

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Moxee Substation PacifiCorp Line Retermination

LURR No.: 20170159

Project Manager: Martin Wick

Location: Yakima, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and Modifications to Transmission Facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to reterminate PacifiCorp's Moxee-Union Gap 115-kV transmission line at BPA's Moxee Substation. BPA would disconnect PacifiCorp's old conductor from BPA's substation deadend and re-attach PacifiCorp's new conductor to that same deadend. BPA would also attach the new conductor to PacifiCorp's newly replaced triple pole wood structure outside the substation fenceline on BPA property. PacifiCorp's new structure would be similar to the old structure in the same or immediately adjacent location.

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/ Nancy A. Wittpenn

Nancy A. Wittpenn

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

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

Date: August 28, 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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed work would occur at Moxee Substation, a BPA fee-owned property in rural Yakima County. The substation is located about 13 miles north of Moxee. Commercial agricultural land surrounds the substation along with a few scattered rural residences farther away from the substation. Within the fenceline where most of the work would occur, the substation is paved or graveled. Outside the fenceline, the property is arid shrub/scrub habitat. Both BPA and PacifiCorp transmission lines cross the property as they enter and/or leave the substation.

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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project area outside of the substation yard was surveyed for cultural resources in 2015 and 2016, as part of a BPA rebuild project and a wood pole replacement project. WA DAHP considers this area to be a moderately low risk to low risk probability zone for archaeological resources. No further survey work or consultation is needed. No impacts to historic and cultural resources are expected.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Soils have been previously disturbed and compacted by the placement of transmission structures and the substation. No additional impacts are expected.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Vegetation in and around the substation has been extensively altered by utility and agricultural use. The substation yard is paved or graveled. Low quality shrub-steppe habitat occurs outside the fenceline where the wood pole structure would be replaced. No impacts to vegetation would occur.</p> <p>A population of diffuse knapweed (designated noxious weed) was mapped on the substation property during a survey in 2014 and would be treated by PacifiCorp's in fall 2017 before construction.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u> PAC would recontour any disturbed areas after construction and reseed in November 2017 after construction with a seed mix from the Stormwater Manual for Eastern Washington.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The area in and around the substation has been extensively altered by utility and agricultural use. The substation yard is paved or graveled. Low quality shrub-steppe habitat occurs outside the fenceline where</p>		

the PacifiCorp's pole would be replaced. No federal or state special-status species or habitats occur on Moxee Substation property. Wildlife surveys in 2013 and 2015 confirmed ferruginous hawk nest sites in the area. Construction would occur in fall 2017; after the March 1 through August 31 nesting season is over. No impacts to wildlife would occur.

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



Explanation: No surface water is present on or in close proximity to the substation property and no impacts are expected to water bodies, floodplains, and fish.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present in and around the substation and no impacts would occur to wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Groundwater is used in the area for irrigation. No ground-disturbing activities are deep enough to affect groundwater quantity or quality.

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



Explanation: All work would occur on BPA fee-owned land either within the substation or just outside the fence line. Moxee Substation is surrounded by commercial agricultural use. No specially designated or recreational areas are in the immediate vicinity of the substation. No impacts to land use and specially designated areas would occur.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There are no designated scenic resources or viewpoints around Moxee Substation. The substation is surrounded by commercial agricultural interests. The proposed work would not be out of character with existing facilities at the substation and no impacts to visual quality would occur.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: An increase in emissions from vehicles and construction equipment would be temporary and localized to the substation property. Dust could be created during structure construction and the conductor work but also would be temporary and localized. Impacts to air quality would be temporary and negligible.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Moxee Substation is surrounded by commercial agricultural interests and a certain level of industrial noise can occur during the growing and harvesting season. While noise would temporarily be generated by the project, it would not be out of character with noise produced by the surrounding land uses. Impacts to noise would be temporary and negligible.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: The conductor work would be done by BPA crews who are well-versed in safety requirements in and around BPA substations. PacifiCorp's construction crews would meet and follow all safety requirements for work on BPA fee-owned land in close proximity to a substation. All soil not needed for backfilling PAC's replaced structure would be disposed of appropriately by PAC. The wood poles from the replaced structure would be examined by PAC for other uses or disposed of appropriately. No impacts to human health and safety would occur.

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: None needed. All proposed work would take place on BPA fee-owned land. No adjacent landowners or passing motorists are likely to be impacted by the proposed work.

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

Signed: /s/ Nancy A. Wittpenn
Nancy A. Wittpenn ECT-4

Date: August 28, 2017