

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION
Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration

**Archer-Cheyenne North/South 115-kV Transmission Line Structure Replacement
Laramie County, Wyoming**

- A. **Brief Description of Proposal:** Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to replace six existing wood-pole structures along the Archer-Cheyenne South (ARH-CH S) and Archer-Cheyenne North (ARH-CH N) 115-kV Transmission Lines. Cheyenne Light, Fuel, and Power (CLFP), a subsidiary of Black Hills Power Corporation, has requested to cross under Western's ARH-CH N, ARH-CH S, and Archer-Stegall No. 1 115-kV (ARH-SG 1) Transmission Lines. This will require Western to relocate and replace six of its structures to maintain proper conductor clearances over CLFP's planned 115-kV double circuit transmission line. Western's wood structures that will be replaced are structures 6/6 (wood H frame), 6/7 (wood H frame), and 6/8 (3-pole wood) on the ARH-CH N line and structures 6/5 (wood H frame), 6/6 (wood H frame), and 6/7 (3-pole wood) on the ARH-CH S line. No structures along the ARH-SG 1 Transmission Line will be replaced.

Construction activities proposed for ARH-CH N and ARH-CH S 115-kV Transmission Line pole replacement project include the removal of the existing wood structures, augering and installing new wood poles, backfilling, and adding new hardware. The equipment utilized includes 4-wheel drive pick-ups, rubber-tired motor digger/derrick, manlift, skid-steer loader, pole trailer, and line trucks. All work will be confined to Western's right-of-way easement. Existing access will be used and no new roads are proposed. The project is scheduled for spring of 2014.

- B. **Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied:** (See text in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.)

B4.13 Upgrading and Rebuilding Existing Powerlines:

Upgrading or rebuilding approximately 20 miles in length or less of existing electric powerlines, which may involve **minor relocations** of small segments of the powerlines.

- C. **Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):** (See full text in regulation and attached checklist.)

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D.

For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements. To fit within a class, the proposal must not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders;
- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;
- 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; and
- Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, State, or local

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Archer-Cheyenne North/South 115-kV Transmission Line Structure Replacement
Laramie County, Wyoming

government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to those listed in paragraph B. (4) (see Attachment A).

- 2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect *the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal*.
- 3) The proposal is not “connected” to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:

If the scope of work for this project changes, Western’s Environmental Division must be contacted for additional environmental review.

This Categorical Exclusion is valid for 1 year after the signature date. If the project has not commenced within that time, Western’s Environmental Division must be contacted for an updated environmental review prior to construction.

If any used treated wood poles or cross-arms are donated, Western will obtain a signed “acknowledgment of receipt” of Western’s Consumer Information Sheet for Treated Wood Poles and Cross-Arms from the person receiving the used poles and/or cross-arms.

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, Western’s Regional Preservation Officer shall be contacted, and the material be evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior’s Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983).

All equipment used should be cleaned prior to use in the area to prevent transporting of invasive plant or noxious weed seeds.

To comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, maintenance work should be scheduled outside the March 1 through July 31 general nesting periods. If the maintenance work is to be done during this period, contact Western’s Environmental Division so that they may arrange for a pedestrian survey to be conducted in advance of the maintenance crews to identify active nests that are to be avoided.

Western shall exercise care to preserve the natural landscape and shall conduct this construction operation to prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of the natural surroundings in the project vicinity. Except where clearing is required for permanent works, approved construction roads, or excavation operations, vegetation shall be preserved and shall be protected from damage by Western’s construction operations and equipment.

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Laramie County, Wyoming**

E. **Determination:** Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from requirements for an EA or an EIS.


Signature

Date: 1/28/14

Gene Iley, Jr.
NEPA Compliance Officer
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region
Western Area Power Administration

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ATTACHMENT A

**Conditions That Are Integral Elements of the Classes
of Actions in Appendix B That Apply to This Proposal**

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. Extraordinary circumstances are unique situations presented by specific proposals, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources.		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B.	NO	YES	Unknown
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	X		
(2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;	X		
(3) 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;	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been	X		

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**Archer-Cheyenne North/South 115-kV Transmission Line Structure Replacement
Laramie County, Wyoming**

identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, State, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:			
(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, State, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;	X		
(ii) Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or federally-proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii) Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, — Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);	X		
(iv) Areas having a special designation such as federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, State and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v) Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), — Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions, or its successor;	X		
(vi) Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii) Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests; or	X		

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

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Laramie County, Wyoming**

(5) 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.	X		
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