

# CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION



Western Area  
Power Administration  
Rocky Mountain Region

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**Proposed Action Title: Ault Substation Emergency Oil Spill Cleanup**

**Location: Weld County, Colorado**

**Project Number: 2023-060**

**Expiration Date: December 1, 2023**

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## **A. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION:**

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA), Rocky Mountain Region (RMR), conducted an emergency spill cleanup of approximately 275 gallons of oil at Ault (AU) Substation between June 28 and August 1, 2023. On June 28, 2023, RMR electricians were performing routine maintenance on AU transformer KV1A. While attempting to repair a pressure relief device on the transformer, an inadvertent release of approximately 275 gallons of transformer oil occurred. The release impacted approximately 0.06 acres of the AU Substation, including the transformer itself and road base substrate. RMR electricians immediately began cleanup activities once they were able to stop the release, and additional RMR crews were called in for cleanup assistance as needed. Between June 28 and July 13, cleanup included removing oil from all surfaces of the transformer and concrete transformer foundation, as well as removing all oil-contaminated road base. Following cleaning of the transformer and concrete foundation and refill of oil reservoirs, RMR deemed it safe to re-energize the transformer on July 6, 2023. Road base was excavated until no visual or odor evidence of oil contamination remained. Excavation depth ranged from 8 to 18 inches throughout the release footprint. On July 13, 2023, RMR disposed of 105.8 tons of oil-contaminated road base at an approved landfill. Between July 14 and August 1, 2023, WAPA RMR replaced all removed road base, compacted new fill material, and deemed the site returned to pre-spill conditions on August 1, 2023. Equipment used for this project included excavators, dump trucks, compactors, skid-steers, work trucks, and hand tools. Work occurred on land owned and managed by WAPA. Work focused on previously disturbed locations within the substation footprint and no new roads were constructed.

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## **B. STIPULATIONS PERTAINING TO PROPOSAL:**

This Categorical Exclusion (CX) covers work that has already been completed. No further work is authorized under this CX. If additional work is required, RMR's Environment Department must be contacted to determine whether additional environmental review is required.

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## **C. NUMBER AND TITLE OF THE CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION BEING APPLIED:**

(See text in 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D.)

B5.6 Oil spill cleanup

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## **D. REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):** (See full text in regulation)

The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B of 10 CFR 1021.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of the Department of Energy (DOE) or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances; pollutants; contaminants; or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) 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.

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 improperly segmented, and the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

## E. DETERMINATION:

Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession (or attached) 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, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

James Wood  
Digitally signed by James Wood  
Date: 2023.12.14 09:00:32 -07'00'

Signature and Date

James Wood, Regional Environmental Manager  
Rocky Mountain Region  
Western Area Power Administration

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