

**GENERIC CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR MINOR ROAD AND UTILITY  
ALTERATIONS, PACIFIC NORTHWEST NATIONAL LABORATORY,  
RICHLAND, WASHINGTON**

**Proposed Action:**

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Pacific Northwest Site Office (PNSO) proposes to conduct minor alteration, repair, replacement, or relocation of roads, pathways, and utilities such as water, sewer, electricity, natural gas, and communications lines.

**Location of Action:**

The proposed action would largely occur on the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) campus in Richland and Sequim, Washington, within or near existing road and utility easements, and occasionally at other locations in support of PNNL research or operations. Tie-ins to nearby off-site road and utility distribution points are occasionally necessary and are included in the scope of this categorical exclusion (CX).

**Description of the Proposed Action:**

The proposed action would be to conduct:

- Minor alteration, repair, extension, or expansion of existing roads and pathways within or near existing road easements to improve safety, maintenance, access, and connectivity between facilities. Note that substantial road widening and realignment would require additional DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review.
- Minor alteration, extension, upgrade, or relocation of aboveground and belowground utilities within or near existing utility easements on the PNNL Site, including tie-ins to nearby offsite distribution points as necessary.

These activities would generally serve existing and new facilities located on the PNNL-Richland and PNNL-Sequim campuses when funded by DOE. Minor road or utility alterations proposed by other organizations (e.g., City of Richland or Benton County) within existing easements on the PNNL-Richland and PNNL-Sequim campuses must incorporate work controls to meet federal regulations in order to be supported by this CX.

The proposed action would also include reasonably foreseeable actions necessary to implement the road and utility alterations, such as personnel, equipment, and material staging, management of temporary piles of dirt/debris from excavation, location of temporary support structures (e.g., utility connections, sanitary facilities, and office trailers), exploratory digging, interaction with City of Richland or City of Sequim personnel, equipment maintenance, and award of grants and contracts.

Any excavation would comply with requirements for excavation safety and protection of the environment, including requirements to avoid underground utilities, protect cultural and biological resources, and implement excavation safety requirements.

## **Biological and Cultural Resources:**

Biological and cultural resources reviews will be conducted prior to such activities to assure that impacts to sensitive resources are avoided or minimized.

The biological resources review will identify the occurrence of federally and state-protected species and habitats in the project area such as avian species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); species protected by the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA); essential fish habitat as defined by the Magnuson-Stevens Fisheries Conservation and Management Act (MSA); plant and animal species and critical habitat protected under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), including candidates for such protection; and state species listed as threatened or endangered. Resource review recommendations will be followed during minor road and utility alteration activities to assure there are no adverse impacts to sensitive species and resources.

DOE will conduct a cultural resources review as part of the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). The Section 106 process assesses undertakings to determine if the undertaking will have an adverse effect/impact to historic properties.

If the biological and/or the cultural resources review determines that resources may be adversely affected/impacted, the use of this CX would be reevaluated. Potential options could be, but are not limited to, changing the proposed activity location, the development of mitigation measures to render the impacts not significant, or the performance of additional NEPA analysis and review.

## **Categorical Exclusion to Be Applied:**

As the proposed action is to support minor alteration of roads and utilities, the following CXs, as listed in the DOE NEPA implementing procedures, 10 CFR 1021, would apply:

*BI.3* Routine maintenance activities and custodial services for buildings, structures, rights-of-way, infrastructures (including, but not limited to pathways, roads, and railroads), vehicles and equipment, and localized vegetation and pest control, during which operations may be suspended and resumed, provided that the activities would be conducted in a manner in accordance with applicable requirements. Custodial services are activities to preserve facility appearance, working conditions, and sanitation (such as cleaning, window washing, lawn mowing, trash collection, painting, and snow removal). Routine maintenance activities, corrective (that is, repair) preventative, and predictive, are required to maintain and preserve buildings, structures, infrastructures, and equipment...Routine maintenance activities include, but are not limited to:

- (e) Plumbing, electrical utility, lighting and telephone service repair or replacement;

