

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** FY23 Expedited Priority Wood Pole Replacements, Light Touch (*Update to Previous CX issued May 8, 2023*)

**Project No.:** 4912

**Project Manager:** Rusty Ludt IV – TELP-TPP-1

**Location:** Lane, Linn, Tillamook Counties, Oregon, Flat head County, Montana, and Douglas, Clallam, Grays Harbor, Mason, Pend Oreille, Skagit, Thurston, Walla Walla Counties, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to perform in-kind replacement of 48 wood pole structures utilizing “light touch” removal techniques that include the following requirements.

- No ground disturbance, including no new anchor holes, landing work, holes for pole extraction, or access road work. A hole may be augured after the original pole is removed in order to allow placement of the new pole. The augur would be roughly the same size as the original pole diameter.
- No digging to level vehicles/equipment, outriggers must use cribbing or matting.
- Only rubber tired vehicles, no tracked vehicles would be used.
- All work must be conducted from existing landings and access roads.
- Poles cannot be removed if within a wetland.
- Poles cannot be removed where a migratory bird or other species timing restrictions would apply.
- Poles would not be replaced if they are within 30 meters of a known archaeological site.

Typical equipment used under “light touch” removal includes line and boom trucks.

This CX has been updated with an updated list of wood poles proposed to be replaced. Wood pole replacement locations are listed below:

Transmission Line	TLM District	Structure	TRS	County, State
Albany-Lebanon No.1	Alvey	5/6	T11S R3W SEC28	Linn, OR
		5/9	T11A R3W SEC33	
		7/2	T11S R3W SEC34	
		9/4	T12S R3W SEC1	
		10/1	T12S R2W SEC7	
		16/1	T12S R2W SEC26	
Boyer-Tillamook No. 1	Chemawa	26/2	T2S R9W SEC28	Tillamook, OR

**Continued from above-**

Transmission Line	TLM District	Structure	TRS	County, State
Chehalis-Olympia No. 1	Chehalis	14/7	T15N R3W SEC23	Thurston, WA
		17/4	T15N R3W SEC2	
		19/3	T16N R3W SEC26	
		20/3	T16N R3W SEC24	
Columbia Falls-Trego No. 1	Kalispell	6/2	T30N R21W SEC14	Flathead, MT
		9/8, 10/1	T30N R21W SEC17	
		12/2, 12/3, 12/4	T30N R22W SEC2	
Fairmount-Port Angeles No. 2	Olympia	15/2	T30N R4W SEC35	Clallam, WA
		15/6	T30N R4W SEC34	
		19/6	T30N R5W SEC 25	
		20/9	T30N R5W SEC26	
Franklin-Walla Walla No.1	Pasco	26/5	T7N R33E SEC13	Walla Walla, WA
		27/3, 27/5	T7 R34E SEC18	
		28/1	T7N R34E SEC17	
Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1	Grand Coulee	12/1	T29N R29E SEC20	Douglas, WA
		21/1	T29N R27E SEC23	
		24/9	T29N R27E SEC19	
		27/1	T29N R26E SEC26	
		28/2	T29N R26E SEC27	
Lookout Point-Alvey No. 1	Alvey	11/2	T18S R2W DC 76	Lane, OR
		12/2	T18S R2W DC 76	
Lookout Point-Alvey No. 2	Alvey	7/5, 7/6	T19S R2W DC 37	
		7/8	T18S R2W SEC 36	
Murray-Custer No. 1	Snohomish	26/4, 26/5	T35N R5E SEC20	Skagit, WA
Olympia-Shelton No. 2	Olympia	17/6	T20N R4W SEC25	Mason, WA
Olympia-South Elma No. 1	Olympia	19/4	T17N R5W SEC4	Grays Harbor, WA
Port Angeles- Sappho No. 1	Olympia	12/1	T30N R8W SEC1	Clallam, WA
		13/3	T30N, R8W SEC2	
		14/7	T30N R8W SEC3	
		15/3, 15/7	T30N R8W SEC4	
Sacheen-Albeni Falls No. 1	Bell	6/3	T31N R45E SEC19	Pend Oreille, WA
		8/7	T31N R45E SEC21	
		9/1	T31N R45E SEC22	
		11/1	T31N R45E SEC23	

The proposed action would maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards.

**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/ Kevin George*  
Kevin George  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

*/s/ Katey Grange*  
Katey C. Grange      Date: May 10, 2023  
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:** FY23 Expedited Priority Wood Pole Replacements, Light Touch (Update to Previous CX issued May 8, 2023)

## **Project Site Description**

Proposed routine maintenance activities would be conducted along the Albany-Lebanon No. 1, Boyer-Tillamook No. 1, Chehalis-Olympia No. 1, Columbia-Falls-Trego No. 1, Fairmount-Port Angeles No. 2, Franklin-Walla Walla No. 1, Grand Coulee-Foster Creek No. 1, Lookout Point-Alvey Nos. 1 & 2, Murray-Custer No. 1, Olympia-Shelton No. 2, Olympia-South Elma No. 1, Port Angeles-Sappho No. 1, and Sacheen-Albeni Falls No. 1 transmission lines. Proposed maintenance activities would be performed in the existing transmission line right-of-ways, which are located in rural, developed, and agricultural areas. Land in the project areas is privately owned and managed.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Based on the information provided, BPA has determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would be conducted using "light touch" methods to only place poles in holes that were utilized for the existing poles. This would result in no additional ground disturbance than what was necessary to originally construct the structure.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known Federal/state special-status plants are present in the project area. Vegetation would be crushed and left in place, rather than bladed, where possible. Any disturbed areas outside the road prism would be reseeded with an appropriate seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not include habitat for any Federal or State special-status species. There would be no effect to ESA-listed species in the area. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted right-of-ways and would not substantially alter the footprint or operational noise of the line; therefore, wildlife and associated habitat would not be substantially affected.

An Osprey nesting platform is located within 100 feet of the Lookout Point-Alvey No. 2 Str. 7/8. No work would be performed within 660 feet of an occupied nest from March 1 through September 15.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No in-water work is proposed for this project. There are no fish in the vicinity of the project area. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to ensure sediment and other contaminants do not enter bodies of water; therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the proposed project activities.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: None of the structures being replaced are within a wetland or riparian buffer.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed and excavation would not extend to a depth that would intersect groundwater.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No specially-designated areas were identified within the project area. Land use would not change as a result of project activities.

#### **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-ways. Replacement of wood poles and associated components would be in-kind and replaced in the same location.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a small, temporary impact on air quality from vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operation noise of the transmission line would not change.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line, which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power to the region.

### 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: BPA Realty personnel would perform landowner notifications 30-days prior to the project initiation and any concerns regarding proposed transmission line maintenance activities would be addressed.

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

Signed: /s/ Kevin George

Kevin George – EPI-4,  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: May 10, 2023