



Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration

U.S. Department of Energy



Proposed Action Title:	East River Deuel County Switching Station
WAPA Region:	Upper Great Plains
Location (County/State):	Deuel County, SD
CX Determination Number:	2026-UGP-010
CX Determination Expiration Date*:	06/05/2031

**CX is valid until the date above (no longer than five years from when document was signed) or completion of work started prior to the expiration of the CX Determination, unless there are substantial changes to the scope of work, location, or applicable regulations. If such changes occur prior to the expiration of the CX, the Region Environmental Program will review the analysis to ensure the CX is still applicable.*

Proposed Action Description:

East River proposes building a Deuel County Switching Station on WAPA's existing Watertown - Brookings #2 115 kV transmission line between structures 28/8 & 29/2 in an adjacent parcel that East River owns adjacent to their own existing transmission line. East River will own, build & maintain the switching station. East River procured the steel poles and installed the concrete foundations that WAPA needs in order to install new structures to support the switching station. WAPA will build, own, and maintain approach structures outside the switching station fence. WAPA will install the new steel structures on concrete foundations at 28/9, 29/1A & 29/1B. The wooden structure at current location 29/1 will be moved north and replaced with a steel pole on a foundation. 29/2 wood 2-pole structure will be relocated north. 28/8 structure is currently a 3-pole structure that East River will remove and WAPA will re-install a previous 2-pole structure. Excavating ground disturbance will occur for steel pole foundation and drilling for wood poles. The switching station will abut WAPA's existing transmission line ROW. WAPA will establish additional Right of Way from East River to access WAPA structures on East River owned property.

Environmental Requirements during Project Implementation:

The following bird conservation measures should be implemented:

1. Impacts on Eagles

WAPA would avoid actions ≤ 660 feet from active bald eagle nests and ≤ 1 mile from active golden eagle nests. Actions in these buffers would occur September 1 – December 31, when nest site disturbance would be lowest; or when a biological monitor is present to monitor the nest and ensure WAPA's activities won't cause undue disturbance to the nest/young/adults.

2. Impacts on Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) Species

If a MBTA species' nest is observed prior to or during the action, a suitable buffer would be established to avoid nest disturbance, and actions would not commence in the buffer until:



A) the nest fate is reached naturally;

B) a biological monitor is present to monitor the nest to ensure WAPA's actions are not causing undue disturbance to the nest/young/adults; or

C) outside the primary nesting season dates (May 1 – August 1).

3. To reduce the risk of birds colliding with the transmission line, line markers (i.e., bird flight diverters) should be installed & maintained, when practicable.



Span recommended to be marked (pink).

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied (Number and Title):

B4.13 Upgrading and rebuilding existing powerlines

Findings:

For the DOE procedures regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see 10 CFR 1021.102 and Appendix B to [10 CFR Part 1021](#), and also Section 5.4



(Applying one or more categorical exclusions to a proposal) and Appendices B and C of [DOE's National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures](#) (Jun. 30, 2025).

Requirements and guidance in 10 CFR 1021.102 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures: (See full text in regulation and in Implementing Procedures)



The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B or C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures. Additionally, for CXs adopted pursuant to NEPA Section 109 (see DNIP, Appendix C), the originating Federal agency's integral elements or extraordinary circumstances must be in accordance with the applicable requirements.



There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. DOE or an applicant may modify the proposal to avoid reasonably foreseeable adverse significant effects such that the categorical exclusion would apply.



The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

[Note: For proposals that fit within the categorical exclusions listed in Appendix C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, see DOE's notice of adoption for the subject Appendix C categorical exclusion for additional considerations. DOE notices of adoption for other agency categorical exclusions may be found on [DOE's Section 109 webpage](#).]

Determination:

Based on my review of the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other requirements and guidance set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

WAPA Authorized Official Signature:

Senior Vice President and Upper Great Plains Regional Manager