

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Allston Substation Security Enhancement

**Project No.:** P04962

**Project Manager:** Micaiah Watkins, TEPF-CSB-2

**Location:** Columbia County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B.1.11 Fencing and B2.2 Building and equipment installation

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to implement security enhancements and replace existing perimeter fences and install new medium security fencing at the Allston Substation on BPA fee-owned land in Columbia County, Oregon. Equipment for an integrated video assessment and intrusion detection system would be installed at Allston Substation. A total of about 4,300 feet of fencing and existing gates would be replaced. The existing 7-foot tall fences would be removed with in-ground concrete curbing or would be removed along with individual post foundations where there is no curbing. Eight-foot-tall cut- and climb-resistant steel-mesh security fences topped with razor wire would be installed around the perimeter of the site. In addition to the increased height, security would be enhanced by a near 40% reduction in visibility through the fence. The new security fences would be in the same location as the existing fence around the perimeter of the substations with minor exceptions, improved design, or added features requiring small alterations of existing fence location (i.e., new equipment, or variations in layout for new camera coverage). Existing vehicle and personnel gate locations would remain in the same locations, replaced with new gates meeting upgraded security standards. Tree trimming, and most likely some tree removals including two trees inside the north side of the Allston Substation fence, would be needed around the perimeter as part of this project. Replacement trees would be planted on substation property in locations not impacting security cameras. The disturbance for the security enhancement would be limited to BPA transmission facility boundaries in which vegetation growth is regularly maintained by mechanical and chemical means.

**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.

Christopher H. Furey  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Sarah T. Biegel  
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:** Allston Substation Security Enhancement

## **Project Site Description**

The Allston project site is at the BPA Allston Substation in Columbia County, Oregon. The site is located near Township 7 North, Range 3 West, Section 10. The site is approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the BPA Longview Substation in Longview, WA. The Columbia River is over 6,000 feet north of the substation. Green Creek is an intermittent stream located over 3,100 feet northwest of the substation. The surrounding area around the substation property is mostly forested land with some farmland and rural development in the broader area.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA archaeologist reviewed the proposed activities and determined that these activities at the project area do not have potential to cause effects to historic or cultural resources.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minimal soil disturbance for installation of the fencing and gates at the Allston substation. Some digging would be necessary for the project. All work is occurring at the established Allston substation property with disturbance limited to existing perimeter of the substations, and for short distances inside and outside the substation yards.

Notes:

- Use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to limit soil transport by wind and water during construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be occurring in the BPA Allston substation perimeter areas that are currently managed for low-growing or no vegetation. Some brush and trees may be cleared where needed for construction. Two trees on the north side of the substation inside the substation fence would be removed and some tree limbs or trees encroaching near the fence would be trimmed or cut.

Notes:

- Replant replacement trees on substation property in locations not impacting security cameras. Re-seed any cleared areas with a BPA-approved seed mix where necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would be at an established BPA substation. Several trees would be trimmed or removed around the perimeter fencing of the substation, and the sites are not identified to provide northern spotted owl habitat or nesting sites. Construction of the fences and gates is expected to occur during daytime hours at the substation with no effect expected to any listed or special-status species.

Notes:

- Use appropriate BMPs and fugitive dust plan to limit wind and water erosion of soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: An intermittent stream named Green Creek is located over 3,100 feet northwest of the substation. The Columbia River is over a mile north of the substation.

Notes:

- Use appropriate BMPs and fugitive dust plan to limit wind and water erosion of soils.

#### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some wetland areas are nearby but project work would avoid those areas. Work would be limited to the substation fence perimeter and the area immediately adjacent to the perimeter.

Notes:

- Use appropriate BMPs and fugitive dust plan to limit wind and water erosion of soils to wetlands.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not impact groundwater or aquifers. Infiltration to groundwater and aquifers would not be adversely impacted by the construction as runoff and erosion at the site would be controlled.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would take place on substation property consistent with activities at large substations without impact to any specially designated areas.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment. The completed work with the new fence and security enhancements may be noticeable but would constitute a small overall change to the current visual state.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation. There would be small, sporadic increases in machine exhaust during periods of active work during construction.

Notes:

- Keep dust to a minimum by adhering to BMPs for ground disturbance.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase expected.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Workers on the project would be required to follow all applicable state and/or Federal safety standards.

### **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: Allston Substation is a BPA-owned substation and the project site is accessed by a paved road. BPA project manager would coordinate with neighboring landowners to avoid conflicts during construction.

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

Signed:

Christopher H. Furey  
Environmental Protection Specialist