

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Trinity Public Utilities District - Fiber Sharing Project

Project No.: 100451664

Project Manager: Mike Jackson

Location: TPUD TRI-WEA line, Trinity and Shasta counties

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4. 7 Fiber Optic Cable

Description of the Proposed Action:

Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region (WAPA) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of several federally owned and operated transmission lines throughout California, including the Trinity-Weaverville (TNI-WEA), Trinity-Carr (TNI-CAR), and Carr-Keswick (CAR-KE) lines located in Trinity and Shasta counties. Part of this responsibility includes ensuring WAPA maintains reliable access to transmission towers and other facilities to comply with the National Electric Safety Code, Western States Coordinating Council, and WAPA directives for protecting human safety and maintaining the reliable operation of the transmission system.

WAPA proposes to share with Trinity PUD (TPUD) its fiber optic system on WAPA transmission lines between WAPA's Keswick Substation near Redding, CA and WAPA/TPUD's Weaverville Substation near Weaverville, CA for bringing redundant broadband services to Trinity County by utilizing two unused fiber optic strands within the existing fiber optic cable located in one of the top wires on the transmission line(s). No construction activities or ground disturbance is required for this action.

This project would be covered under Categorical Exclusion B4.7 Fiber optic cable, which includes fiber optic cables on transmission facilities or underground fiber optic cable in existing powerline or pipeline rights-of-way.

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, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), WAPA 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, WAPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

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Attachment: 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 project area is located in Trinity and Shasta counties, California.

The setting along the WAPA transmission system between Keswick and Weaverville substations consists of mixed conifer, secondary-growth, forest and cleared transmission line rights-of-way (ROWs). Oak woodlands and chaparral exist in lower elevations, particularly on southern-facing slopes.

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>		

There are no activities involving ground disturbance. The project would not impact cultural resources. Natural Resources will be contacted immediately if archeological, paleontological, or historic evidence is found.

2. **Geology and Soils**



Explanation:

No ground disturbance will take place along the transmission lines; these areas are already disturbed areas.

3. **Plants** (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation:

The project does not include ground disturbance; therefore, no special-status plants would be impacted.

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



Explanation:

No construction activities or ground disturbance would occur; therefore, no impacts to wildlife or special status wildlife would occur.

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



Explanation:

The project does not include ground disturbance; therefore, no impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish would occur.

6. **Wetlands**
Explanation:



The project does not include ground disturbance; therefore, no impacts to wetlands would occur.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**
Explanation:



The project does not include ground disturbance; therefore, no impacts to groundwater or pathways to groundwater would occur.

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**
Explanation:



The land use would not change along the project corridor.

9. **Visual Quality**
Explanation:



There is no change to the visual quality along the project corridor.

10. **Air Quality**
Explanation:



No construction activities or ground disturbance would occur; therefore, there would be no impacts to air quality.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

No construction activities will take place along the project corridor. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

No project construction activities would occur along the project corridor; therefore there would be no impacts to human health or 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: WAPA-owned and maintained facilities.

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

Signed: **Latisha M. Saare**

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