

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Cowlitz PUD 230-kV Hycom Transmission Line Rebuild

Project No.: LURR 20210068

Project Manager: Charlene Belt, TERR-ROSS MHQA

Location: Cowlitz County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Cowlitz Public Utility District (PUD) to rebuild their existing 230 kV Hycom transmission line by replacing structures and constructing a temporary access road on BPA fee-owned land in Cowlitz County, Washington.

Cowlitz PUD is planning to rebuild its 230-kV Hycom transmission line which terminates at BPA's Longview Substation Annex. The Cowlitz PUD project would include removal of two existing structures and conductor, installation of two new structures, and reconductoring of the transmission line. To support this action, BPA proposes to allow Cowlitz PUD to replace two, three-pole wood structures on BPA fee-owned land, one located southeast of BPAs Longview Substation and one southeast of BPA's Longview Substation Annex. The two existing structures would be replaced with three-pole steel structures with concrete foundations and supported with helix guy anchors. An existing road would be used to access the structure southeast of Longview Substation. To access the structure southeast of Longview Substation Annex, Cowlitz PUD would either use temporary wetland matting, track vehicles, or construct a temporary 200-foot-long bark or rock covered access road from Industrial Way to the structure and a 100-foot by 100-foot landing around the structure. If a temporary road and landing are used, all bark or rock would be removed in its entirety once construction is completed. Some grading may be necessary for the use of wetland mats or for the construction of the temporary road and landing.

Equipment that may be used on the project includes; grader, excavator (for mat placement), dump truck, utility line truck, tractor-trailer, and pick-up trucks.

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, Jul. 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/ Laura Roberts

Laura Roberts

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange December 20, 2021

Katey C. Grange Date

NEPA Compliance Officer

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: Cowlitz PUD 230-kV Hycom Transmission Line Rebuild

Project Site Description

The requested Cowlitz PUD transmission line rebuild would occur on BPA fee-owned land near BPA's Longview Substation and Longview Substation Annex, in Cowlitz County, Washington. The project is located in Township 8N, Range 3W, and Donation Land Claim 38. Cowlitz PUD's project area is located in an existing transmission line corridor that contains several transmission lines and substations. The area consists of low-growing native and non-native grasses and shrubs. Several wetlands and a large drainage ditch occur within the general vicinity of the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation on April 10th, 2021 and received concurrence on the APE from the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) on April 12th, 2021. A cultural resource pedestrian survey and subsurface testing in May of 2021. No cultural resources were identified within the APE during this effort, nor were any cultural resources identified as a result of background research. BPA sent final consultation with a determination that the project would result in No Historic Properties Affected on August 27th, 2021. DAHP concurred with BPA's determination on August 30th, 2021. No other responses were received and no further cultural resource management is necessary for the project.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor impacts to soils are anticipated from Cowlitz PUD's replacement of two transmission line structures and access to the project area. Best Management Practices would be implemented during construction and following construction, disturbed areas would be stabilized and seeded.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no listed or special-status plant species present within the project area. Minor impacts to existing upland and wetland vegetation would occur resulting from Cowlitz PUD's replacement of two transmission line structures and access to the project area. Disturbed areas would be stabilized and seeded following construction, with wetland areas seeded with a site-specific wetland seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no listed or special-status wildlife species present within the project area. Cowlitz PUD's replacement of two transmission line structures and access to the project area may temporarily increase disturbance for locally occurring species resulting from noise and human presence.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A large drainage ditch occurs within the general vicinity Cowlitz PUD's project area. This resource, along with other water bodies, floodplains, or fish, would not be impacted directly or via erosion by Cowlitz PUD's replacement of two transmission line structures and access to the project area.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The general area southeast of the Longview Substation Annex is a delineated wetland. The proposed replacement of one existing wood pole structure with a three-pole steel structure with concrete foundations and supported with helix guy anchors, and temporary access to the site, would occur within a wetland. Cowlitz PUD has obtained a Section 404 of the Clean Water Act permit authorization (NWS-2021-483, December 7, 2021) for permanent fill to wetlands of 0.001 acre and temporary impacts during construction. Cowlitz PUD would implement all mitigation measures stipulated under the permit authorization. Temporary fills, if used, would be removed in their entirety. Disturbed wetland areas would be seeded with a site-specific wetland seed mix.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: As Cowlitz PUD's replacement of two transmission line structures and access to the project area would require limited soil excavation for structure footings and guy anchors, the project would have no impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change in the general land use or specially-designated areas as a result of Cowlitz PUD's replacement of two transmission line structures and access to the project area.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be a minimal change to visual quality as a result of Cowlitz PUD replacing wood pole structures with steel pole structures. The visual changes would be consistent with the general surroundings of the existing transmission line corridor.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur temporarily Cowlitz PUD's replacement of two transmission line structures and access to the project area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary increases in noise may occur during daylight hours as a result of the proposed project. No ongoing noise increase is expected for this area as a result of this project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are anticipated to result from this 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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA Realty is in coordination with Cowlitz PUD, the applicant.

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

Signed: /s/ Laura Roberts December 20, 2021
Laura Roberts, ECT-4 Date
Environmental Protection Specialist