



# U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title:

MED-PES 500kV Transmission Line Conductor Spacer Repair on Towers 145-1, 206-2, 206-4, 207-1, 207-4, & 211-4

Program or Field Office: WAPA DSW Phoenix Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Maricopa and Mohave Counties, AZ

Proposed Action Description:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) Desert Southwest Region (DSW) proposes to replace broken conductor line spacers on 6 tower spans along the Mead to Perkins 500kV Transmission Line (MED-PES 500kV) in Maricopa and Mohave Counties, AZ. Repair crews will drive to each tower span location and use an insulated man-lift bucket vehicle to replace broken spacers. In order to reach each tower span location WAPA DSW will blade and grade (with a dozer) the existing dirt access roads whenever they encounter steep, eroded, and impassible sections. All road work will be conducted within the existing road prism. Some minor tree and shrub pruning is necessary due to overhang on the access roads. Some minor vegetation removal (small shrubs and grasses) will be removed for staging area clearance.

WAPA repair crews plan to change the spacers between the following structures:

1. Spacer between Structures 145-1 and 145-2.
2. Spacers between Structures 206-2 and 208-1.
3. Spacer between 211-4 and 212-1.

Please see attachment sheet:

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.3 - Routine maintenance

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (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; (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; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (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 listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This 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 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Date Determined:

4-9-18

# MED-PES 500kV Transmission Line Conductor Spacer Repair Categorical Exclusion Continuation Sheet

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## **Biological Concerns**

Existing dirt access roads will be bladed/graded by a dozer and front end loader, all work will be conducted in the road prism and some minor vegetation (trees and shrubs) trimming will take place. Some minor clearing of small shrubs and grasses will take place during the preparation of the staging areas under the ROW.

Prior to dirt access road work, WAPA repair crews will observe the road prism sections necessary for blading/grading and make sure that no desert tortoises are present. If desert tortoises are observed or encountered WAPA repair crews will wait until the tortoises move out of the area before starting/continuing dirt access road work. WAPA repair crews will immediately contact and report their findings to the WAPA biologist.

An active raptor nest was observed on structure 208-1. WAPA repair crews replacing the spacer close to structure 207-4 will minimize their time and noise during the repair, and observe the nest for any unusual activity. If unusual activity occurs from the nest, WAPA repair crews will immediately contact and report it to the WAPA biologist.

## **Cultural Resource Concerns**

Based upon the results of a Class I literature review, no historic properties lie within the area of potential effects. WAPA made a finding of No Historic Properties Affected per Stipulation V.A.1 of the Programmatic Agreement.

**GENERAL:** Do not remove or alter cultural artifacts or paleontological resources (fossils). Cultural artifacts are of potential scientific or cultural importance and include bones, tools, historic buildings, and features. Paleontological resources can be of scientific importance and include mineralized animals and plants or trace fossils such as footprints. Both cultural and paleontological resources are protected by Federal Regulations during Federal construction projects

**UNKNOWN CULTURAL OR PALEONTOLOGICAL SITES:** On rare occasions cultural or paleontological sites may be discovered during excavation or other earth-moving activities.

- (1) **Reporting:** If evidence of a cultural or paleontological site is discovered, immediately notify the Regional Preservation Officer (602-605-2842) and give the location and nature of the findings. Stop all activities within a 50-foot radius of the discovery and do not proceed with work within that radius until directed to do so by the Regional Preservation Officer.
  
- (1) **Care of Evidence:** Do not damage or remove artifacts or fossils uncovered during construction.