

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Dish Wireless Equipment Installation at Enterprise Site

Project No.: W1007

Project Manager: TELP-TPP-3

Location: Whatcom County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers; B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Dish Enterprise to install new wireless network antennas and equipment on structure 10/4 on the Bellingham-Custer No. 1 – Murray-Custer No. 1 transmission line in Whatcom County, Washington. All work would occur on the structure and would consist of installing three panel antennas, three antenna pipe mounts, hybrid cable, and an overvoltage protection box. The equipment would be installed on three pipe mounts with cross plates mounted on the BPA lattice-steel transmission structure.

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.

Jeremy Doschka
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
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.

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Project Site Description

The project site is located on an existing BPA-owned 230-kilvolt (kV) lattice steel transmission structure on the Bellingham-Custer No. 1 transmission line in Whatcom County, Washington. The transmission line right-of-way is in easement on private land. The project site is located in a flat agricultural field consisting of grasses/forbs/weeds and the transmission line right-of-way is in easement on private land. No water bodies are located in or adjacent to the project site. Structure 10/4 and surrounding area is mapped as wetland by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wetland Inventory online mapper.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A BPA historian reviewed the proposed project actions and determined that the project has no potential to cause effects to historic resources in a memo dated August 15, 2024.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on the structure so no ground-disturbing activities would occur during the wireless equipment installation. Therefore, there would be no impacts to geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on the structure so no ground-disturbing activities would occur during the wireless equipment installation. Therefore, the proposed action would not have an effect on special-status plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no special-status wildlife species or suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species present in the project area. Minor noise and visual disturbance could occur during equipment installation, but these disturbances would be temporary, transitory, and likely similar to background levels of noise and visual disturbance. Therefore, the proposed action would not have an effect on special-status wildlife species or habitats. If an active

nest is found on the structure prior to equipment installation, the work would be delayed until the nest is unoccupied.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on the structure so no ground-disturbing activities would occur during the wireless equipment installation. There are no water bodies, floodplains, or fish habitat at the project site; therefore, no water bodies, floodplains, fish habitat, or fish would be impacted by the proposed action.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on the structure so no ground-disturbing activities would occur during the wireless equipment installation. Therefore, no impacts to wetlands would occur.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would take place on the structure. No sediment or hazardous material releases are expected from the proposed actions. Therefore, no impacts to groundwater or aquifers are expected.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The installation of wireless equipment on the structure would not change the land use at the project site. No specially-designated areas are located within the project site.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The wireless antennas and equipment would be mounted on structure 10/4 of the Bellingham-Custer No. 1 – Murray-Custer No. 1 transmission line. The transmission line corridor also contains two other lines; the Monroe-Custer No. 1 and the Monroe-Custer No. 2, which have transmission structures on either side of the project site structure. Structure 10/4 is 133 feet tall and the two adjacent structures are similar in height. The new wireless equipment would be mounted at approximately 100 feet above the ground on structure 10/4.

The wireless equipment mounted on the 10/4 structure would be relatively unnoticeable due to the height at which it is mounted, and the relative size of the equipment is small compared to the size of the structure. Additionally, there are two similar sized transmission line structures on either side of structure 10/4. Because of the relative size of the three adjacent transmission line structures compared to the size of the equipment installed on structure 10/4, the visual quality of the area would not be substantially altered.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities would generate a small amount of vehicle emissions when accessing the structure for installation. However, there would be no substantial changes to air quality after installation is complete.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. However, there would be no substantial changes to noise quality of the area, beyond temporary construction-related noise impacts.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed during project activities; therefore, project activities would not impact human health or safety

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: Dish Wireless would notify the nearby landowners, as required by BPA, prior to commencing work.

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

Signed:

Jeremy Doschka
Environmental Protection Specialist