

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Skamania PUD Reconductor

Project No.: LURR 20170352

Project Manager: Laura Loop – TERR-3

Location: Skamania County, 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 allow Skamania PUD to reconductor their distribution line that crosses the Underwood Tap to Bonneville PH1-Alcoa Nos. 1&2 115-kV transmission line between structures 9/6 and 10/1. This portion of the BPA right-of-way is owned in fee. To reconductor their line, Skamania PUD would do one of the following:

- 1) Replace the existing single wood pole tight south of the existing pole. The new wood pole would be at the same height. The guy wires would be replaced but the anchors would be re-used if possible. One new guy wire and anchor would be needed approximately 10 feet to the south.
- 2) The existing pole would remain but the crossarms would be replaced. The guy wires would be replaced but the anchors would be re-used if possible.

Since the existing wood pole structure is immediately adjacent to the road, most of the work can be done from the road with minimal disturbance. Option 1 would create the most disturbance but would be limited to a 25 x 25 foot area surrounding the existing pole. Some vegetation and soil would be disturbed from replacement of the wood pole and guywires. Noise and dust would be generated by construction and a few vehicles.

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

Concur:

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

Date: 10/30/2017

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: Skamania PUD Reconductor

Project Site Description

Skamania PUD’s existing distribution line is on existing BPA right-of-way just south of Carson, Washington. The existing pole is located immediately adjacent to the road shoulder of Carson Depot Road, which is a rural residential road that parallels Wind River Road, a busy highway connecting the town of Carson to SR 14.

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> BPA has determined that No Historic Properties would be affected by the proposed undertaking.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Soils have been previously disturbed and compacted in this area from right-of-way clearing, pole and guy anchor construction, and road construction. A new pole and guy anchor would be installed in this previously disturbed and compacted area. In addition, most of the work would be done from the paved road, further minimizing disturbance in this area.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Vegetation in the area has been extensively altered by past clearing for the existing BPA and Skamania PUD rights-of-way. Low quality vegetation in the disturbed area consists of non-native weedy species. No federal or state special-status species occur on the site.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No federal or state special-status species occur on or near the site. Eagles or migratory birds may be in the area but construction would take place outside of nesting season and would be temporary. Noise from construction would not be inconsistent with noise generated from adjacent Wind River Highway.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The disturbed site is just over 200 feet west of an intermittent drainage. The disturbed area does not contain any water bodies, fish, or fish habitat. Also, the site is not within a floodplain.		

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: No wetlands occur on or near the site.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: Construction activities would not be deep enough to affect groundwater quantity or quality, or aquifers that may exist in the area.

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

Explanation: The site is within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (NSA) but falls within the boundary of a designated NSA Urban Area where no further NSA consideration is required. Regardless, Skamania PUD's distribution line crosses the existing BPA right-of-way in an area of rural residences adjacent to a busy highway. No recreational areas or uses exist in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: Although the site is within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, it falls within the boundary of a designated NSA Urban Area. There are no designated scenic resources or viewpoints in the project vicinity. The existing structure is immediately adjacent to Carson Depot Road, which is a rural residential neighborhood road. Carson Depot Rd. parallels and is adjacent to Wind River Highway, a busy road that connects the town of Carson to SR 14, a scenic by-way.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: An increase in emissions from vehicles and construction equipment would be temporary and localized. Dust could be created during pole replacement or installation of new guys or guy anchors but would also be temporary and localized.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Ambient noise occurs in the area from passing motorists and trucks on Wind River Highway that connects the town of Carson to SR 14. Additional noise would be generated during construction but it would be localized and temporary.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: All soil not needed for backfilling the replaced pole or guy anchors would be disposed of appropriately by Skamania PUD. No hazardous or other substances harmful to humans would be generated by this project.

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 has been notified through the LURR process.

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

Date: 10/30/2017