

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Airport Road Substation Interconnection on Albany-Lebanon Transmission Line

Project No: L0346

Project Manager: Kelly Gardner, TEP-TPP-1

Location: Linn County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to approve a Consumers Power Incorporated (CPI) line and load interconnection request near Lebanon, Oregon. CPI would like to connect their new Airport Road Substation (currently under construction) to the BPA Albany-Lebanon No. 1 transmission line, to better serve the expanding load growth in area.

North of Airport Road, BPA would replace an existing 60 ft. tall, single-circuit 115-kV H-frame wood two-pole structure (12/5) with a new dead-end 70 ft. tall H-frame wood pole structure, positioned approximately 60 ft. southeast of its current location. BPA would also construct a load-break disconnect switch (S-2) on a horizontal mount platform adjacent to the new 12/5 structure location.

South of Airport Road, on CPI's substation property and within the yet-to-be-built substation fence, BPA would install metering equipment inside the control house and construct a 115-kV dead-end steel structure on top of CPI-installed footings or concrete pad and one load-break disconnect switch (S-1). No BPA ground disturbance would occur south of Airport Road on CPI property.

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

Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 09, 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 on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Airport Road Substation Interconnection on Albany-Lebanon Transmission Line

Project Site Description

The project area is located approximately one mile west of Lebanon, Oregon in the mid-Willamette Valley of western Oregon. The mid-Willamette Valley, and Linn County in particular, is recognized as a global producer of grass seed. As such, the region is dominated by expansive agriculture croplands for grass and hay production. Rural residences and livestock pastures are also common in the area.

The 0.7-acre project area is a flat, open field bisected by a wire livestock fence running along a north-south property boundary line. The project area seems to be used for livestock grazing and cultivation of grass/hay crops. A drainage ditch and Airport Road are located to the south of the project area; barns, pasture and a residence are located to the west; a small (less than 100) monoculture stand of young pine trees, barns, and a residence are located to the north; a gravel driveway, pastures, and open fields are located to the east.

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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA initiated Section 106 consultation on January 15, 2016, with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).</p> <p>On May 3, 2016, the BPA archaeologist determined that no adverse effects to historic properties were expected to occur as a result of the proposed undertaking.</p> <p>Oregon SHPO concurred with BPA's determination of effects on May 10, 2016. No response was received from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde.</p> <p>Should cultural deposits be encountered during construction activities, work shall halt immediately, and the BPA archaeologist should be notified and suitable action taken.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The project area and surrounding areas are flat and contain Clackamas variant silt loam soil, which is a non-hydric soil with hydric inclusions. Best management practices would be implemented to avoid or minimize erosion or sedimentation in the adjacent roadside drainage ditch.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No special-status species are present in the project area. There is evidence that the project area has been mowed, graded, and cleared of vegetation multiple times since 2005. Current land uses seem to be livestock pasture and cultivation of grass/hay crops. Primarily non-native naturalized grasses such as meadow foxtail and tall fescue are present.</p>		

Federally-listed Kincaid's lupine, golden paintbrush, and Bradshaw's lomatium have been documented 1.5, 1.8, and 3.7 miles, respectively, away from the project area, but were not observed within the project area.

4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: No special-status species are present in the project area. While the streaked horned lark, a federally-threatened species, was observed approximately 3 miles west of the project area in 1996, the project area does not contain suitable streaked horned lark habitat.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: Three water bodies have been designated as freshwater critical habitat within 5 miles of the project area (Albany-Santiam Canal, South Santiam River, and Hamilton Creek). However, all three water bodies are greater than 2 miles east of the project area. Chinook salmon and steelhead may occur in these water bodies, but they would not be impacted as a result of this project due to the relative distance between their habitat and the project area.

The project area is approximately 200 ft. northeast of a Federal Emergency Management Agency Q3-designated floodplain associated with Oak Creek. Best management practices would be used to avoid erosion of soils into this floodplain during construction activities.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: BPA staff identified one palustrine, emergent wetland within the proposed project area during a wetland delineation on February 12, 2016. The proposed project is expected to generate approximately 25 cubic yards of total fill and removal in less than 0.1 acre.

The Oregon Removal-Fill Law typically requires permits for projects involving 50 cubic yards or more of alteration of streambed, streambanks, or wetlands. Therefore, the project as proposed would not require a removal-fill permit from Oregon Department of State Lands.

Section 404 of Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States (e.g., wetlands) without first receiving authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Actions related to utility lines that result in less than 0.5 acre of fill in wetlands are generally authorized under the USACE's Nationwide Permit 12. Furthermore, actions resulting in less than 0.1 acre of fill in wetlands do not require submittal of a pre-construction notification to the USACE.

A formal wetland delineation report was submitted to BPA on April 5, 2016.

If construction activities take place between October 1 and May 31, and soggy soil cannot support construction vehicles and equipment such that ruts 3 inches or greater would be created, then wetland mats or other best management practices would be required.

If construction activities take place between June 1 and September 30, and the soil is firm enough to prevent ruts 3 inches or deeper, then wetland mats would not be required.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: All proposed ground disturbance activities are not expected to impact groundwater resources in the region. The nearest EPA Region 10 sole source aquifer is over 75 miles away.

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



Explanation: No change to current land use is expected as a result of this proposed project. CPI purchased the open, flat pasture south of Airport Road for the purposes of constructing a substation.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: North of Airport Road, the existing 60 ft. tall 12/5 two-wood pole H-frame structure would be replaced with a 70 ft. tall wood pole H-frame structure. While the replacement structure would be 10 ft. taller, this additional height would not create significant visual quality impacts to the surrounding area.

The new switch (18 ft. tall by 24 ft. wide by 6 ft. long) to be located adjacent to the new structure 12/5 (S-2) would present a noticeable difference to the property and would be visible from Airport Road. While the new switch would be noticeable, it would not create significant visual quality impacts to the surrounding area.

South of Airport Road inside the CPI substation, the new BPA metering equipment, the new 115-kV dead end steel structure, and the load-break disconnect switch (S-1) would not present a noticeable visible difference to the area. This BPA equipment would be contained within the new substation yard and would be surrounded by large amounts of CPI substation equipment.

10. **Air Quality**



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

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise from the replacement structure, new drop switch near 12/5, and newly-installed equipment inside the new Airport Road substation would not be noticeably different from the current ambient noise levels.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impact to human health or safety.

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: BPA is coordinating with with two private landowners north of Airport Road and CPI for project activities south of Airport Road.

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

Contract Environmental Protection Specialist

Flux Resources, LLC

Date: August 09, 2016