



U.S. Department of Energy

Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

<u>Categorical Exclusion Number:</u>	CX-270820
<u>Loan Application Number:</u>	EIR0037
<u>Proposed Action Title:</u>	American Electric Power's (AEP's) Buckrun Switch to West Crawford 69 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project (AEP Project No. 2)
<u>Program of Field Office:</u>	Loan Programs Office (LPO)
<u>Location(s) (City/County/State):</u>	Hancock and Wyandot counties, Ohio
<u>Proposed Action Description:</u>	

The Project will rebuild approximately 6.12 miles of existing linear transmission line infrastructure generally within its existing 60-foot-wide right-of-way (ROW) between the existing Blanchard Station and West Crawford Station (main line) and between the main line and South Vanlue Station, in Hancock and Wyandot counties, Ohio. There are three deviations (i.e., a shift in more than a few feet from the existing centerline) from the existing ROW (totaling 0.67 mile) to avoid a landowner's farmland, to avoid existing encroachments, and to impact fewer residential landowners. One of the deviations (0.4 mile) splits away from the existing ROW along a new route that terminates at the existing West Crawford Station (i.e., does not return back to the existing ROW). The new ROW for the 0.67 mile deviation is in previously disturbed areas (e.g. active agricultural lands or residential lawns). The rebuild with its deviations will result in a shorter transmission line (6.12 miles to 6.09 miles) and reduced overall ROW area (44.56 acres to 44.18 acres). Proposed construction activities include removing 106 existing 45-foot-tall wooden poles and replacing them with 105 new single steel poles and upgrading the wires to improve electrical reliability for area customers. The new steel poles are approximately 85 feet tall.

The Project is within an area dominated by active agricultural crop lands with scattered isolated woodlots. Land use within the ROW is nearly 100 percent agricultural crop lands, with the exception of a few roads/driveways, mowed lawn, six emergent wetlands, three stream segments, and two man-made ponds (crossed by the existing ROW section that will be removed due to the 0.4 mile deviation to West Crawford Station). The eastern approximately 2 miles of the rebuild runs adjacent to Township Highway 27 (aka Brown Road) and then an abandoned railroad. The Project is also adjacent to a few isolated woodlots.

Existing roads and temporary access roads will be used for construction. Approximately 5.13 miles of temporary access roads will be inside the existing ROW and new ROW (from deviations), and 0.98 mile of temporary access roads will be outside the ROW. No new permanent access road will be constructed as part of the Project. Temporary access roads will consist primarily of matting within and outside of the ROW within previously disturbed upland areas. A small area of a work pad within the existing ROW will include the temporary placement of matting in 806 square feet of one emergent wetland, and a temporary access road will require matting in 85 square feet of another emergent wetland. No other part of the Project would impact surface waters or wetlands. Twelve temporary pull pads will be required to string conductors on poles, with five of these pull pads within the existing ROW and seven just outside and adjacent to the existing ROW; all pull pads will be located on previously disturbed land. In addition, approximately 0.09 acre of trees would be trimmed or removed for slight deviations from the centerline (no more than a few feet) that are adjacent to wooded areas. The general construction process would entail erosion and sediment control installation, crane pad grading, foundation installation, structure assembly and erection, conductor/wire installation, and restoration once construction is completed. Construction is anticipated to begin September 29, 2025, and end in September 2026.

LPO's review of the Project in accordance with the Endangered Species Act determined that the Project *may affect, is not likely to adversely affect* the endangered Indiana bat, and would have *no effect* on the endangered clubshell and rayed bean, proposed endangered salamander mussel, proposed threatened monarch butterfly, and experimental population (non-essential) of whooping crane. The USFWS concurred with LPO's Indiana bat determination on August 11, 2025. As part of this concurrence, AEP has committed to cut trees ≥ 3 inches diameter at breast height only between October 1 and March 31.



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In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, LPO consulted with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Ohio SHPO concurred with LPO's finding of no historic properties affected for this Project on August 29, 2025. LPO identified and contacted ten (10) federally recognized Native American Indian Tribes (Tribes) that may have an interest in the Project area: Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma; Hannahville Indian Community, Michigan; Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Michigan; Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomis Indians of Michigan; Miami Tribe of Oklahoma; Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma; Seneca Nation of Indians; Seneca-Cayuga Nation; Shawnee Tribe; and Wyandotte Nation. On August 26, 2025, the Shawnee Tribe responded that they have no comments or concerns with the Project. In the event of a post-review unanticipated discovery of cultural resources and/or human remains during construction, LPO will determine actions to resolve adverse effects and notify the SHPO, any Tribe that might attach religious and cultural significance to the affected property, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) within 48 hours of the discovery, pursuant to 36 CFR 800.13(b)(3).

The Project does not cross any 100-year floodplains mapped by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service determined the Project is not subject to the Farmland Protection Policy Act.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B4.13 - Upgrading and rebuilding existing powerlines

B4.12 - Construction of powerlines

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Description:

B4.13 Upgrading and Rebuilding Existing Powerlines: Upgrading or rebuilding existing electric powerlines, which may involve relocations of small segments of the powerlines within an existing powerline right-of-way or within otherwise previously disturbed or developed lands (as discussed at 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(1)). Upgrading or rebuilding existing electric powerlines also may involve widening an existing powerline right-of-way to meet current electrical standards if the widening remains within previously disturbed or developed lands and only extends into a small area beyond such as lands as needed to comply with applicable electrical standards. Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements, including the integral elements listed at the start of appendix B of this part; and would incorporate appropriate design and construction standards, control technologies, and best management practices. This exclusion does not apply to underwater powerlines. As used in this categorical exclusion, "small" has the meaning discussed at 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(2).

B4.12 Construction of Powerlines: Construction of electric powerlines approximately 10 miles in length or less, or approximately 20 miles in length or less within previously disturbed or developed powerline or pipeline rights-of-way.

For the DOE procedures regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see [10 CFR 1021.102](#) and Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, and also Section 5.4 (Applying one or more categorical exclusions to a proposal) and Appendices B and C of [DOE's National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures](#) (June 30, 2025).

Requirements and guidance in 10 CFR 1021.102 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures: (See full text in regulation and in Implementing Procedures)

- ☒ The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B and C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures.



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- ☒ There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. DOE or an applicant may modify the proposal to avoid reasonably foreseeable adverse significant effects such that the categorical exclusion would apply.
- ☒ The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

[Note: For proposals that fit within the categorical exclusions listed in Appendix C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, see DOE's notice of adoption for the subject Appendix C categorical exclusion for additional considerations. DOE notices of adoption for other agency categorical exclusions may be found on [DOE's Section 109 webpage](#).]

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other requirements and guidance set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Corporate Validation:

Name and Title (Print): Chris Long – Environmental Director

Signature:

Date:

9/8/2025

Signature:

Date Determined:

9/9/2025

Name and Title (Print): Todd Stribley, Director, Environmental Compliance
Loan Programs Office