

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2024 Rate Adjustment for Central Valley Project and California Oregon Transmission Project - Rate Order No. WAPA-207

Project No.:

Project Manager: Arun Sethi, Power Marketing Manager; Autumn Wolfe, Rates Manager

Location: Northern and Central California

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):

B4.3 Electric power marketing rate changes
B4.4 Power marketing services and activities

Description of the Proposed Action:

Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region (WAPA) proposes a rate process to continue existing formula rates for the Central Valley Project (CVP) power, transmission, and ancillary services and California Oregon Transmission Project (COTP) transmission service. The existing formula rates for these services expire on September 30, 2024 and December 31, 2024, respectively. The WAPA proposed power, transmission, and ancillary service formula rates, which are unchanged from the existing formula rates, under Rate Case WAPA-207, will be effective on October 1, 2024 through September 30, 2029, pending confirmation and approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) on a final basis or until superseded. Minor rate cases are defined by 10 CFR 903.2(e). WAPA is establishing the formula rates for COTP and CVP transmission, WAPA power, and related services in accordance with section 302 of the DOE Organization Act (42 U.S.C. 7152). By Delegation Order No. S1-DEL-RATES-2016, effective November 19, 2016, the Secretary of Energy delegated: (1) the authority to develop power and transmission rates to the WAPA Administrator; (2) the authority to confirm, approve, and place such rates into effect on an interim basis to the Deputy Secretary of Energy; and (3) the authority to confirm, approve, and place into effect on a final basis, or to remand or disapprove such rates, to FERC. By Delegation Order No. S1-DEL-S3-2022-2, which was redelegated by Order No. S3-DEL-WAPA1-2023, effective April 10, 2023, the Secretary of Energy delegated the authority to confirm, approve, and place such rates into effect on an interim basis to WAPA's Administrator.

WAPA published the Federal Register notice of the proposed formula rates (88FR59909) on August 30, 2023 and initiated a 90-day consultation and comment period. On November 17, 2023 WAPA published a Federal Register notice (88FR80293) extending the public comment period an additional 30 days, which closed December 28, 2023. Actions taken by WAPA related to the proposed rates are primarily administrative. All generation projects would operate within normal operating limits and consistently with environmental laws and regulations.

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), WAPA 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, WAPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

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Attachment: 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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed project area is northern and central California.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources <u>Explanation:</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or changes to existing structures and landscapes. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

2. **Geology and Soils**



Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or potential for erosion, landslides, or other related impacts. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

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



Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or vegetation removal or alteration. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

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



Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to special-status species and habitats. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

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



Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in potential to cause impacts to water bodies, floodplains, and fish.

6. **Wetlands**
Explanation:



The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to wetlands. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**
Explanation:



The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to groundwater or aquifers. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**
Explanation:



The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in potential to cause impacts to land use. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

9. **Visual Quality**
Explanation:



The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to visual resources. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

10. **Air Quality**
Explanation:



The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to air quality. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or noise. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to human health or safety. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

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, if necessary:



Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:



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, if necessary:



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 Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

Explanation, if necessary:



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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description:

WAPA conducted public information forums and no comments from the public were received. Proposed action is under existing contracts with directly affected property owners and agencies.

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

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