would not include the use of nearby streams, ditches, or water bodies near the project area, unless approved by BPA personnel.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Construction noise would be limited to daytime hours. Operational noise from the expansion area would be consistent with existing substation and transmission line noise in the area.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No impacts to human health and 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 adjacent property owners and interested parties of BPA's proposed actions for this interconnection request in February 2012. BPA received 10 comments, many of which focused on Avangrid's wind project rather than BPA's actions (substation equipment and interconnection).

The comments received included the relationship between rising local power rates in Gilliam County and the continued installation of new wind power projects within the county, the identity of the recipient(s) of the power sold from the wind project, the financial impact on taxpayers from wind power subsidies and oversupply agreements between wind generators and BPA, the effect on property values, and the degradation of viewsheds. Many of the concerns associated with the wind facility's impacts on the local area were considered and addressed in EFSC's site certification process. The operation of the FCRTS requires BPA to consider the reliability of the transmission system and its ability to meet the demand for power of priority customers within BPA's Balancing Authority. BPA currently complies with the Open Access Transmission Tariff policies consistent with FERC Order 2000, which assures that BPA offers non-discriminatory access for all generators to its transmission system on a first-come, first-served basis. BPA has no plans to purchase power from this wind facility. Avangrid is responsible for marketing power for the facility and will supply its own Generation Imbalance reserves for the wind facility.

One comment expressed concern that the Slatt Substation expansion would encroach on privately-owned land to the west and south of the substation parcel; the substation expansion would all occur within the limits of the BPA-owned parcel and would not infringe on nearby easements or adjoining properties.

---

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

Signed: /s/ Claire McClory  
Claire McClory ECT-4

Date: June 2, 2017