



U.S. Department of Energy

Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Submit by E-mail

Proposed Action Title: WTS-WTBM ERC/WAPA Fiber Optic Cable Replacement

Program or Field Office: SDMO

Location(s) (City/County/State): Watertown/Codington/South Dakota

Proposed Action Description:

Installation of new fiber-optic cable from the WAPA Watertown Static VAR to Basin's Watertown Repeater Building located on WAPA land. East River (ERC) would provide and install new fiber optic cable utilizing existing path where current fiber optic cable exists. The proposed project occurs in previously disturbed lands (crop ground), occurs in existing ROW and proposes to install new fiber optic cable where a cable has previously been installed.

- WAPA determined that there is no suitable habitat for any listed species, no streams and no wetlands present within the proposed project area, and that this project will have no effect to listed species. There are no known Bald or Golden Eagle nests within 660 feet of the project, and no grassland habitats to support nesting migratory bird species. The project is proposed to start on or around September 1 2024, which is outside of the primary nesting season (May 1-Aug 1) for migratory birds in South Dakota. This project will have no effect to eagles or migratory bird nests.
- WAPA determined no potential to affect cultural resources or Historic Properties affected for the Proposed Action. If, during the course of any ground disturbance related to the project, any bones, artifacts, foundations, or other indications of past human occupation of the area are uncovered, the project will be stopped, and the State Historic Preservation Officer notified immediately.
- WAPA conducted a desktop qualitative review of impacts to aesthetics, transportation, air quality/GHG emissions, hazardous materials, human health and safety, socioeconomic & community resources. No concerns identified.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B4.7 - Fiber optic cable

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of [10 CFR Part 1021](#).

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, 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 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 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 Part 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 listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

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 segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal 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 preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of 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.

NEPA Compliance Officer: **JOHN RUSSELL** Digitally signed by JOHN RUSSELL
Date: 2024.07.30 09:33:20 -06'00'

Date Determined: 07/30/2024