

## Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Midway-Rocky Ford Insulator Replacement, Mile 2 to Mile 35

**Project No. (if applicable):** 3652

**Project Manager:** Brent Thompson

**Location:** Grant County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA is proposing to replace worn out insulators at 13 structure locations along the Midway-Rocky Ford No. 1, 230 kV transmission line from mile 2 to mile 35. Proposed replacement schedule is from April 17, 2017, thru April 28, 2017. Refer to the table below for project location information.

Transmission Line	Structure Location	TRS	County, State
Midway-Rocky Ford No. 1	2/4	T13N R24E SEC2	Grant, WA
	3/2	T14N R24E SEC35	
	4/4	T14N R24E SEC23	
	5/5	T14N R24E SEC14	
	8/2	T14N R24E SEC2	
	12/5	T15N R24E SEC12	
	15/4	T16N R25E SEC31	
	16/2	T16N R25E SEC30	
	26/2	T17N R25E SEC14	
	27/3	T17N R25E SEC1	
	29/2	T18N R26E SEC31	
	35/3, 35/5	T19N R26E SEC33	

Insulators located at the attachment points between the conductor and the transmission line structures listed above would be changed out using “hot” methods. Transmission line maintenance personnel would use pickup trucks with capstans, rope rigging, and ladders to remove and replace the insulators. All vehicles would use existing roads to access structure locations. Minor high brushing of tumbleweeds in roadways that are not in crop fields would occur to reduce fire danger from vehicles. No ground disturbance or work in streams would be required for this project. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code 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/ Michael Rosales*  
Michael A. Rosales  
Physical Scientist

Concur:

*/s/ Sarah T. Biegel*  
Sarah T. Biegel  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 10, 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:** Midway-Rocky Ford No. 1 Insulator Replacement, Mile 2 to Mile 35

### Project Site Description

Proposed routine maintenance activities would be conducted along the Midway-Rocky Ford No. 1 transmission line. All proposed activities would be performed in the existing transmission line right-of-way and access road easements which are located in mostly rural agricultural areas and in rural, non-developed areas.

### 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> No ground disturbance is planned or would be performed. Existing roads would be used by maintenance vehicles to access the towers.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing activities would be performed.		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Minor high brushing of tumbleweeds in roadways that are not in crop fields would occur to reduce fire danger from vehicles. No suitable habitat is present within the project area for listed plant species.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No suitable habitat is present within the project area for listed wildlife species.		
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> Listed fish species may inhabit streams that are within ½-mile of the transmission line. Project activities are not planned near water resources containing listed fish species; therefore, there would be “No Effect” to listed fish species or aquatic habitat.		
6. <b>Wetlands</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> At locations adjacent to wetlands, erosion control devices would be utilized to prevent sedimentation of wetlands during proposed project activities; therefore, there would be a “No Effect” on wetland habitat.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No groundwater or aquifers would be affected by the proposed work as no ground-disturbing activities would occur.

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

Explanation: No change in land use. No specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: The project involves in-kind replacement of insulators which would not alter or effect visual quality of the transmission line.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amount of dust from driving vehicles to and from project locations would be temporary; existing air quality would not be affected.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary maintenance noise during daylight hours. Operational noise of transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line, which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

### **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: BPA Realty would perform landowner notifications and any concerns regarding the proposed transmission line maintenance activity would be addressed.

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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/ Michael A. Rosales  
Michael A Rosales EPR-Bell-1

Date: April 10, 2017