



# Categorical Exclusion Determination

## Western Area Power Administration

### U.S. Department of Energy



<b><u>Proposed Action Title:</u></b>	2025 Path 15 Access Road Repairs
<b><u>WAPA Region:</u></b>	Sierra Nevada Region
<b><u>Location (County/State):</u></b>	Merced and Fresno Counties, California
<b><u>CX Determination Number:</u></b>	2026-SNR-002
<b><u>CX Determination Expiration Date*:</u></b>	December 31, 2026

*\*CX is valid until the date above (no longer than five years from when document was signed) or completion of work started prior to the expiration of the CX Determination, unless there are substantial changes to the scope of work, location, or applicable regulations. If such changes occur prior to the expiration of the CX, the Region Environmental Program will review the analysis to ensure the CX is still applicable.*

### **Proposed Action Description:**

The project involves grading 11.35 miles of existing access roads along WAPA’s Path 15 transmission line where they have become rough or developed rills or gullies in the roadway. Typical equipment for the project includes one road grader, one excavator, one dump truck, one small tractor with front-end loader and box grader attachment, one roller, water trucks, and a trailer to haul equipment. One to three heavy-duty pickup trucks for construction crew are typically on scene as well. Road work is to be performed within WAPA’s existing 30’ right-of-way for access roads.

Two staging areas are proposed for use, each estimated as approximately a 30’ radius circle, adjacent to established ranch roads in areas which are moderately disturbed by ranch traffic. These sites are within WAPA’s right-of-way.

The entire project is expected to be completed in one week in the first half of 2026. No permanent environmental impacts are expected from the project, as even the severely gullied sites will be recontoured to approximate the original grade.

### **Environmental Requirements during Project Implementation:**

- A paleontological monitor will be on site during construction
- Standard Operating Procedures and Conservation Measures from the USFWS consultation would apply. A biological monitor will be on site and will ensure compliance with terms of the USFWS informal consultation.
- The project will comply with San Joaquin Valley air quality SOPs:
  - AQ-SOP-1: The contractor will adhere to all applicable requirements of those agencies having jurisdiction over air quality matters, and any necessary permits for O&M will be obtained.
  - AQ-SOP-2: Machinery and vehicles will be kept in good operating condition and older equipment will be replaced with equipment meeting applicable emission standards; appropriate emissions-control equipment will be maintained for vehicles and



equipment, per Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and/or WAPA air-emission requirements.

- AQ-SOP-3: Idle equipment will be shut down when not in active use; visible emissions from stationary generators will be controlled.
- AQ-SOP-7: Major operations will be avoided on days when the local Air Quality Index is expected to exceed 150.

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**Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied (Number and Title):**

B1.3 Routine maintenance

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**Findings:**

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](#) (Jun. 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 or 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. Additionally, for CXs adopted pursuant to NEPA Section 109 (see DNIP, Appendix C), the originating Federal agency's integral elements or extraordinary circumstances must be in accordance with the applicable requirements.*

- 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](#).]***



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**Determination:**

Based on my review of the proposed action, 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.

WAPA Authorized Official Signature:

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Title: Sierra Nevada Regional Manager