

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Monroe Substation Line Retermination (*Update to previous categorical exclusion issued on August 16, 2017*)

**PP&A No.:** 4339

**Project Manager:** Charla Burke – TEP-TPP-3

**Location:** Snohomish County and Douglas County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to reterminate an existing transmission line and add related equipment at its Monroe Substation in Snohomish County and Chief Joe Substation in Douglas County, Washington. The work is needed to increase operational flexibility, reliability, and capacity of existing transmission lines.

Equipment to be added inside of the yard at Monroe Substation would include a substation dead-end tower, power circuit breakers, disconnect switches, breaker differential relays, instrument transformers, surge arrestors, and utility breakers. Equipment to be removed and replaced with bus pedestals includes a power circuit breaker, disconnect switches, instrument transformers, surge arrestors, and breaker relays. The Chief Joe-Monroe and the Monroe-Custer No. 2 transmission lines would be reterminated including their overhead ground wires. In order to maintain adequate clearance to the new alignment of the transmission lines per Western Electricity Coordinating Council standards, approximately one acre of tall-growing trees would need to be cleared within the BPA-owned right of way (ROW) corridor. Removal of the trees would be done by chainsaw, and crews would enter the ROW on foot. Ground disturbance would not be required for the removal of vegetation.

Equipment to be replaced at Chief Joe Substation inside the control house includes line protection relays and transfer trip.

**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: December 31, 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.

**Proposed Action: Monroe Substation Line Retermination**

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### Project Site Description

The project site is located at BPA’s Monroe Substation in Snohomish County, Washington and Chief Joe Substation in Douglas County, Washington. The project area at Chief Joe Substation is within the control house. The project area at Monroe Substation inside the substation yard consists of the graveled yard, substation equipment, transmission lines, and the control house. The project area of the vegetation management portion of the work outside Monroe Substation is located in a wetland area, with vegetation consisting of spirea, reed canary grass, and some taller growing species including birch and alder.

### Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. <b>Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The proposed action occurs within both of the substation yards and the tree clearing would not result in ground disturbance. Therefore, it was determined that the project would have no potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources.</p>		
2. <b>Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Some soil disturbance would occur within the yard at Monroe Substation for excavation and grading to remove existing equipment footings and install new equipment (total of approximately 665 cubic yards of soil).</p> <p><u>Note:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Erosion and sediment controls would be employed as needed to control run-off and prevent off-site transport of sediment. Soil and concrete would be disposed of in an approved waste management facility.</li> </ul>		
3. <b>Plants</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Trees would be cleared over an about 1 acre area. There would be no additional vegetation removal and no sensitive or Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plant species are located within the project area.</p>		
4. <b>Wildlife</b> (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Oregon spotted frog potential habitat is present in the area that requires vegetation management activities. BPA consulted with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) on potential vegetation management activities, including those activities in the project area, for effects on Oregon spotted frog. FWS issued a biological opinion (01EWF00-2018-F-0790) that addressed vegetation management activities within the project area on August 10, 2018.</p> <p><u>Note:</u></p>		

- Conservation measures outlined in the Biological Opinion for Monroe-Custer Transmission Line Right-of-Way Vegetation Maintenance Project (01EWF00-2018-F-0790) would be adhered to during vegetation management activities.

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



Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains at or near the project sites. No in-water work proposed.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Vegetation management activities would occur within wetlands, but the area would be accessed via foot and no ground disturbance would occur. In those locations where ground disturbance would occur in the substation, erosion and sediment control best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented for ground disturbance activities to ensure the wetlands surrounding the substation would not be impacted.

Note:

- No fill would not be added to and no ground disturbance would occur in wet areas. Crews working within wetlands would access the area by foot.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater proposed. Maximum depth of disturbance would be less than five feet.

Note:

- Spill prevention kits would be present on site.

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



Explanation: There are no specially designated land use areas and the project would be consistent with existing land uses

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project activities would be similar to vegetation management activities already occurring in the surrounding area and consistent with the existing visual character of the right-of-way.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Small amount of dust and vehicle emissions anticipated during construction.

11. **Noise**



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

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impact to human health and 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: 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: NA

- 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

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: All activities would be coordinated with landowners prior to beginning work.

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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: December 31, 2019