

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** North Bonneville-Midway Impairment Corrections (Miles 108-138)

**PP&A No.:** 3236

**Project Manager:** Gary Beck, TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Yakima and Benton Counties, WA

**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:** BPA is proposing to correct five critical line impairments on the North Bonneville – Midway transmission line. An impairment is an area where the distance from the conductor to the ground surface is inadequate, per National Electrical Safety Code (NESC) standards, resulting in a threat to line reliability and posing a risk to public health and safety. The proposed work is necessary to ensure the line meets current NESC and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) standards.

The five impairments would be corrected by lifting the conductor through the addition of a transmission structure between the existing structures or through changes to the hardware on existing structures as described further below.

<b>Tower Span</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Proposed Fix</b>
118/1 – 118/2	Yakima	Addition of prop structure
133/4 – 133/5	Benton	Addition of prop structure
136/2 – 136/3	Benton	Addition of prop structure
137/2 – 137/3	Benton	Existing structure hardware adjustment
137/3 – 137/4	Benton	Existing structure hardware adjustment

The impairment in span 118/1 – 118/2 would be corrected with a new wood H-frame prop structure placed approximately 225 feet behind-on-line from structure 118/2. The prop structure would be about 80 feet tall and placed to minimize disturbance within a privately-owned agricultural field.

The impairment in span 133/4 – 133/5 would be corrected with a new wood H-frame prop structure placed approximately 540 feet behind-on-line from structure 133/5. The prop structure would be about 75-80 feet tall and placed on the north side of the highway on privately-owned land that is flat with sparse shrub cover. Materials and vehicles would be staged to minimize disturbance of any invasive weed populations in the work area.

The impairment in span 136/2 – 136/3 would be corrected with a new wood H-frame prop structure placed approximately 750 feet behind-on-line from structure 136/3. The prop structure would be about 90-95 feet tall and placed to minimize disturbance within privately-owned land that is relatively flat with sparse shrub cover.

The impairment in span 137/2 – 137/3 would be corrected with a new floating dead end on structure 137/3. Dirt work would not be required at the work site; however, heavy machinery would need to access the site. Extra cribbing would be used on all outriggers and the disturbance area would be limited to a 100-foot radius when feasible. Structure 137/3 is located on federal/tribal land that is relatively flat with sparse shrub cover.

The impairment in span 137/3 – 137/4 would be corrected with a new floating dead end on structure 137/3 (as described above) and the removal of two bells from structure 137/4. Dirt work would not be required at the work site; however, heavy machinery would need to access the site. Extra cribbing would be used on all outriggers and the disturbance area would be limited to a 100-foot radius when feasible. Structure 137/4 is located on federal/tribal land that is relatively flat with sparse shrub cover.

The proposed work shall occur in the existing, cleared right-of-way corridor on relatively flat terrain, using existing access roads. Crews shall remain on existing access roads and landings when feasible for driving, parking, and staging; only clean equipment shall be brought to the work sites, particularly in agricultural and weed-prone areas. Some minor access road maintenance may be needed on the existing gravel roads to the sites. All work sites are on non-BPA owned land, for which BPA has an easement. Equipment is likely to include a combination of the following: a dump truck, a bulldozer, a backhoe, an excavator, crane, and work trucks. The sites and any redistributed material will be contoured to match surrounding terrain, seeded, back-tracked, and mulched/strawed to prevent erosion and provide site stabilization.

The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line to minimize risk of outages and maintain power delivery in the region. Due to the urgent nature of the activity, BPA is proposing to perform the work in May 2017. All work will be in accordance with NESC and BPA standards.

**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/ Caitlin Colson*  
Caitlin SH Colson  
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*  
Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 27, 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:** North Bonneville-Midway Impairment Corrections (Miles 108 – 138)

---

### Project Site Description

All proposed work will occur on relatively flat landings along rolling hill terrain. Tower span 118/1 – 118/2 is located in an agricultural field. The remaining project areas are comprised of debris and gravelly sediments with shrub steppe vegetation. Four sites are located in Benton County and one is located in Yakama County, Washington.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
<p><b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> WA DAHP concurrence on Areas of Potential Effect (APE) received on 11/16/2015. DOE-Richland, Yakama, Umatilla, and Nez Perce Tribes consulted on APE for towers 137/3 and 137/4 – no response. Yakama and Wanapum Tribes consulted on all APEs – no response.</p> <p>WA DAHP concurrence on Determination of No Historic Properties Affected was received on 3/27/2017. Yakama and Wanapum Tribes consulted on final determination – no response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ For work on towers 137/3 and 137/4, use extra cribbing on outriggers.</li> <li>✓ For work on towers 137/3 and 137/4, minimize disturbance area to 100-foot radius around towers.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>2. Geology and Soils</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance in immediate work area around new structures (for new prop structures) and existing towers (for floating dead-end installation and bell removal).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Stabilize work sites</li> <li>✓ Contour excess material to match surrounding terrain; track-walk, seed, and mulch/straw bare areas</li> <li>✓ Temporarily place excavated materials in a location with low-to-no risk of direct sediment runoff into known drainage areas and streams until spoils are hauled off for removal.</li> <li>✓ Drive, park, and stage vehicles and equipment on existing access roads and landings; do not stage in vegetated areas/</li> <li>✓ Clean vehicles prior to arrival at work sites.</li> <li>✓ Use work area isolation BMPs to prevent erosion and runoff from entering neighboring waters.</li> <li>✓ Follow conditions listed in Historic and Cultural Resources (Section 1) to minimize soil disturbance.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b></p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No ESA- or special-status species are known to exist in the work areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Follow conditions listed in Geology and Soils (Section 2) to minimize potential disturbance to vegetated areas</li> </ul>		

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

Explanation: No ESA- or special-status species are known to exist in the work areas.

- ✓ Follow conditions listed in Geology and Soils (Section 2) to minimize potential disturbance to wildlife and habitat

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

Explanation: Two intermittent stream branches are located near tower 133/4. One intermittent stream branch is located next to 137/3. One-quarter mile north of tower span 118/1 – 118/2 is an artificial water body used as an irrigation canal. Work will be conducted in May when the intermittent streams are expected to be dry. No ESA- or special-status species are known to exist in the water bodies near the worksites.

- ✓ Use work area isolation BMPs to prevent erosion and runoff from entering neighboring waters.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: There are no wetlands in the vicinity of the work sites.

- ✓ Use work area isolation BMPs to prevent erosion and runoff from entering neighboring waters.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: The proposed work is not located near any known aquifers.

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

Explanation: The work is on existing right-of-way and access roads and will not impact land use.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: Proposed action is on existing access roads and will not alter or effect visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Any fugitive dust or vehicle emissions generated during project implementation will be temporary and negligible.

- ✓ Use water to minimize airborne particles when handling concrete or other dust-prone materials

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Construction noise will be temporary and localized.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: Proposed action is on existing right-of-way and access roads and will 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: The proposed work will occur within BPA transmission line right-of-way and access roads. The land owners have been notified. Two sites are located in the Hanford reservation. The Hanford tribes have been consulted on the project work.

---

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

Signed: /s/ Caitlin Colson  
Caitlin SH Colson, EPI-4  
Environmental Engineer

Date: April 27, 2017