



U.S. Department of Energy

Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Categorical Exclusion Number:	CX-270846
Loan Application Number:	EIR0044
Proposed Action Title:	Phenix City DS – 115kV Electrical Transmission Line Upgrades
Program of Field Office:	Loan Programs Office
Location(s) (City/County/State):	Russell County, Alabama

Proposed Action Description:

Description of Categorically Excluded Action

The United States Department of Energy (DOE), Loan Programs Office (LPO), may provide loan guarantees for energy infrastructure projects under Section 1706 of Title XVII of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, as amended by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. 16517) and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Pub. L. No. 119-21, 139 Stat. 72 (July 4, 2025)) (the Energy Dominance Financing or EDF Program). The purpose of the EDF Program is to finance projects and facilities in the U.S. that retool, repower, repurpose, or replace energy infrastructure that has ceased operations or enable operating energy infrastructure to increase capacity or output (42 U.S.C. 16517(a)(2) and Pub. L. No. 119-21, 139 Stat. 72 (July 4, 2025)).

LPO is considering whether to issue a loan guarantee of a funding facility to Alabama Power Company (APC) pursuant to its authority under the EDF Program. In its application, APC has identified the Phenix City – 115kV Electrical Transmission Line Project (Project) for inclusion in the funding facility that is the subject of DOE's loan guarantee. APC may request inclusion of multiple individual projects with independent utility in the funding facility that is the subject of the DOE loan guarantee; accordingly, DOE will complete an environmental review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for these projects prior to their inclusion in the funding facility that is the subject of DOE's loan guarantee.

The Project includes upgrading an existing 115kV overhead transmission line. The proposed upgrade will immediately enhance system operational flexibility through incremental transmission capacity, high-speed communication paths (fiber), and system automation, including dispatchable distributed energy sources (DERs). Accordingly, the Proposed Action considered in this record of categorical exclusion is LPO's issuance of Federal financial support for the Project.

Project Description

The Project will upgrade an existing APC 115kV overhead transmission project. The Project is approximately 6,450 feet (1.22 mi) in length and the right-of-way encompasses approximately 3.70 acres. The Project site spans several city streets between 12th Avenue and along 20th Street in Phenix City, Russell County, Alabama. The transmission ROW is within the city road ROW with easements granted to APC; city streets, sidewalks, and stormwater drainage are also located within the ROWs. The transmission ROW width varies but is generally 25 feet or less. The overall site boundary will not increase.

The Project will include the replacement poles in their current footprint as needed with no new ground disturbance. Pole replacement will be installed in the same location as existing ones. Additional mass vegetation removal or ground disturbance outside of the overall site boundary is not anticipated. The Project will also replace the existing conductors with new and larger capacity conductors. Additional electrical equipment and poles will be replaced along the transmission line as necessary during reconductoring.

The Project is scheduled to begin construction on January 5, 2026, with a completion date of May 1, 2026. There are no plans to retire the transmission line in the near future.



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In accordance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, LPO's review of the Project found that the project area does not overlap with designated critical habitat. Additionally, for six Federally threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species with potential to occur in the Project area (alligator snapping turtle, monarch butterfly, Georgia rockcress, relic trillium, whooping crane, tri-colored bat), LPO has reached a *no effect* determination based on: (1) the Project taking place in the existing city and APC ROW; (2) no suitable habitat present, and/or (3) no new ground disturbance.

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), LPO consulted with the Alabama State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). On September 22, 2025, the Alabama SHPO concurred with LPO's finding of no historic properties affected for this project. DOE identified and contacted six federally recognized Native American Indian Tribes (Tribes) that may have an interest in the Project area (Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas; Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town; Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana; Miccosukee Tribe of Indians; Muscogee (Creek) Nation; and Seminole Tribe of Florida).

The Muscogee (Creek) Nation concurred with LPO's finding of no historical properties affected and requested to be notified immediately if artifacts or archaeological features are encountered during project activities. If archaeological materials are encountered during construction, the procedures at 36 CFR 800.13(b) would apply and DOE or the applicant would notify the SHPO and tribes immediately. If human remains are encountered during construction, the provisions of the Alabama Burial Act (Code of Alabama 1975 §13A-7-23.1, as amended; Alabama Historical Commission Administrative Code Chapter 460-X-10 Burials) would be followed. This stipulation is included in the construction plans.

