

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 15-Minute Transmission Scheduling

Project Manager: William Rimmer, Project Manager – SR-7

Location: Vancouver, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.4 – Power marketing services and activities; B4.5 – Temporary adjustments to river operations

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to offer generators in the region the ability to schedule use of BPA's transmission system every 15 minutes, which is referred to as 15-minute transmission scheduling. Allowing generators to submit transmission schedules for the use of the BPA transmission system in 15-minute increments is expected to help BPA balance loads (or use of electricity) within its Balancing Authority Area with the amount of power being generated to help maintain electrical system reliability. BPA uses dams in the Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) to provide power to balance variations in total generation, particularly from wind projects, which results in automatic adjustments to FCRPS generation to maintain load-generation balance.

Under 15-minute transmission scheduling, generating projects would be expected to operate in a similar manner as they currently operate within normal operating limits and under existing environmental operational constraints. In addition, no changes to the existing transmission system would be required.

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, July 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.

/s/ Jeffrey J. Maslow

Jeffrey J. Maslow

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Date: October 21, 2014

Stacy L. Mason

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: 15-Minute Transmission Scheduling

Project Site Description

The Federal Columbia River Power System (FCRPS) includes the federally owned dams on the Columbia River and its tributaries in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Montana.

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	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No expected effects on historic and cultural resources beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No expected effects on geology and soils, including shoreline erosion, beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No expected effects on plants beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No expected effects on wildlife beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Because river operations would be maintained within the existing operating constraints of the FCRPS, implementation would not affect existing compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA). Federal generation sources would continue to be operated within current federal and state law requirements, in particular, the requirements described in the 2008 National Marine Fisheries Service Biological Opinion, the 2010 and 2014 Supplemental Biological Opinions, and BPA decision documents adopting them. FCRPS generation would continue to be operated, to the extent practicable, within current federal and state Clean Water Act (CWA) standards. To monitor for compliance with the ESA and CWA, BPA will check monthly during fish-passage		

season to determine whether BPA is meeting spill percentages outlined in the Annual Fish Operating Plan until NMFS issues another FCRPS Biological Opinion, which is expected in 2018.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No expected effects on wetlands beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No expected effects on groundwater and aquifers beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.

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



Explanation: No expected effects on land use and specially designated areas beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: No expected effects on visual quality beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: No expected effects on air quality beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: No expected effects on noise beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No expected effects on human health and safety beyond those already occurring from overall current hydro operations.

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:

- 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: No landowners would be affected by 15-minute transmission scheduling.

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

Signed: /s/ Jeffrey J. Maslow

Date: October 21, 2014