Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Raver-Covington No. 1 Impairments

Project No.: P04881

Project Manager: Andrew Young, TELP-CSB-2

Location: King County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to address transmission line impairments to ensure proper line function and perform some access road work. The locations are in proximity to transmission line miles 3, 6, and 7 of the Raver-Covington No.1 Transmission Line in King County, Washington. The first potential impairment between structures 6/5 and 7/1 is caused by a Puget Sound Energy (PSE) aboveground utility line. The impairment would be addressed by PSE moving their utility line underground at BPA's cost. This work would involve approximately 880 feet of trench, both within and outside BPA's right of way (ROW), installed using either horizontal directional drilling or an open trench approximately 1 foot wide by 4 feet deep. The second impairment is between structures 7/2 and 7/3 and would be cleared by installing a prop structure approximately 420 feet ahead-on-line (AOL) of structure 7/2 to raise the line. The prop structure would be a steel lattice structure with four plate footings and would require excavation of an area slightly larger than about 4 feet, 4 inches. long by 4 feet, 4 inches wide by 10 feet, 9 inches deep for each footing. The prop structure installation would likely use trucks, backhoes, bucket trucks, and/or cranes.

Some access road work would occur at line mile 3 and line mile 7 of the Raver-Covington No.1 Transmission Line. At line mile 3, two 60 foot by 40 foot landings would be installed; one at Raver Covington No. 1 structure 3/3 and Raver Covington No. 2 structure 3/3. Additionally, 975 feet of road would be reconstructed (including 775 feet of ditch), about 975 feet of access road would be mowed, and 680 feet of new geotextile fabric would be installed. One heavy duty single rail gate with a standard pin lock would also be replaced on the access road. A drainage culvert would be installed and the road work would place a total of 985 tons of rock on the access road in line mile 3.

At line mile 7, two landings would be installed adjacent to the proposed prop structure, one 70 feet by 50 feet and one 70 feet by 45 feet. A total of approximately 2,000 feet of road would be improved, 200 feet of new road would be constructed to the prop structure, and 100 feet of new road would be constructed to better access 207th Ave. SE. A heavy-duty single rail gate with a standard pin lock would be installed on the western end of the new access to 207th Ave. SE. This new road construction would include 300 feet of mowing, 300 feet of geotextile fabric installation, and one drain dip. The access road activities would place an estimated total of 1,230 tons of rock. Equipment for the access road work would likely include bulldozers, graders, and dump trucks.

The proposed project would help ensure proper functioning of the transmission system. The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

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]

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Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

KATEY GRANGE

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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.

Proposed Action: Raver-Covington No.1 Impairments

Project Site Description

The project site is located in King County, Washington. The area primarily involves transmission line right-of-way and easement areas with low growing vegetation and some existing dirt, gravel, and paved access roads. The adjacent areas include suburban and commercial development and some forested areas. No USFWS NWI wetlands are located at the project site. The intermittent Cranmar Creek is located over 340 feet north of the right-of-way and Lake Sawyer is over 700 feet south of the ROW.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The BPA archaeologist reviewed the proposed activities and determined that these activities at the project area do not have potential to cause effects to historic or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be soil disturbance for installation of the raised transmission line and access road work. Digging would be necessary for the project in order to install the new transmission tower structures in the new locations, access road improvements, and to install the new gates.

Notes:

- Use Best Management Practices (BMPs) to limit soil transport by wind and water during construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be occurring in the BPA right-of-way and some adjacent easement areas. Some areas of low-growing vegetation and landscaping may be cut or removed for installation of the project. No ESA-listed or sensitive plant species would be impacted by the project.

Notes:

- Re-seed any cleared areas with an appropriate type of replacement grass landscaping or other low growing vegetation. Replace any removed trees with similar trees in area not expected to impact transmission line.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would be in established BPA right-of-way and easement areas. The transmission line and access road work is expected to occur during daytime hours with no effect expected to ESA-listed and special status species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The intermittent Cranmar Creek is located over 300 feet north of the project area. Lake Sawyer is located over 700 feet south of the project area. Implementation of appropriate erosion control BMPs would prevent sediment from reaching these waterbodies.

Notes:

- Utilize appropriate BMPs and fugitive dust plan to limit wind and water erosion of soils.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some potential wetland areas are nearby but project work would avoid those areas. Work would be limited to the BPA right-of-way and limited easement areas outside of the right-of-way. Implementation of appropriate erosion control BMPs would prevent sediment from reaching any nearby wetlands.

Notes:

- Utilize appropriate BMPs and fugitive dust plan to limit wind and water erosion of soils to wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not impact groundwater or aquifers. Infiltration to groundwater and aquifers would not be adversely impacted by the construction as any spills, runoff, and erosion at the site would be controlled.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The transmission line and access road work may impact the right-of-way. Installation of new access road gates may enhance site control. Access may be more limited with the gate installations, which would reduce unauthorized users of the right-of-way.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be some visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment. The completed work with the transmission lines and access roads may be noticeable but would constitute a small overall change to the current visual state.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation. There would be small, sporadic increases in machine exhaust during periods of active work during construction.

Notes:

- Keep dust to a minimum by adhering to BMPs for ground disturbance.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase expected from the transmission line project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Workers on the project would be required to follow all applicable state and/or Federal safety standards. Appropriate flagging and traffic control would be used

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: BPA project manager will coordinate with neighboring landowners to avoid conflicts during construction.

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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