



National Nuclear Security Administration Categorical Exclusion Determination Form



NEPA ID#: HEDLP 15-001-001

Proposed Action Title: Telephone Pole Grading Project (NV-2017-031)

Program or Field Office: Nevada Field Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Nevada National Security Site (NNSS), Nye County NV

Proposed Action Description:

An estimated 8,000 telephone poles located throughout the Nevada National Security Site (NNSS) have been identified by the Fire & Rescue Department as critical infrastructure that needs to be protected from wildland forest fires. The poles in all areas of the NNSS have weeds around them that must be removed to prevent wildfire damage or destruction. Grading and clearing around power poles would be conducted in phases. Following the initial clearing around each pole, the process would repeat indefinitely through the phases, as needed.

The poles are in previously disturbed areas (e.g. the area was disturbed during installation), with a road leading to each pole and usually going through or around it. Although previously disturbed, many of the areas have not been maintained or disturbed since the original installation of the power poles. Therefore, biological and cultural resources surveys would be conducted during the first round of clearing. Once the area around power poles is conducted the first time, biological and cultural resources surveys would not be needed unless the NNSS Biologists recommend additional surveys for specific areas such as (but not limited to) within Desert tortoise habitat.

An area of up to 450 feet (ft) in diameter would be graded that would include groupings of multiple poles (about three poles) and a 50-ft buffer. Equipment used for the grading would include a tractor and dozer. Existing paved and unpaved roads would be used to access the power poles. No grading or clearing of the access roads would be required.

Phase I: Initial plans would be to clear weeds from the 138 KV line first, since this is the backbone of the power system (approximately 2,000 poles). A secondary line along Mercury Highway would also be cleared in Phase 1. The clearing activities would be a continuous activity. Following the initial clearing around each pole, the process would repeat indefinitely as needed.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

10 CFR 1021: B2.5 Facility safety and environmental improvements

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 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.

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.

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession concerning 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 and that other-regulatory requirements set forth above are met. Therefore, the application of a categorical exclusion is appropriate.

NEPA Compliance Officer: Carrie Stewart

Date Determined: June 28, 2017