(h) Repair of road embankments;

- B1.7* Acquisition, installation, operation, modification, and removal of electricity transmission control and monitoring devices for grid demand and response, communication systems, data processing equipment, and similar electronic equipment.
- B1.13* Construction, acquisition, and relocation, consistent with applicable right-of-way conditions and approved land use or transportation improvement plans, of pedestrian walkways and trails, bicycle paths, small outdoor fitness areas, and short access roads and rail lines (such as branch and spur lines).
- B1.32* Traffic flow adjustments to existing roads (including, but not limited to, stop sign or traffic light installation, adjusting direction of traffic flow, and adding turning lanes), and road adjustments (including, but not limited to, widening and realignment) that are within an existing right-of-way and consistent with approved land use or transportation improvement plans.
- B4.7* Adding fiber optic cables to transmission facilities or burying fiber optic cable in existing powerline or pipeline rights-of-way. Covered actions may include associated vaults and pulling and tensioning sites outside of rights-of-way in nearby previously disturbed or developed areas.

Generic CXs are authorized by 10 CFR 1021.410(f) for recurring activities to be undertaken during a specified period of time, after considering potential aggregated impacts.

**Eligibility Criteria:**

The proposed activity meets the eligibility criteria of 10 CFR 1021.410(b) because the proposed action does not have any extraordinary circumstances that might affect the significance of the environmental effects, 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 environmental impact statement preparation.

The "Integral Elements" of 10 CFR 1021 are satisfied as discussed below:

<b>INTEGRAL ELEMENTS, 10 CFR 1021, SUBPART D, Appendix B (1)-(5)</b>	
<i>Would the Proposed Action:</i>	Evaluation

Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health?	The proposed action would not threaten a violation of regulations or DOE or Executive Orders.
Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities?	No waste management facilities would be constructed under this CX. Any generated waste would be managed in accordance with applicable regulations in existing facilities. Waste disposal pathways would be identified prior to generating waste and waste generation would be minimized.
Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases?	No preexisting hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants would be disturbed in a manner that results in uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.
Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species?	The proposed action would not involve the use of genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species.
<p>Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protected historic/archaeological resources</li> <li>• protected biological resources and habitat</li> <li>• jurisdictional wetlands, 100-year floodplains</li> </ul> <p>Federal- or state-designated parks and wildlife refuges, wilderness areas, wild and scenic rivers, national monuments, marine sanctuaries, national natural landmarks, and scenic areas.</p>	<p>No environmentally sensitive resources would be adversely affected by the proposed road and utility alteration actions.</p> <p>The proposed action would not adversely affect floodplains, wetlands regulated under the Clean Water Act, national monuments, or other specially designated areas, prime agricultural lands, or special sources of water.</p> <p>Potential impacts to Biological or Cultural resources would be addressed as described above.</p>

**Summary of Environmental Impacts:**

The following table summarizes environmental impacts considered when preparing this CX determination.

<b>Environmental Impacts Considered when Preparing this CX Determination</b>	
<i>Would the Proposed Action:</i>	Evaluation
Result in more than minimal air impacts?	Only minimal air impacts would be expected, as minor road and utility installations might result in localized dust and fumes from equipment. Dust abatement measures would be employed as necessary, using water applications or other means of dust and erosion suppression, and would be compliant with applicable permits, local, state, and federal regulations, DOE orders, and PNNL guidelines.


