

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Astound Broadband Fiber Installation

**Project No.** 20170026

**Project Manager:** Victor Alvarado—TERR-Chemawa

**Location:** Washington County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.7 Fiber optic cable

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to allow Astound Broadband (dba Wave Division Holding, LLC.) to install fiber optic lines within conduit, and one fiber optic vault, near the Keeler Substation, in Hillsboro, Oregon. To install the conduit, Astound Broadband would trench approximately 1,200 feet on BPA property. The approximate three-foot-deep trench would be located between the Highway 26 on-ramp and the northern fence line of the substation property. Excavated soils would be backfilled into the trench. In addition, a 4x4x4 foot vault would also be installed just below grade level. The project area has extensive prior disturbance from the construction of the on-ramp and substation.

**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/ Beth Belanger

Beth Belanger

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Motus Recruiting & Staffing

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 6, 2017

Attachment: 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:** Astound Broadband Fiber Installation

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## Project Site Description

The proposed project location is adjacent to the Keeler Substation, located in Washington County, Oregon. The project area is located in Section 23, Township 1 North, Range 2 West; approximately 15 feet outside of the Keeler Substation fence. Highway 26 is immediately north; the surrounding area to the south, east, and west, is developed with commercial buildings and residential dwellings. Dawson Creek is approximately 0.25 miles to the west and Rock Creek is approximately 0.50 miles east.

The vegetation in the proposed project area consists of Queen Anne's lace (*Daucus carota*), Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), Oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), and unidentified grasses.

A review of the National Wetland Inventory, topography, and aerial photos did not reveal any wetlands or water bodies at the site.

## 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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA cultural staff determined that the project location has extensive prior ground disturbance and has been previously surveyed. They have concluded that the project is unlikely to affect historical or cultural resources. Therefore, no further action is required.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Trenching for conduit installation would be approximately three-feet deep. Native soils would be used to backfill the trench. Best management practices (BMPs) would be used to prevent soil erosion.</p>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status plant species present within the project area.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> There are no special-status wildlife species present within the project area.</p>		

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



Explanation: There are no floodplains or fish present within the project area. Washington County has recently completed road improvements on Cornelius Pass Road, which included routing a drainage through the northwestern corner of the BPA property. Astound would be required to return the project area to the current condition. There would be no impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: There are no wetlands present within the project area. Per the US Geological Services Natural Resource Conservation Service (USGS NRCS), the soils at the site are mapped hydric. However, the substation was built on an approximately 10 feet of fill, and the project area is in an upland habitat, which was verified during a January 23, 2017, site visit. There would be no impacts to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The depth of disturbance would be approximately three-feet deep and would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no land use changes for this project. The proposed location is on BPA fee-owned land and the Oregon Department of Transportation has an easement on this area of the property.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The fiber installation would not alter the visual quality of the landscape.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to long-term air quality, and no significant short-term impact due to machinery during installation.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary noise may occur during the fiber installation but the impact would be non-significant.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impact 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: No landowner notification or involvement would be necessary since the location is on a BPA fee-owned property. The project proponent would be required to work with Oregon Department of Transportation, which has an easement along that portion of the fee-owned property. Additionally, it would be the project proponent's responsibility to comply with state and local environmental regulations.

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

Signed: /s/ Beth Belanger  
Beth Belanger, ECT-4  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Motus Recruiting & Staffing

Date: February 6, 2017