

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sprint Communication Equipment Upgrades NW Washington

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian—TELP-TPP-3

Location: King, Kitsap, Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to allow Sprint Corporation to upgrade their antennas and equipment, at sixteen existing wireless sites on BPA transmission towers throughout NW Washington. The work would consist of removing four, six, or nine antennas attached to BPA transmission structures and replacing those with two or three new, slightly larger antennas. Remote Radio Heads (RRH's) would be added to the antenna mounts and new coaxial would be installed, connecting the RRH's to existing equipment located on the ground, beneath or adjacent to the tower base. To ensure safety, BPA workers and subcontractors would complete the wireless antenna and coaxial installation work. The project does not involve any ground excavation.

The activities would occur at the following locations:

Bangor: Kitsap County, WA. Section 28, Township 26 North, Range 1 East; Kitsap-Bangor-1 Transmission Line.

Cedar Hills: King County, WA. Section 29, Township 23 North, Range 6 East; Echo Lake-Maple Valley-2 Transmission Line.

East Bellingham: Whatcom County, WA. Section 14, Township 38 North, Range 3 East; Murray-Custer Transmission Line.

East Plateau Drive: King County, WA. Section 35, Township 25 North, Range 6 East; Sammamish-Maple Valley Transmission Line.

Echo Falls: Snohomish County, WA. Section 19, Township 27 North, Range 6 East; Sno-King Tap-Echo Lake-Monroe Transmission Line.

Fall City: King County, WA. Section 25, Township 24 North, Range 7 East; Echo Lake-Monroe No.1 Transmission Line.

Federal Way: King County, WA. Section 9, Township 21 North, Range 4 East; Tacoma-Covington No. 3 Transmission Line.

Hobart: King County, WA. Section 30, Township 23 North, Range 7 East; Echo Lake-Maple Valley No.2 Transmission Line.

Lake Morton: King County, WA. Section 6, Township 21 North, Range 6 East; Raver-Covington No. 1 Transmission Line.

Lake Sawyer: King County, WA. Section 3, Township 21 North, Range 6 East; Raver-Covington-2 line.

Maplewood: King County, WA. Section 21, Township 23 North, Range 5 East; Echo Lake-Maple Valley-1 line.

Panther Lake: King County, WA. Section 19, Township 21 North, Range 4 East; Tacoma-Covington No.4 Transmission Line.

Raging River: King County, WA. Section 11, Township 23 North, Range 7 East; Echo Lake-Maple Valley-1 & 2 Transmission Line.

Rocky Ridge: Pierce County, WA. Section 36, Township 18 North, Range 3 East; Raver-Paul Transmission Line.

Sudden Valley: Whatcom County, WA. Section 30, Township 38 North, Range 4 East; Murry-Custer-1 Transmission Line.

Thornwood: Skagit County, WA. Section 19, Township 36 North, Range 5 East; Murry-Custer-1 Transmission Line.

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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Recruiting & Staffing

Reviewed by:

/s/ Chad J. Hamel for

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: 12/8/2017

Attachment: 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: Sprint Communication Equipment Upgrades in NW Washington

Project Site Description

Antenna equipment replacements would occur on existing transmission structures located within existing transmission line rights-of-way. The structures are located in various underlying and surrounding land uses at the structure sites including timber land, farm land, rural and urban residential, a gravel pit, and areas adjacent to roadways. The sites are mostly graveled, with existing access roads to the tower bases. All have had prior ground disturbance.

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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA has reviewed the proposed activities and has determined that this type of activity does not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties, per 36 CFR 800.3 (a). In addition, the locations of the activities were reviewed and they are not located in, or near, known archaeological sites.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project does not involve ground disturbance. Some insignificant compaction of soils may occur, due to bucket-trucks driving around the site.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The projects' locations are mostly graveled and all have been previously disturbed. Golden paintbrush is a federally protected plant in Pierce, Skagit, Snohomish, and Whatcom Counties; however, the project locations are not near any known current or historic populations of golden paintbrush. The project would have no impacts to this species or any other special-status plants.</p> <p>To prevent the spread of noxious weeds, the construction vehicles would be required to be cleaned before entering a new project location</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species or habitats are present at any of the locations. The project would have no impacts to special-status wildlife. If any active nests are found on the structures prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nest is unoccupied.</p>		

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



Explanation: The project areas do not have any water bodies, floodplains or listed fish species; therefore, there would be no impacts.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Per the USGS Soil Survey, some of the project locations are on hydric soils; however, the sites exhibit upland vegetation. The project does not involve any ground disturbing activities. Additionally, the construction vehicles would be required to stay on the access roads and at the base of the towers. Therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project does not involve any ground disturbance; therefore there would be no impact to groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change to land use at the project locations. There are no specially designated areas at the locations either.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The amount of antennas at each site is decreasing, and the wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the utility corridor.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operation noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be no impact 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: The project proponent is responsible for acquiring and maintaining easements for their facilities from underlying landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger
Beth Belanger—ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Motus Recruiting & Staffing

Date: December 8, 2017