U.S. Department of Energy
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: License Agreement for GridLiance's Geotechnical Drilling Investigations on WAPA-Administered Withdrawn Lands near Mead Substation

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration, Desert Southwest Regional Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Boulder City, Clark County, Nevada

Proposed Action Description:

Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) plans to issue a license agreement to GridLiance West, LLC (GridLiance) in support of geotechnical investigations at up to 4 locations within an existing transmission line right-of-way or easement across WAPA-administered withdrawn lands at Mead Substation. The drilling locations occur within Sections 28-30 in Township 23 South, Range 64 East on the Mount Diablo Baseline and Meridian.

At each location, GridLiance would core and auger a hole, up to 2 feet in diameter, and up to 40 feet deep or 10 feet into bedrock. Setting up and operating the equipment would temporarily disturb a 25-by-25-foot area. They would collect sediment samples for laboratory analysis, such as Standard Penetration Tests. They would backfill the holes with flowable bonded aggregate fill approved for use by the Clark County Department of Public Works. The most commonly used equipment for this work is a 14-foot-tall drill rig mounted on a 3-axle flatbed truck. They would use existing roads or unpaved two-tracks in their current condition to reach the drilling locations. New road construction is not planned.

WAPA plans to complete the license agreement by October 31, 2019 or as soon as possible. GridLiance plans to start the geotechnical fieldwork as soon as possible. They expect that work at each drilling location will take 2 to 3 hours to complete.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.24 - Property transfers

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: SEAN BERRY Digitally signed by SEAN BERRY Date: 2019.10.25 07:33:35 -07'00' Date Determined: