

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: ODA-TCY Helicopter Landing Zone near Tower 120-4

Project No.: 1001530224

Project Manager Dean Faller

Location: Yolo County

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance

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 Olinda Tracy line (ODA-TCY), located in northern California from Tracy to Olinda substations. 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 replace insulators along the ODA-TCY transmission line. To accomplish this task, one landing zone (LZ) outside the right-of-way near Tower 120-4 will be used in Yolo county on private land. Equipment will be staged at the landing zone.

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.

Proposed Action: ODA-TCY Helicopter Landing Zone near Tower 120-4

Project Site Description

The proposed helicopter landing zone is located in Yolo County, California. The site is located 1 mile northeast of Tower 120-4 on private farmland in a well disturbed area adjacent to farming type structures nearby. The site is surrounded by farmland.

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 <u>Explanation:</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From background research, no known cultural resource concerns were identified in the landing zone site. No ground disturbance is required. Natural Resources will be contacted immediately if archaeological, paleontological, or historic resources are found.

2. **Geology and Soils**



Explanation:

Ground disturbance is not anticipated in this project; therefore, no impacts would occur.

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



Explanation:

No special-status plants are known or expected at the landing zones. Elderberry shrubs may be located near the towers and will be surveyed.

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



Explanation:

No special status species or habitat have been identified at the landing zone site. The landing zone site is 1,255 feet southwest of Goodnow Slough.

Bird surveys are conducted during nesting season prior to use.

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



Explanation:

The project area does not have any water bodies, floodplains, or fish; therefore, no impacts would occur. The locations are sufficient distance from the creeks such that no impacts would occur.

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation:



The project area does not have wetlands; therefore, no impacts would occur.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation:



Spill prevention measures would be utilized. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination. Equipment will be stored, fueled, and maintained in a vehicle staging area 300 feet or the maximum distance possible from any seep, spring, pond, lake, river, stream, marsh, or their associated habitats. Vehicles will be inspected daily for fluid leaks before leaving the area.

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

Explanation:



The land use would not change at the project site. Nor is the project within, or near, any specially designated areas, such as National Scenic Rivers.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation:



The visual quality would be consistent with the existing use of agricultural farmland. There would be no significant changes to the visual quality.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation:



A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during the replacement of insulators. The helicopter would operate for a few hours with 2-3 take-offs and landings.

The following relevant SOPs were adopted by WAPA to support the state implementation plan to restore air quality in the region.

AQ-SOP-1: The Contractor will adhere to all applicable requirements of those agencies having jurisdiction over air quality matters, and any necessary permits for O&M will be obtained.

AQ-SOP-2: Machinery and vehicles will be kept in good operating condition and older equipment will be replaced with equipment meeting applicable emission standards; appropriate emissions-control equipment will be maintained for vehicles and equipment, per EPA and/or WAPA air-emission requirements.

AQ-SOP-3: Idle equipment will be shut down when not in active use; visible emissions from stationary generators will be controlled.

AQ-SOP-5: There will be no open burning of construction trash.

AQ-SOP-7: Major operations will be avoided on days when the local Air Quality Index is expected to exceed 150.

11. Noise



Explanation:

There are no residences within the project location. Helicopter noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety



Explanation:

During project activities, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact human health or safety. Contractor shall be required to follow the OSHA standards set forth in 29 CFR 1910.269 specifically paragraphs (a)(2), (b), (c), (g), (k), (p), and (r) as required under (a)(E)(2). Contractor shall also adhere to the requirements under Title 8 Cal OSHA Electrical Safety Order specifically Subchapter 5 Article 38 and Subchapter 7 Article 12. Contractor shall maintain a safe working distance from conductors as described in the above OSHA standards. If a safe working distance cannot be maintained, a clearance shall be requested 3 days in advance.

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:



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.

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 has notified and received permission from the landowner to use the landing zone site.

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

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