

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Verizon Wireless New Telecommunications Installation at Tacoma Crest Site

Project No.: W0976

Project Manager: Brian Keith

Location: King County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers; B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Verizon to establish a new wireless telecommunications site (Tacoma Crest) on structure 19/5 of BPA's Tacoma-Raver No. 1 transmission line in Maple Valley, King County, Washington. The structure is located on private property with an existing easement for BPA's transmission line Right-of-Way (ROW). Telecommunications equipment installed on the existing BPA structure would include:

- Nine antennas
- Six remote radio units (RRUs)
- One overvoltage protection device (OVP)
- 115-feet of Hybrid cables with Pendant

BPA leases space on its transmission structures for wireless antenna facilities pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act. 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f).

Additional groundwork would be required for the new communications site, including access road construction and an 18-foot by 18-foot chain-link fence enclosing a new equipment compound located at the base of BPA structure 19/5. These additional activities would occur on private property not on the BPA-owned structure. The additional work would not be constructed, authorized, or funded by BPA and would be addressed in the Federal Communications Commission's licensing process and associated environmental compliance.

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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), 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.¹

Justin Olmsted
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*

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

Structure 19/5 of BPA's Tacoma-Raver No. 1 transmission line is within private property in Maple Valley, King County, Washington (Township 22 North, Range 6 East, Section 33). The ground cover at the work site consists of regularly maintained common grasses, forbs, and shrubs. Outside of the ROW, the surrounding area is primarily suburban residential housing with some undeveloped wooded areas to the west and south. The nearest residence is approximately 70 feet from the transmission structure. Approximately 750 feet to the west, there is a freshwater forested/shrub wetland associated with Cranmar Creek. US Department of Agriculture (USDA) soil surveys indicate the project site does not contain hydric soil.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and implementing regulations 36 CFR 800, BPA initiated consultation with the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP), Muckleshoot Indian Tribe, Puyallup Tribe of Indians, and Snoqualmie Indian Tribe on February 24, 2025. BPA had previously determined that the Tacoma-Raver No. 1 Transmission Line is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places with DAHP concurrence.

DAHP concurred with the Area of Potential Effect and the finding of no adverse effect to historic properties on February 25, 2025. The Snoqualmie Indian Tribe responded on February 24, 2025, stating they had no comments on the undertaking at this time. No other responses were received.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor soil compaction may occur due to increased construction equipment associated with telecommunications equipment installation on BPA's transmission structure. However, these would be temporary and would cease following project completion. No impact to geology would occur.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor amounts of vegetation would be crushed and trampled during the proposed actions; however, vegetation would return shortly after project completion. The ROW is currently managed for low-growing vegetation, and there are no documented occurrences of Federal or state special-status plant species within the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during project implementation. However, wildlife species that may be present in the area are likely habituated to human activity, including vehicle traffic and other activities associated with urban and commercial development. There are no documented occurrences of Federal or state special-status wildlife species or their habitats near the project site.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site would not be located near any surface waters or fish bearing streams and is not located within a floodplain. The proposed actions would not impact these resources.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project site would not be located in any mapped wetlands and the soil at this location is not hydric. Therefore, the proposed actions would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no activities associated with BPA property that could reach groundwater depths. Verizon and its contractors would implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce the potential for inadvertent spills that could enter groundwater or aquifers.

Notes:

- No refueling of vehicles and equipment is authorized on BPA ROW

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The new wireless telecommunications site would be located on and within the perimeter of the existing BPA transmission structure. No changes to the existing land use or any specially-designated areas are proposed within the scope of this project.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to BPA's structure due to the addition of telecommunications equipment. However, these changes would be similar to the existing

structure and the additions of antennas, wiring, and equipment would not be overtly noticeable from nearby viewing areas. Therefore, the proposed actions would have minimal impact to the visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Small amounts of fugitive dust and vehicle emissions may occur during construction; however, these would be temporary and end following construction completion. The proposed actions would not have permanent impacts to air quality within the area.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Installing the telecommunications equipment on the BPA tower would increase noise above ambient conditions, however construction would be limited to daylight hours and noise would return to pre-existing conditions following construction completion. No permanent noise increase would be expected for this area as a result of this project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No releases of hazardous materials are expected. Wireless carriers are required to use equipment that meets Federal Communications Commission (FCC) standards for radio wave emissions. Any hazardous materials, such as lead-acid batteries, removed from the site would be disposed of at a designated hazardous waste facility. No impacts to human health and safety are expected.

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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project site is on private property. Verizon would be required to coordinate with BPA regarding all work occurring on BPA's transmission structure. Verizon would be required to coordinate access to the property with the appropriate landowners and approving officials, as required.

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

Signed:

Justin Olmsted
Environmental Protection Specialist