

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Malin-Hilltop #1 Wood Pole Replacement

**PP&A No.:** 3151

**Project Manager:** Richard Heredia

**Location:** Modoc County, California

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3 Routine Maintenance

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to replace deteriorating wood poles on its Malin-Hilltop #1 230-kV transmission line to ensure continued operational reliability. The proposed maintenance involves replacement of existing wood poles and associated structural/electrical components (i.e. cross arms, insulators, guys and guy anchors, etc.). The wood poles will be mechanically removed from the ground. The replacement structure would in-kind, having the same height as the original. The locations of the wood pole structures to be replaced are shown in the table below:

Malin-Hilltop #1 Wood Pole Replacement Project Locations

Mile	Structure	Owner	Town	Range	Sec	County
16	7	Modoc NF	46N	6E	34	Modoc
47	3	Modoc NF	43N	9E	26	Modoc
47	4	Modoc NF	43N	9E	26	Modoc

The work may include creating a 50- by 50-foot earthen landing adjacent to the structure to allow equipment staging for pole removal and replacement. The new poles for the structure would either be placed back in the existing holes, or an auger attached to a backhoe would be used to drill new holes approximately five feet ahead or back on line from the existing poles. This would allow for the new pole holes to be drilled before the line outage, since this process can be time consuming and the outage is of limited duration. During the line outage, the existing poles would then be removed and the new poles installed in the existing or pre-drilled holes.

Ground disturbance for the pole replacement would not extend beyond a 100-foot radius around the existing pole structure. No access road improvements will be needed for this project.

**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/ Aaron Shurtliff*  
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

*/s/ Stacy L. Mason*  
Stacy L. Mason  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: *July 2, 2015*

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:** Malin-Hilltop #1 Wood Pole Replacement

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### Project Site Description

The project is located on Modoc National Forest with sparse vegetation consisting primarily of shrubs and grasses. Topography is flat.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> A cultural survey was conducted and no cultural resources were identified. Consultation letters with a determination of No Effect were sent to the California SHPO, Modoc National Forest, Burns-Paiute, Grand Ronde, and Warm Springs tribes in March 2015 – no responses received.		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Minimal soil disturbance		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No sensitive or protected plant species are present. No trees will be removed.		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No sensitive or protected wildlife/habitat are present in the project area		
5. <b>Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish</b> (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No waterbodies are present		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No wetlands are present

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: No impact on groundwater

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

Explanation: No change to existing land use

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: No change to visual quality. Wood pole structures will be in kind.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Some temporary construction dust

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Some temporary construction noise

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No change to 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, 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:

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**Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: BPA has coordinated with the Modoc National Forest, including Section 106 consultation

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

Signed: /s/ Aaron Shurtliff  
Aaron Shurtliff  
Environmental Engineer

Date: July 2, 2015