

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Verizon North Bonneville Antenna Upgrade Project

Project No.: WO # 00484492

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: Skamania County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Verizon Wireless to perform the following modifications to the existing telecommunications facility located on structure 61/2 of BPA's Knight-Ostrander #1 500-kV transmission line:

- Remove six (6) panel antennas
- Remove three (3) Tower Mounted Amplifiers (TMAs)
- Remove nine (9) remote radio units (RRUs). Six (6) RRUs are located in the cabinet on the ground below the tower and three (3) on located on the tower.
- Install six (6) panel antennas
- Install six (6) RRUs

The height of the tower is approximately 240' and the antennas are located near the top of the tower. Both the new and the old antennas are approximately 12"W x 7"D x 72"L. The RRU's are approximately 15"W x 10"D x 28"L.

The BPA transmission tower where the equipment upgrade would take place is located on lands designated as Urban Areas under the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Management Plan. Additionally, the property is owned by Hood River Sand and Gravel. Access to the project area is currently available via a well maintained gravel road. No improvements or modifications to the existing road would occur as a result of this project.

No ground disturbing activities would occur as a result of this project.

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/ Michael Henjum

Michael Henjum

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 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.

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Project Site Description

Tower 61/2, where the equipment replacements would occur, is located approximately 800' away from BPA's North Bonneville Substation, approximately 1,200' away from the Columbia River, and approximately 5,000' away from the Bonneville Dam. The adjacent land is used as a staging area for aggregates and other materials by the property owner, Hood River Sand and Gravel.

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> This project would use established access roads to access this facility and no ground-disturbing activities are proposed. A BPA historian and cultural staff verified that the small additive features to the transmission tower do not affect the integrity of the tower and there is no potential to affect historic or cultural resources.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbance would occur as a result of this project.		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground disturbing activities would occur as a result of this project; therefore, this project is not anticipated to have impacts to any state or federally protected plant species. Access to the site would occur via an existing gravel road.		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No wildlife habitat exists within the project area. If any active nests are observed on the tower prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No water bodies, floodplains, or other fish habitat exists near the project area.		
6. Wetlands	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No wetlands are present or in close proximity to the project area.		

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No ground disturbance, drilling, or excavation would occur as a result of this project; thus, neither groundwater, nor aquifers, are anticipated to be affected.

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



Explanation: The site is located in a designated Urban Area within the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area (CRGNSA). Urban land use designations are exempt from CRGNSA regulations. The underlying land use would not change as a result of this project.

There would be no change to the land use at the project location, as the proposed action is replacing existing equipment of the same purpose.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The wireless antennas and equipment are consistent with the existing use of the site. Additionally, the relative small size of equipment being upgraded and the distances from which the tower is viewed should not result in a noticeable difference to viewers looking at the site.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: No air quality effects would occur during this equipment replacement project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Installation noise would be minimal, temporary, and occur during daytime hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: There would be 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:

- 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 project area is owned by Hood River Sand and Gravel. Rights to perform this work would be verified by BPA realty specialists prior to project implementation.

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

Signed: /s/ Michael Henjum

Michael Henjum

Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: January 31, 2019