No potential jurisdictional wetlands are located on the project ROW; however, two (2) potentially jurisdictional streams flow across and adjacent to the proposed project ROW. Stream 1 is a probable tributary to Mill Creek, while Stream 2, the Chattahoochee River is located on the eastern boundary of the project. Due to no additional disturbance to land, wetlands or streams will not be impacted, nor subject to regulated activity from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). No effects to floodplains will occur as a result of the project either.

No additional permits or authorization must be obtained prior to construction.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B4.6 - Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Categorical Exclusion(s) Description:

The Project is consistent with and covered by DOE categorical exclusions in 10 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1021, Appendix B4, Categorical Exclusions Applicable to Electric Power and Transmission. Specifically, the Project is covered by DOE Categorical Exclusion B4.13 Upgrading and Rebuilding Existing Powerlines.

B4.6 Additions and Modifications to Transmission Facilities

Additions or modifications to electric power transmission facilities within a previously disturbed or developed facility area. Covered activities include, but are not limited to, switchyard rock grounding upgrades, secondary containment projects, paving projects, seismic upgrading, tower modifications, load shaping projects (such as reducing energy use during periods of peak demand), changing insulators, and replacement of poles, circuit breakers, conductors, transformers, and crossarms. (See B4.14 of this appendix for energy storage systems.)

Per 10 CFR 1021.102, application of categorical exclusions (classes of actions that normally do not require EAs or EISs), the following clarifications are provided to assist in the appropriate application of categorical exclusions that employ the terms or phrases "previously disturbed or developed" and "small" or "small- scale":

- (1) "Previously disturbed or developed" refers to land that has been changed such that its functioning ecological processes have been and remain altered by human activity. The phrase encompasses areas that have been



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transformed from natural cover to nonnative species or a managed state, including, but not limited to, utility and electric power transmission corridors and rights-of-way, and other areas where active utilities and currently used roads are readily available.

- (2) DOE considers terms such as “small” and “small-scale” in the context of the particular proposal, including its proposed location. In assessing whether a proposed action is small, in addition to the actual magnitude of the proposal, DOE considers factors such as industry norms, the relationship of the proposed action to similar types of development in the vicinity of the proposed action, and expected outputs of emissions or waste. When considering the physical size of a proposed facility, for example, DOE would review the surrounding land uses, the scale of the proposed facility relative to existing development, and the capacity of existing roads and other infrastructure to support the proposed action.

Regulatory Requirements Defined in 10 CFR § 1021

The proposed loan guarantee for actions described above was subjected to an environmental due diligence review by DOE LPO staff to ensure consistency with the specific category of action (categorical exclusion) contained in Appendix B of 10 CFR Part 1021 and the conditions for applying categorical exclusions specified in Section 102 of Part 1021. To ensure that the requirements of Appendix B were met, LPO Environmental Compliance obtained numerous project-related documents between March and September 2025 and participated in several conference calls with APC staff to ensure a complete understanding of the activities associated with the Project.

The environmental due diligence review determined that there is no controversy regarding the potential environmental impacts of the Project, and that the actions associated with the loan guarantee would not adversely affect any physical, biological, or socio-cultural resources associated with the deployment of the project. The environmental due diligence review determined the Proposed Action has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Signature by APC’s designated representative in the Corporate Validation section (below) is an indication of APC’s concurrence with the findings and determinations presented herein.

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.
- ☒ 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.



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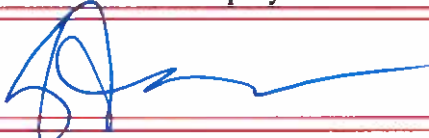
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Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other requirements and guidance set forth above are met, and the proposed action is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

Corporate Validation:

Comments: _____

Applicant Signatory: Stacey Turner
Vice President, Environmental Affairs
Alabama Power Company

Signature: 

Date: 10-20-25

DOE Signatory: Todd Stribley
Director, Environmental Compliance
DOE Loan Programs Office

Signature: _____

Date Determined: 10/21/2025