

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Execution of Contracts for B2H with Transfer Service

**Project Manager:** K. Sheckells, TSB-TPP-2; P. Garrett, PSS-6

**Location:** Multnomah County, Oregon and Clark County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 C.F.R. §1021, Subpart D):** B4.4 Power marketing services and activities; and B4.8 Electric transmission agreements

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to execute contracts under the Boardman to Hemingway (“B2H”) with Transfer Service plan of service. Under B2H with Transfer Service, BPA would acquire long-term transmission service from Idaho Power under its open access transmission tariff (“OATT”).

B2H with Transfer Service provides a plan of service beyond the BPA transmission system for six customers currently served using PacifiCorp’s Idaho transmission system. These customers (the Southeast Idaho Load Service or “SILS” customers) include Fall River Rural Electric, Lost River Electric, Salmon River Electric, Lower Valley Energy, the City of Idaho Falls, and the City of Soda Springs. Execution of the contracts under the B2H with Transfer Service would provide a long-term firm, reliable, and cost-effective plan of service for the SILS customers’ loads. Further information about the B2H with Transfer Service can be found in the 2022 and 2023 letters to the region located at <https://www.bpa.gov/learn-and-participate/projects/southeast-idaho-load-service>.

Under the B2H with Transfer Service plan of service, BPA’s role as permitting partner and potential future partial owner of the B2H project would be removed from the B2H ownership structure. BPA would transfer its B2H permitting interest share to Idaho Power in a Purchase, Sale, and Security Agreement. To serve the SILS customers’ loads, BPA would enter into a network integration transmission service agreement (“NITSA”) with Idaho Power under its OATT for service to the five SILS customers in the Goshen area and a second NITSA for service to Idaho Falls. These NITSAs would provide BPA with a single leg of network integration transmission service (“NITS”) from Idaho Power to deliver resources from the BPA transmission system to the SILS customers’ various points of delivery.

BPA would provide point-to-point (“PTP”) transmission service in central Oregon to PacifiCorp through the redirect of existing PTP service paired with a conversion of legacy scheduling rights in central Oregon to PTP service. Additionally, BPA would provide Idaho Power with PTP service to the proposed B2H interconnection at the proposed BPA Longhorn substation near Boardman, Oregon, contingent on BPA making a final decision to construct the Longhorn Substation and interconnect the B2H project. PacifiCorp and Idaho Power would take and pay for the PTP services pursuant to BPA’s OATT and rate schedules.

BPA will continue to evaluate the transmission arrangements required for the proposed interconnection of the B2H Project to BPA's proposed Longhorn substation, the removal and replacement of a segment of BPA's Boardman to Lone Line and development of replacement service for Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative. BPA is currently evaluating these actions in accordance with BPA business practices and is not making final decisions or executing contracts for these actions as part of B2H with Transfer Service contract execution. BPA will conduct appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis for these activities in the future as planning, engineering, and project-related details are available.

**Findings:** In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) 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 C.F.R. § 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/ Amy Mai

Amy Mai  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

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Katey C. Grange  
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:** Execution of Contracts for B2H with Transfer Service

## **Project Site Description**

The execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would provide a plan of service beyond the BPA transmission system for six statutory preference customers that are currently served using PacifiCorp's Idaho transmission system. These customers (the Southeast Idaho Load Service or "SILS" customers) include Fall River Rural Electric, Lost River Electric, Salmon River Electric, Lower Valley Energy, the City of Idaho Falls, and the City of Soda Springs.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or changes to any existing structures or landscapes. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect historic and cultural resources.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or have any potential for erosion, landslides, or other related impacts. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or vegetation removal or alteration. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect plants.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or cause impacts to special-status species and habitats. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect wildlife.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to water bodies, floodplains, and fish, including federal/state special-status species and ESUs. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect water bodies, floodplains, and fish, including federal/state special-status species and ESUs.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to wetlands. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect wetlands.

#### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to groundwater and aquifers. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect groundwater and aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or have the potential to cause impacts to land use and specially designated areas. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect land use and specially designated areas.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to visual resources. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect visual resources.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to air quality. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect air quality.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability and cost effectiveness of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause noise impacts. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect noise resources.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action involves administrative and financial activities intended to increase reliability of electrical service to customers in southeast Idaho. The contracts BPA would execute under B2H with Transfer Service would not result in any ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to human health and safety. For these reasons, the execution of contracts for B2H with Transfer Service would not affect 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: 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: Because the proposed action does not involve activities directly or indirectly affecting any particular real property, notification and involvement of any specific land owner is not required. However, BPA has developed the proposed plan of service for B2H with Transfer Service with public input, including workshops and comment periods associated with the publication of the draft term sheet and letters to the region.

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

Signed: /s/ Amy Mai

Amy Mai  
Environmental Protection Specialist

March 22, 2023

Date