

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: 2026 Rate Adjustment Pacific Alternating Current Intertie Point-to-Point Transmission Service, Rate Order No. WAPA-211

Project No.: N/A

Project Managers: Padmini Palwe, Power Marketing Manager; Autumn Wolfe, SN Rates Manager

Location: Northern California

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from 10 CFR 1021, Appendix B): B4.3 Electric Power Marketing Rate Changes

Description of the Proposed Action:

Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region (WAPA) proposes to adjust the formula rates for point-to-point transmission service on the Pacific Alternating Current Intertie (PACI). There are no changes from the existing formula rates, and there are no material changes aside from updating the effective dates. The formula rates will be effective April 1, 2026 through March 31, 2031, or until superseded, pending confirmation and approval by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC).

WAPA published a Federal Register notice on April 23, 2025, proposing new long-term formula rates for PACI point-to-point transmission service, and initiating a 90-day public consultation and comment period. During the 90-day consultation and comment period, which included direct outreach, public information and comment forums, and a public website, WAPA received no oral comment submissions and no written comment letters. The public comment period ended on July 22, 2025.

Actions taken by WAPA related to the rate adjustment are primarily administrative. All generation projects would operate within normal operating limits and consistently with environmental laws and regulations.

Findings:

In accordance with the requirements and guidance in 10 CFR 1021.102 and Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Procedures, WAPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021 (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.

Signed:

Name: Kristen Dalldorf

Title: Environmental Manager

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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed project area is in northern California, with customers across the state of California.

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

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or changes to existing structures and landscapes. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, there is no impact to historic and cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or potential for erosion, landslides, or other related impacts. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, there is no impact to geology and soils.

3. Plants

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

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or vegetation removal or alteration. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, there is no impact to plants.

4. Wildlife

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

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or potential to cause impacts to special-status species and habitats. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. For these reasons, there is no impact to wildlife.

5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish

(including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in potential to cause impacts to water bodies, floodplains, and fish. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period.

6. Wetlands

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to wetlands. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to groundwater or aquifers. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in potential to cause impacts to land use. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

9. Visual Quality

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to visual resources. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

10. Air Quality

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to air quality. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

11. Noise

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or noise. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

12. Human Health and Safety

Explanation:

The proposed action involves administrative, strategic and financial activities to recover WAPA costs for power and transmission products and services and would not result in ground disturbing activities or impacts to human health or safety. Generation would continue to operate within normal operating limits during the rate period. No impacts would occur.

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: None provided

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: None provided

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: None provided

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 1021, Appendix B

Explanation, if necessary: None provided

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 conducted public information forums and no comments from the public were received. Proposed action is under existing contracts with directly affected property owners and agencies.

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

Signed:

Name: Kristen Dalldorf

Title: Environmental Manager