

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Walla Walla–Tucannon River Transmission Line Vibration Damper Installation

Project Manager: John Morris TD-TPP-1

Location: Walla Walla and Columbia counties, WA

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to install vibration dampers on the conductors of the 47-mile long Walla Walla – Tucannon River No. 1 115-kV transmission line. The stockbridge vibration dampers would attach to the conductor adjacent to each transmission line structure (most are H-frame wood poles) to help keep the conductors from vibrating during high winds.

The project is situated in predominantly seed wheat and farm lands. The work will be done with minimal ground disturbance. The sites will be accessed with smaller vehicles and “side by side” utility vehicles using existing access roads. Workers will climb structures to avoid disturbance by equipment and trucks. The work will be scheduled for fall during reduced fire hazard season, after crop harvest.

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/ Michelle Colletti

Michelle Colletti
Physical Scientist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 25, 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: Walla Walla-Tucannon River Transmission Line Vibration Damper Installation

Project Site Description

The Walla Walla – Tucannon River No. 1 line was rebuilt in 2010-2011. The line crosses predominantly seed wheat and farm land as a complete rebuild. It consists of mostly wood pole construction (H-type) and is a 3 phase 115 kV line that covers approximately 47 miles in Walla Walla and Columbia Counties in Washington.

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> BPA has determined the undertaking does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties—there would be no ground-disturbing activities and existing access roads would be used.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing activities are planned for this project.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species are present. Area is previously developed by agriculture and road development.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No effect on listed species is expected based on the limited duration of the project and no disturbance to soils.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing activities are proposed.		

6. Wetlands

Explanation: None present.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Explanation: No ground-disturbing activities are proposed, and no wells or use of groundwater are proposed. Spill prevention measures would be present on site.

8. Land Use and Specially Designated Areas

Explanation: No change in land use.

9. Visual Quality

Explanation: New vibration dampers are not large and would not change the character of the structures.

10. Air Quality

Explanation: Small amounts of temporary dust and vehicle emissions due to accessing the sites.

11. Noise

Explanation: Temporary construction noise. Operational noise would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Explanation: No known soil contamination or hazardous conditions.

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 Realty will make the necessary landowner notifications.

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

Signed: /s/ Michelle Colletti
Michelle Colletti
Physical Scientist - EPR-4

Date: August 25, 2017