



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

<u>Categorical Exclusion Number:</u>	CX-270850
<u>Loan Application Number:</u>	EIR0045
<u>Proposed Action Title:</u>	Arkwright-South Macon (Black) 115 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project
<u>Program of Field Office:</u>	Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF)
<u>Location(s) (City/County/State):</u>	Bibb and Jones Counties, Georgia

Proposed Action Description:

Description of Categorically Excluded Action

The United States Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF) (formerly the Loan Programs Office [LPO]) and Georgia Power Company (GPC) have executed a loan guarantee agreement (LGA) of a funding facility pursuant to DOE’s authority 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). EDF is considering whether to include the Arkwright-South Macon (Black) 115 kV Transmission Line Rebuild project (Arkwright-South Macon Project or Project), in Bibb and Jones Counties, Georgia, in the funding facility.

The Project is needed to maintain efficient and dependable power flow on the grid. Accordingly, the Proposed Action considered in this record of categorical exclusion is EDF’s Federal financial support (i.e. inclusion in the funding facility) for the Arkwright-South Macon Project.

Project Description

GPC proposes rebuilding an approximately 11.8-mile-long segment of the existing Arkwright-South Macon 115 kV transmission line, which may include the replacement of individual components such as conductors and/or the replacement of transmission structures. The southern end of the Project is located within Bibb County, Georgia, approximately 1.0 miles south of downtown Macon, and the northern end is located within Jones County, approximately 5.6 miles northwest of the city of Macon, Georgia. The project will enable the transmission line to operate more efficiently by reducing energy losses.

Limited ground disturbance is associated with the Arkwright-South Macon Project that is the subject of EDF’s Federal financial support. The Arkwright-South Macon Project is limited to the replacement of individual components, transmission structures, and associated poles. As such, new ground may be disturbed to erect new poles next to the existing ones to be replaced. The replaced poles will then be removed and the ground will be stabilized following removal with permanent vegetation suitable for this area of the State of Georgia and the time of year when planting will occur. No additional right-of-way would be needed for the transmission line rebuild.

The Project’s right-of way (ROW) width generally varies between 40 to 200 meters (131.2 to 656.2 feet) wide along the length of the 11.8-mile-long route, with some narrow portions measuring between 5 to 35 meters (16.4 to 147.6 feet) wide.

Depending on availability, the Project will either use a graveled laydown yard at Georgia Power’s former Plant Arkwright facility in Bibb County or lease a previously used graveled laydown yard in Jones County for material and equipment staging. These areas are located outside of the transmission line right-of-way and will be accessed



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via existing paved county roadways. No new ground disturbance outside of the existing transmission line right-of-way and previously disturbed areas is planned.

The Project transmission line rebuild activities would be constructed in two phases. Phase 1 – structures 15 to 35 are anticipated to begin rebuild activities in late February 2028 and would be completed in late May 2028. Phase 2 – structures 35A to 83 are anticipated to begin rebuild activities in September 2028 and would be completed in November 2028. The transmission line is expected to operate for an additional 40 years.

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA), EDF's review of the Project found that there would be *no effect* on the six federally listed species within the project vicinity because there would be no ground-disturbing activities as part of EDF's Proposed Action (beyond pole replacement) and because the project will avoid suitable habitat for these species. The Ocmulgee River is listed as critical habitat for the Atlantic sturgeon and will not be impacted by the Project. No other critical habitat has been designated within the project area. USFWS does not consult on a *no effect* determination.

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), EDF consulted with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). As part of the Section 106 identification process, the Applicant prepared two cultural resource survey reports which were provided to the SHPO: one report for the portion of the Project located on private land, and a separate report for the portion of the Project located on U.S. National Park Service (NPS) lands at the Ocmulgee Mounds National Historical Park. Based on these reports and desktop research, the Georgia SHPO concurred with EDF's Finding of No Adverse Effect for this project on October 10, 2025.

DOE contacted the U.S. NPS on October 2, 2025, and invited the U.S. NPS to consult under Section 106 of the NHPA. Due to the government shutdown and questions and comments from NPS, the consultation was not concluded until March 24, 2026. DOE concluded the Section 106 consultation with a finding of No Adverse Effect.

In addition, DOE identified and contacted eleven (11) 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; Kialegee Tribal Town; Miccosukee Tribe of Indians; Muscogee (Creek) Nation; Poarch Band of Creek Indians; Seminole Tribe of Florida; Seminole Nation of Oklahoma; Thlopthlocco Tribal Town, and United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians in Oklahoma). No response was received from any of the Tribes contacted. In the case of an inadvertent discovery during the course of the Project, GPC will halt all project activities in the area of the discovery, and DOE and GPC will contact the Tribes for further consultation if the inadvertent discovery includes items of cultural significance.

There are 34 streams in the project area – 8 ephemeral streams, 12 jurisdictional intermittent streams and 14 jurisdictional perennial streams. A total of 36 State Waters (including the 26 jurisdictional streams) were identified within the survey area. Approximately 65.6 acres of the Arkwright-South Macon (Black) Transmission Line Rebuild Project (Project) is located in a regulatory floodway, designated as a Special Flood Hazard Area (Zone AE) in Bibb and Jones Counties, Georgia. Accordingly, on October 8, 2025, DOE published a Notice of Floodplain Action for a 15-day public comment period. Additionally, EDF notified relevant county and Federal emergency management departments and Tribes with a known interest in the project area. No comments were received.

New structure placement will meet local and federal floodplain management requirements. The new structures will be designed to not affect base flood elevations. Work areas will be temporary and will not require modifications to



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site elevations. Temporary erosion controls will be installed and maintained until the work areas are restored and stabilized. Base flood elevations will not be affected by the Project.

The Project qualifies for coverage under U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Nationwide Permit 3 (Maintenance) for maintenance of the existing transmission line. Of the 81 structures to be replaced, 18 are within a jurisdictional wetland and will require U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting per Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. GPC will obtain coverage under the USACE Nationwide Permit 3 (NWP 3) for maintenance activities associated with replacing the 18 structures located in jurisdictional wetlands. Prior authorization from USACE, via the use of an existing NWP, will be obtained, as applicable.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B4.13 - Upgrading and rebuilding existing powerlines

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:

B4.13 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).

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 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*



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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 EDF 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, EDF Environmental Compliance obtained numerous project-related documents between March 2025 and March 2026 and participated in meetings with GPC 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 GPC's designated representative in the Corporate Validation section (below) is an indication of GPC'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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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): Jennifer McNelly, Vice President,
Environmental Affairs, GPC

Signature: 

Date: April 1, 2026

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Name and Title (Print): Todd Stribley, Director, Environmental
Programs, EDF

Signature: 

Date: April 1, 2026