

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Snohomish-Boeing No. 9 Transmission Line Upgrade

Project Manager: Rasha Kroonen TEP-TPP-1

Location: Snohomish County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 Electric power substation and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA is planning to upgrade its double circuit Snohomish-Boeing No. 9 line from 155-kV to 230-kV in response to Snohomish Public Utility District's (PUD) plans to increase capacity at its Beverly Park Substation in Snohomish County, Washington. BPA's double circuit Snohomish-Boeing No. 9 line was originally constructed at 230-kV specifications, but is currently operating at 115-kV. To upgrade to 230-kV, BPA plans to reterminate the existing line from BPA's Snohomish Substation 115-kV bay to a new 230-kV bay. A new power circuit breaker, disconnects, associated bus work, as well as indoor protection and monitoring equipment would be installed at the new bay and within the substation control house. The drainage system at Snohomish Substation would be upgraded to account for the additional runoff potential. About 3,170-cubic yards of material would be excavated from within the substation footprint and disposed of in an approved off site facility.

Two wooden pole structures outside Snohomish substation (1/1 and 1/2) would be removed and replaced with two taller steel monopoles, one outside of the substation to angle the line into the new 230-kV bay, and another monopole within the substation to carry the conductor to the new 230-kV bay. The steel monopoles would be installed using drilled pier foundations and would result in about 100-square feet of permanent disturbance at each pole site. The conductor would be pulled and tensioned onto the new monopole using heavy machinery, resulting in some temporary surface disturbance outside the substation fence. Upgrading the line would also result in an impairment between towers 2/3 and 2/4 where the conductor to ground clearance would not meet National Electric Safety Code (NESC) minimum requirements. To fix the impairment, about 27 cubic yards of material would be excavated and hauled off site to an approved waste facility.

At Snohomish PUD's Beverly Park Substation where the Snohomish-Boeing No. 9 line terminates, BPA would extend the transmission line conductor to reach Snohomish PUD's 230-kV circuit breaker bay. Snohomish PUD is responsible for terminating the line within their substation. A new steel monopole would be installed west of structure 5/8 to carry the line into the new Beverly Park breaker bay. The new structure 5/9 would be installed using a drilled pier foundation. New overhead ground wire would be installed from Beverly Park Substation to existing structure 5/8. Pulling and tensioning would take place within the existing right-of-way. Three ornamental trees located within BPA right-of-way would be removed to complete the installation.

All work would take place within the Snohomish substation fee- area and within existing rights-of-way. No new access roads would be needed to complete the work.

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/ Claire McClory
Claire McClory

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: March 14, 2017

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: Snohomish-Boeing No. 9 Transmission Line Upgrade

Project Site Description

The project area is within the Snohomish River catchment area. The areas outside Snohomish and Beverly Park substation have been previously disturbed by transmission line and substation construction and maintenance. The land is dominated by non-native forbs and grasses. Noxious weeds observed in the project area include Scot's broom, Himalayan blackberry, tansy ragwort, bull thistle, Canada thistle, and reed canary grass. Some portions of land outside Snohomish Substation have been classified as wetland. Much of the area surrounding Snohomish Substation has been ditched to convey water away from substation infrastructure.

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> Washington SHPO concurrence on no historic properties affected received on January 23, 2017.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> About 3,170-cubic feet of soils would be removed from the Snohomish Substation fenced area and 27-cubic yards from the impairment along the transmission line. Two new steel monopoles would be installed, one outside the Snohomish Substation and one outside of Beverly Park Substation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Soils from inside the Snohomish Substation fenced area that cannot be reused on site as backfill would be sampled and analyzed for contamination, and disposed of at an approved waste facility if deemed necessary.✓ Soils removed from the impairment area within the ROW can be spread locally within the ROW or taken to a nearby quarry as fill.✓ If removed material from the impairment area is spread on site, it must be spread between structures 2/3 and 2/4 of the Snohomish-PUD #3 transmission line. Additionally, spread material would need to be reseeded with native meadow seed mix per the Western Washington Stormwater Manual BMP C120.✓ Implement erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) prior to pole installation and ground-disturbing activities.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species present. Grasses and forbs (mostly non-native or invasive species) would be removed or disturbed to install new steel monopoles. Three ornamental fruit trees would be removed outside the Beverly Park substation to meet NESC clearance requirements.		

4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: An active osprey nest is located atop tower 1/3 where tower work would be needed to direct the conductor to a new steel monopole.

- ✓ Inactive nests can be removed when young have fledged and no activity in the nest is evident.
- ✓ No construction activities would take place in the immediate vicinity of the tower while the nest is active, or between March 1 and August 31.

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



Explanation: A drainage pond north of the substation would be unaffected by the project.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: BPA identified three palustrine emergent wetlands in a 5-acre area south of the Snohomish Substation. Work would take place under Nationwide Permit (NWP) 12 with no pre-construction notification required. NWP 12 General, Regional, and Water Quality conditions would apply.

- ✓ Construction staging and access would be limited to the existing access road and rocked landing pad.
- ✓ Temporary soil disturbance for pole installation would be limited to a 500-square foot area.
- ✓ Disturbed areas would be smoothed and reseeded to minimize erosion potential.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Proposed excavation would not be deep enough (i.e., <12 inches) to intercept ground water.

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



Explanation: No changes to land use.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Steel monopoles would be about 50-feet taller than existing wood pole structures. The new, taller monopoles would be placed near structures of similar height and would not be noticeably different.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: Project activities would not affect human health and 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:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: BPA owns and operates the Snohomish Substation and vicinity. BPA has been in contact with landowners who may be affected by work proposed on the Snohomish – Boeing No. 9 transmission line corridor.

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

Signed: /s/ Claire McClory
Claire McClory ECT-4

Date: March 14, 2017