

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Longview Substation Breaker and Switch Replacement

**Project Manager:** Rasha Kroonen – TEPS-TPP-1

**Location:** Cowlitz County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to modify electric transmission equipment inside the substation yard at BPA's Longview Substation near Longview, Cowlitz County, Washington. In Bay 5, BPA would remove and replace in-kind one breaker and three disconnect switches: (1) the main bus disconnect switch, (2) the aux bus disconnect switch, and (3) the line side disconnect switch. The existing breaker foundation would be used for the new breaker, but three new foundations would be required for the disconnect switches. Each of the three new concrete foundations would be approximately 35 square feet and would be buried to a depth of 2 feet below ground surface with an additional 5 inches of backfill under the foundation.

All staging of materials and equipment would be on the previously disturbed, compacted fill material that constitutes the substation yard and surrounding areas. No removal of trees or other vegetation is proposed.

**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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Date: March 25, 2020

Sarah T. Biegel  
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:** Longview Substation Breaker and Switch Replacement

## Project Site Description

The project site is inside of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) Longview Substation near Longview, Cowlitz County, Washington (Donation Land Claim 38, Township 8 North, Range 3 East). The site is accessed via an existing paved access road heading southwest from Industrial Way. All ground-disturbing activities would be carried out within the fenced substation yard, which is heavily disturbed and consists of compacted, non-native fill material. The primary native soil type underlying the substation yard is Snohomish silty clay loam, which is hydric and associated with wetlands. Although a small amount of herbaceous vegetation could be present within the project site, the substation yard is largely maintained free of vegetation and is of low ecological quality. Surrounding land uses include industrial and commercial properties as well as undeveloped wetlands located immediately southeast of the substation yard and on the opposite side of Industrial Way to the east and northeast. The closest water body is a substantial drainage feature (Ditch Number Five) located approximately 1,400 feet east of the substation. The Columbia River is located over 2,000 feet southwest of the project site.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Although Longview Substation is historic and has one of the few remaining untanking towers, the substation as a historic district is not eligible for inclusion on the National Register due to alterations and loss of integrity. Because all ground-disturbing activities would occur within the previously-disturbed substation yard, the proposed action would not adversely impact the integrity of archaeological resources. Therefore, BPA has determined that this undertaking has No Potential to Effect historic properties.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> All soil disturbance would occur within the previously-disturbed, compacted, and non-native fill material that constitutes the substation yard and surrounding areas. The site would be accessed via existing paved roads, and materials and equipment would be staged within the substation yard or adjacent parking areas. BPA would implement temporary erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) to prevent the off-site transport of sediment, including concrete washout water and solids. All excavated soils would be disposed of in a local quarry and the removed concrete foundations would be recycled at a local recycler. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on geology and soils.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No tree or vegetation removal is proposed. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on protected plant species.</p>		

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



Explanation: For several years, an osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*) was nesting on a steel-lattice structure within the substation yard. The nest was relocated in February 2020 to a nest platform on a wooden monopole located in the wetlands adjacent to the substation. Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during project implementation. However, current ambient noise and disturbances are high in the area due to operations and maintenance activities at the substation and activities associated with surrounding land uses. As such, many wildlife species that could be present in the area, including the aforementioned osprey, would likely already be habituated to human activity. There are no other documented occurrences of any state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA, and no such species or suitable habitat are expected to occur at the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on protected wildlife species.

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



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any water bodies or floodplains, and there are no documented occurrences of any state special-status or ESA-listed fish or fish habitat near the project site. To avoid contaminating water bodies, BPA would implement BMPs to prevent erosion and sedimentation and to reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present within the project site, and the project would use established access roads and work areas. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Given the geophysical characteristics of native soils underlying the substation yard and the proximity of the site to the Columbia River and surrounding wetlands, ground excavation could reach a depth that would intersect groundwater. BPA would implement BMPs to reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers is proposed. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: All ground-disturbing activities would occur on BPA fee-owned property, and there would be no indirect impacts to adjacent lands. There would be no change in land use at the project site, and no specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The removal and replacement of equipment would not appreciably change the appearance of the substation as the new equipment would be consistent with the existing equipment configuration and scale. There would be no change in visual quality at the project site.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary and minor dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area from use of vehicles and equipment during project implementation. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Current ambient noise levels in the local area are high due to operations and maintenance activities at the substation and due to activities associated with surrounding land uses. Although project-related noise would intermittently rise above current ambient conditions, noise impacts would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. There would be no long-term change in noise levels following completion of the project.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Personnel would follow applicable state and BPA safety protocols. The general public would not have access to the project site, and adjacent landowners would not be affected by the work. No impact on human health and safety would be expected as a result of project activities.

**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:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: The project site is on BPA fee-owned property. No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette

Date: March 25, 2020

W. Walker Stinnette  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
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