Increase offsite radiation dose measurably?	The proposed road and utility alterations would not increase off-site dose.
Require a radiological work permit?	Activities performed in radiologically controlled areas would be performed in compliance with as low as reasonably achievable (ALARA) principles, applicable state and federal regulations, DOE Orders, and PNNL guidelines. The radiation received by workers during the performance of activities would be administratively controlled below DOE limits as defined in 10 CFR 835.202(a). Under normal circumstances, those limits control individual radiation exposure to below an annual effective dose equivalent of 5 rem.
Discharge any liquids to the environment?	It is possible that alterations of sewer and water supply lines might result in minor and short-term liquid discharges. During road and utility upgrade or maintenance activities there might be minor quantities of liquid effluents, such as water applications to control dust and cleanup rinse water. Depending upon the effluent quality and location, effluents would be discharged to the ground or contained for treatment in accordance with applicable environmental requirements. Should concrete wastewater be generated, it would be managed in accordance with applicable regulations. Effluents would be managed in accordance with applicable regulations and best management practices.
Require a Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures plan?	Road and utility alterations are not likely to require a formal Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasures plan. However, standard best management practices would be implemented to prevent and control accidental releases of fluids.
Use carcinogens, hazardous, or toxic chemicals/materials?	Although unlikely, proposed activities might involve the use of carcinogens, hazardous and/or toxic chemicals and materials. For example, excavation equipment might contain or require the use of chemicals such as antifreeze, hydraulic fluids, or fuel. In addition, road and utility alteration activities might require the use of adhesives, cleaning solvents, and other potentially toxic substances. Project inventories would be maintained at the lowest practicable levels, and chemical wastes would be recycled, neutralized, or regenerated if possible. Product substitution (use of less toxic chemicals in place of more toxic chemicals) would be considered when reasonable.
Involve hazardous, radioactive, polychlorinated biphenyl, or asbestos waste?	Road and utility alterations might generate hazardous or possibly radioactive waste (if alterations must be conducted in a contaminated area) such as excess wire, conduit, and pipe. If unrecyclable, such wastes would be characterized, handled, packaged, transported, treated, stored, and/or disposed of in existing treatment, storage, and disposal facilities in accordance with applicable regulations.

<p>Cause more than a minor or temporary increase in noise level?</p>	<p>Equipment used for road and utility alterations may cause short-term, intermittent increases in noise. These would be typical of construction equipment and would be temporary and within regulatory limits.</p>
<p>Create light / glare, or other aesthetic impacts?</p>	<p>Road and utility alterations, especially emergency repairs to utilities, may require construction lighting to allow for work to proceed after dark. This would be a temporary impact. No other aesthetic impacts are expected to occur.</p>
<p>Require an excavation permit (e.g., for test pits, wells, utility installation)?</p>	<p>Minor road and utility alterations might require excavation permits, such as a PNNL or Hanford Site excavation permit. Stipulations in the excavation permit to minimize potential impacts to safety and the environment would be followed.</p>
<p>Disturb an undeveloped area?</p>	<p>Disturbance of undeveloped areas is not expected, as all activities would occur within existing road and utility easements or within other previously disturbed areas where active utilities and roads in the vicinity are readily accessible. Additional NEPA review would be required if the installation would impact sensitive species and/or habitats; cultural resources, including historic buildings and Traditional Cultural Properties; or other resources.</p>
<p>Result in more than minimal impacts on transportation or public services?</p>	<p>Road or utility alterations could temporarily block roads or alter traffic patterns while the work is being performed. These are expected to be short-term and minor impacts.</p>
<p>Disproportionately impact low-income or minority populations?</p>	<p>Road and utility alterations are not expected to disproportionately impact low-income or minority populations.</p>

Require environmental or other permits from federal, state, or local agencies?	Although not expected during most minor road and utility alteration activities, environmental or other permits may be required from federal, state, or local agencies. Examples of required permits or plans could include approvals to use temporary and portable air pollution sources, erosion and sediment control plans, review of wastewater discharge, and/or a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. Activities will abide by all applicable permit requirements.
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**Compliance Action:**

I have determined that the proposed action satisfies the DOE NEPA eligibility criteria and integral elements, does not pose extraordinary circumstances, and meets the requirements for the CX referenced above. Therefore, using the authority delegated to me, I have determined that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation. This determination must be reviewed at least once every 5 years.

**Signature:**  Digitally signed by  
THOMAS MCDERMOTT  
Date: 2023.04.03 10:18:43  
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Tom McDermott  
PNSO NEPA Compliance Officer

cc: ES Norris, PNNL