

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Interconnection Request at Ponderosa Substation

Project No.: L0392

Project Manager: Emmanuel Jaramillo, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Crook County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 – Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: In Phase I, BPA proposes to expand two 230-kilovolt (kV) busses, add two new 230-kV breakers, and install four new 230-kV switches inside the BPA Ponderosa Substation yard. BPA would install a new 70-foot tall 230-kV dead-end tower and a new 70-foot tall ground pole inside the substation yard. Some of the new substation equipment would be installed on concrete pads to maintain stability.

New fiber optic cables would be installed inside of new trenways between the customer's substation (immediately adjacent to the Ponderosa Substation) and BPA's Control House #1 (approximately 350 linear feet) and between BPA's Control House # 1 and Control House #2 (approximately 380 linear feet). The new trenways would be installed via excavation/trenching (approximately 24-inches deep by 48-inches wide). Alternatively, the fiber optic cable may be installed underground via directional boring at or above a depth of 48 inches, if bedrock permits. Up to two BPA Vaults (BVs) and up to two Customer Vaults (CVs) may be installed inside of BPA's Ponderosa Substation yard east of Control House #1.

BPA would replace damaged station service power cables and station service AC panels within existing cabinets in the substation yard and trenway system.

New metering, relaying, Remedial Action Scheme (RAS), Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) and communications equipment for the interconnection would be installed inside the existing substation control houses.

In Phase II, BPA proposes to add relaying to accommodate PacifiCorp 230-kV transmission line changes to add the new PacifiCorp 230-kV substation. BPA would make operational, or alter, the RAS metering and communication equipment installed during Phase I of the 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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sara T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: July 5, 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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located at BPA’s Ponderosa Substation, located in Crook County, Oregon. The majority of the project area is located inside of the fenced yard of the substation, which consists of the graveled yard, substation equipment, transmission lines, and control houses. A 1.2-acre parcel and a 0.76-acre parcel of land, located immediately north and south of the substation’s fence, may be used for temporary equipment staging areas. These areas consist of gravel access roads, gravel parking lots, and bare soils with bunch grasses and small stature shrubs.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> On June 8, 2017, the BPA archaeologist determined that the proposed undertaking presented no potential to effect historic properties.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Soil disturbance would only occur within the existing substation. Best management practices to avoid potential erosion and to control sedimentation would be implemented.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status species present within the project area. The dominant plant species that could be disturbed during staging activities is non-native Russian thistle.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status species or designated critical habitat present within 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> There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish habitat within the project area.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish habitat within the project area.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: All proposed ground disturbance activities are not expected to impact groundwater resources in the region.

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



Explanation: There would be no permanent changes to land use at this location.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The additional substation equipment would be installed within the fenced Ponderosa Substation yard, and would be visually consistent with the existing structures and equipment already located at the substation.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: There would be temporary dust and vehicle emissions during construction activities.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: There would be temporary, intermittent noise from construction activities during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no impact to human health and safety from the proposed project.

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 coordinated with PacifiCorp.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC

Date: July 5, 2017