



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: Black Mountain and Cunningham Mountain Microwave Upgrades

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration, Desert Southwest Regional Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): North of Yuma in Imperial County, California & La Paz County, Arizona

Proposed Action Description:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Desert Southwest Region (DSW), plans to create a microwave link between two existing communication facilities, Black Mountain Peak and Cunningham Mountain, located north of Yuma in Imperial County, California and La Paz County, Arizona. WAPA would add a gray 10-foot diameter microwave dish on the existing communications tower at each site. Workers would use a capstan to lift the dish up the tower and climb the tower to complete the installation. WAPA would add cables on the tower to connect the dish to the communications building located near the tower base. Workers would install communication equipment in the existing building. WAPA plans to use existing access roads to reach these facilities; no road work is planned as part of this project. This work is needed to maintain the reliability and safety of the bulk electrical system.

WAPA plans to start this work in mid-September 2018 and complete it by mid-December 2018. WAPA anticipates that the work would take 5 days to complete at each facility.

See Attached Continuation Sheet

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.19 - Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) 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; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) 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 listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer: **Matthew D. Blevins** Digitally signed by Matthew D. Blevins
Date: 2018.09.14 15:40:46 -05'00'

Date Determined:

09/14/2018

Black Mountain & Cunningham Mountain Microwave Upgrades Continuation Sheet

Project Description (continued)

WAPA holds a lease from Bureau of Land Management for Black Mountain. Arizona Public Service holds a lease from Bureau of Land Management for Cunningham Mountain. Black Mountain occurs within portions of Section 12 in Township 13 South, Range 20 East on the San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian, and Cunningham Mountain is situated within portions of Section 29, Township 8 North, Range 20 West on the Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian.

Special Conditions:

1. At Black Mountain, workers driving on the access road, which crosses critical habitat for Desert Tortoise (Mohave Population), shall drive slow, look for tortoises on the road, and avoid them. If workers park along the access road, then workers shall look under the vehicles prior to moving it.
2. At Black Mountain, workers will perform all work within the existing facility fence, which has a tortoise-proof fence added to its base.
3. If evidence of a nesting bird is discovered in the work area, work shall cease and DSW's Environmental Manager will be contacted with the location and nature of the findings.
4. If any cultural materials are discovered, work in the area shall halt immediately, DSW Regional Preservation Officer shall be contacted, and the material be evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983). The Regional Preservation Officer shall promptly contact the Bureau of Land Management.