



Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration

U.S. Department of Energy



Proposed Action Title:	Gila-Sonora 69-kV Underground Duct Bank Crossing
WAPA Region:	Desert Southwest Region (DSW)
Location (County/State):	Yuma County, Arizona
CX Determination Number:	2026-DSW-004
CX Determination Expiration Date*:	6/15/2031

**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:

BrightNight, LLC (Yuma BN, LLC) is constructing a 9-mile 230-kilovolt (kV) transmission line from their Sidewinder Substation to the existing Arizona Public Service Orchard Substation in Yuma, Arizona. The new 230-kV line will follow Western Area Power Administration's (WAPA) existing Gila-Sonora 69-kV Transmission Line. To accommodate the new 230-kV line crossings, Yuma BN, LLC would install six underground double circuit 230-kV duct banks crossing at the existing Gila-Sonora 69-kV Transmission Line between structures 10-1 to 10-3, and 11-11 to 11-12 near South Avenue 4 East and Arizona State Route 195 in Section 7, Township 10 South, Range 22 West. A WAPA inspector will be onsite to provide daily hot line orders for safety during construction. WAPA anticipates construction will occur between July to October 2026.

Equipment may include rubber and/or tracked backhoe and trencher, dump and concrete trucks for backfill (trucks, compactors, and various concrete settling tools if necessary), and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) conduit handling trucks. For the installation of the concrete duct bank, Yuma BN, LLC will excavate, stage, transport, and slurry backfill. For installation of the PVC conduits Yuma BN, LLC will utilize bending machines or benders to shape conduits for bends or stub-ups. Conduit cutters may be used for cutting at joints of splice points. Additionally, Yuma BN, LLC will grade and compact the surface ground. WAPA and Yuma BN, LLC will access the project area using existing right-of-way access roads. WAPA anticipates issuing a crossing license agreement with Yuma BN, LLC for the transmission line crossing.

Environmental Requirements during Project Implementation:

- If the scope of work of this project changes, DSW's Environmental Department must be contacted to determine whether additional environmental review is required.
- Any injured or orphaned birds and all observed active nests must be immediately reported to DSW Environmental. Any dead birds must be reported to DSW Environmental within twenty-four (24) hours of discovery. Additional documentation, such as photographs and GPS coordinates, may be requested to support DSW's reporting requirements to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



- If an inactive or active eagle nest is discovered, DSW Environmental must be notified immediately for further instruction. Work must be avoided within 330 feet of Bald and Golden Eagle nests when inactive and 660 feet when active.
- If any cultural resources are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100 feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, and a DSW Archaeologist must be contacted immediately. Work around the discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by a DSW Archaeologist.
- If any possible human remains are inadvertently discovered during implementation of the proposed action, work within 100 feet of the discovery area must halt immediately, and a DSW Archaeologist must be notified immediately (no later than 24 hours from the time of discovery). A reasonable effort must be made to protect the remains from looting and/or further damage. Work around the discovery must not resume until notification to proceed is provided by a DSW Archaeologist.

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

B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

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](#).]

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:

SCOTT
LUND

Digitally signed by
SCOTT LUND
Date: 2026.06.30
11:23:11 -07'00'

Scott R. Lund
Senior Vice President and
Desert Southwest Regional Manager