

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Installation of Metering Equipment near North Bench and Bonners Ferry Substations

Project Numbers: LURR20160038 and LURR20160040

Project Manager: Gary Wilson, TERR-BELL-3

Location: Boundary County, Idaho

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to allow Northern Lights, Inc. to install metering equipment on concrete pads adjacent to the North Bench and Bonners Ferry substations. The concrete pads (approximately 1 ft. x 4 ft. x 15 ft.) would be located outside of the BPA substation fences, but on BPA fee-owned property. At the North Bench Substation, the equipment pad would be installed to the west of the substation, situated between a small stand of trees and the gravel from the substation yard. An underground conduit line (approximately 200 feet in length, 36 inches below grade and no more than two-feet wide), would be trenched from the Northern Lights' equipment into the substation bus through the gravel substation yard. At the Bonners Ferry Substation, the equipment pad would be installed east of the substation and the access road, under existing Northern Lights, Inc. transmission lines. No conduit trenching would be required for Bonners Ferry, and no grading would be required at either site. Furthermore, no trees would be removed or damaged as a result of these projects.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (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, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

David Evans and Associates

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 1, 2016

Attachment(s): 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 to environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Installation of Metering Equipment near North Bench and Bonners Ferry Substations

Project Site Description

Both proposed projects are located in Boundary County, Idaho near the town of Bonners Ferry. They are approximately four miles apart, and are located on BPA fee-owned property immediately adjacent to the North Bench and Bonners Ferry substations. The substations are located in the Kootenai River Valley, which is predominantly agriculture and urban development. There are no streams within 700 feet and no wetlands within 0.5 mile of either proposed project site. Vegetation at the proposed project locations consist of bracken ferns and grasses.

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 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation concurred with BPA's determination that there would be no historic properties affected as a result of the proposed project on February 25, 2016. Idaho SHPO also concurred with BPA's determination on March 3, 2016. | | |
| 2. Geology and Soils | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> Minimal ground disturbance. All work is occurring within areas previously disturbed due to substation construction, access road installation, and PUD transmission line installation. | | |
| 3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> No special status species present. The small area (less than 0.02 acres) of vegetation to be disturbed as a result of these proposed projects is primarily bracken fern and grasses. The majority of the work would take place on and in gravel substrate. | | |
| 4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> No special status species present. | | |
| 5. Water bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| <u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not have any water bodies, floodplains, or listed fish species. The nearest water body is over 700 feet from each project area. Best management practices (BMPs) would be employed by the contractor to control erosion, sedimentation, and to prevent hazardous material spills. | | |

6. **Wetlands**

Explanation: The project area does not have any wetlands. The nearest wetland is over 0.5 mile away.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**

Explanation: Groundwater and aquifers are deeper than the proposed 36-inch trench. Therefore, the proposed project would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**

Explanation: There would be no permanent changes to land use at this location.

9. **Visual Quality**

Explanation: There would be no visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment.

10. **Air Quality**

Explanation: Small amounts of dust and vehicle emissions due to construction.

11. **Noise**

Explanation: Temporary construction noise during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**

Explanation: No impact.

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:

- 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:

- 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:

- 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: The proposed project areas are located on BPA fee-owned property.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill, ECT-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
David Evans and Associates

Date: April 1, 2016