

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Silver Bow Bypass

PP&A No.: 4146

Project Manager: Cynthia Rounds – TEPL-TPP-1, John Roeder TEPS-TPP-1

Location: Silver Bow County, Montana

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.10 – Removal of electric transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to bypass and eventually decommission Silver Bow Substation. The proposed project is necessary because the transmission line is being upgraded and the equipment at Silver Bow Substation is no longer compatible with the voltage of the transmission line. Activities associated with the transmission line upgrade were addressed in a previous categorical exclusions (CX), *Anaconda Transformer Installation*, issued April 12, 2019.

Project activities would be completed in three phases, described below:

- Phase 1: A temporary bypass would be constructed inside Silver Bow Substation. Installation of the bypass would require placement of flexible and rigid bus that directly connects the transmission line coming into the substation to the outgoing transmission line. The new bus would bypass the 115-kV breaker, power transformer, station service, and metering inside the station. No ground-disturbing activities would occur during phase 1.
- Phase 2: A permanent bypass would be constructed, eliminating any connection between the transmission line and substation. New line guys would be installed north of structure 13/5 of the Anaconda-Silver Bow line. One new two-pole structure with an adjacent switch stand and jumpers and one three-pole structure with associated line guys would be constructed north of the substation. These structures would connect structure 13/5 of the Anaconda-Silver Bow line to Vigilante Electric Cooperative's line. New overhead ground wire line guys would also be installed west of Silver Bow Substation.
- Phase 3: Silver Bow Substation would be decommissioned. Decommissioning the substation would involve the removal of equipment including the transformer, bus, control house, and all other above-ground electrical equipment. The ground grid, conduit, drainage systems, and all other below-ground equipment would remain retired in place. Footings and the fence would also remain retired in place.

The new line name of Anaconda-Silver Bow No. 1 after completion would be Anaconda-Divide No. 1.

The proposed work would occur on BPA-owned land adjacent to and within Silver Bow Substation. Equipment used to perform this work may include a combination of the following: cranes, dump trucks, bulldozers, backhoes, excavators, and work trucks. All disturbed areas would be restored at the end of the project. Soil displaced by the project would be kept on site, seeded, and mulched at the conclusion of project activities for erosion and sediment control purposes.

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/ Emma Reinemann

Emma Reinemann

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 21, 2019

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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed project would be conducted within the fence and adjacent to Silver Bow Substation on BPA-owned property, located approximately 1 mile southeast of the town of Ramsay, Montana in the BPA Kalispell District. The project area is mostly flat with sparse grassy and shrubby vegetation. Silver Bow Creek is located approximately ¼ mile north of the substation. The land use in the surrounding area is industrial. Silver Bow Substation lies within the Solvay Silver Bow Plant Hazardous Waste Cleanup Site.

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> A cultural survey was performed in the proposed work location. Report findings indicated there would be no adverse effect to historic properties by the undertaking. Montana DAHP concurred with BPA's No Adverse Effect determination for all proposed activities on July 19, 2019.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project area is located within the Solvay Hazardous Waste Cleanup Site. Poles for the new transmission structures would be excavated to a depth of approximately nine feet below ground surface. The waste coordinator for the Solvay Hazardous Waste Cleanup Site was contacted regarding soil management and has requested that spoils be kept on site.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> There are no Federal/state special status species in the project area. The project footprint would be minimized and any disturbed vegetation would be restored after construction is complete.		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The project area does not include habitat for any special-status species. The project is located in an industrial area and any wildlife within the vicinity of the project are accustomed to the operation of a transmission facilities and presence of construction equipment; therefore, wildlife would not be affected by the proposed action.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No in-water work is proposed for this project and there are no floodplains present within the proposed work area. Best management practices would be used during construction to prevent sediment from		

migrating off site during ground-disturbing activities.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are located in the vicinity of the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The proposed activities have no potential to effect groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: No change in land use would occur and project activities would not impact land use. No specially-designated areas were identified within the project limits.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Visual quality would not be substantially impacted by this project. Two new transmission structures would be installed; however, the surrounding area has previously been visually impacted due to the adjacent chemical manufacturing plant and hazardous cleanup site.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions and dust may occur during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Some temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. The operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: During project activity, all standard safety protocols would be followed. A site-specific health and safety plan would be prepared and implemented to address any hazards during the proposed work.

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: NA

- 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: NA

- 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: Silver Bow Substation is located within the Solvay Silver Bow Plant Hazardous Waste Cleanup Site (EPA ID: MTD057558546). The EPA remedial project manager has been contacted regarding the project and did not have concerns regarding the proposed work. It was requested that excess soil generated be redistributed on site. Stormwater BMPs would be implemented to ensure sediment would not migrate off site.

- 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: NA

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: All activities would take place on BPA-owned land.

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

Signed: /s/ Emma Reinemann
Emma Reinemann
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: August 21, 2019