

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Communications Upgrade at Auburn Ridge

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: King County, Washington

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 T-Mobile to upgrade its existing telecommunications facility located on a BPA-owned transmission structure (12/2) on the Tacoma-Covington No. 3 and No. 4 transmission lines in Auburn, Washington. Six existing panel antennas, eighteen existing tower mounted amplifiers, and all existing coaxial cable would be removed from the transmission structure. Three new panel antennas, six new remote radio units, approximately 175 feet of fiber optic cable, and one pendant would then be installed on the structure. To ensure safety, BPA workers and their subcontractors would complete the equipment removal and installation on the transmission structure.

In addition to upgrading equipment on the transmission structure, removal and/or replacement of ground-level telecommunications equipment would occur within T-Mobile's fenced equipment area underneath the transmission structure on privately-owned property within BPA's easement.

The project would not involve any ground excavation or grading and would use established access roads and work areas.

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, Jul. 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

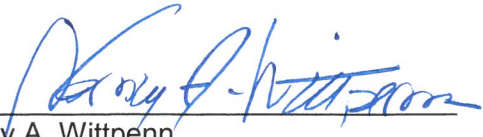
- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:



Nancy A. Wittpenn
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 26, 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: T-Mobile Telecommunications Upgrade at Auburn Ridge

Project Site Description

The project site consists of an existing T-Mobile telecommunications facility located on a 140-foot-tall steel-lattice electrical transmission structure owned by BPA. T-Mobile maintains a fenced, ground-level equipment area underneath the transmission structure on privately-owned property. Access to the site is via an approximately 500-foot-long existing unpaved road that extends west from 112th Avenue SE.

Ground cover within the fenced equipment area consists of a concrete pad and gravel with sparse vegetation. The project site and access road are entirely within a maintained transmission line right-of-way (ROW), where it passes through the yards of multiple residential properties. The ROW contains a mix of low-growing native and non-native herbaceous and shrub species. There are no mapped surface water bodies or wetlands within 300 feet of the 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> BPA historian review found that because there would be no ground disturbance and the additions would be minor additive features to the structure, the project would not adversely impact the integrity of the historic transmission line. BPA has determined that this undertaking has No Potential to Effect historic properties. No further review under the National Historic Preservation Act is required.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Geology and soils within and around the project site were previously disturbed during construction of the transmission structure, T-Mobile's existing communications equipment area, and the access road. Although the proposed project would use established access roads and work areas and would not involve ground excavation, minor soil compaction may occur due to the use of vehicles and heavy equipment around the structure.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No tree or vegetation removal is proposed. Project-related activities (e.g., vehicle and equipment use) could cause disturbance of vegetative cover in small areas. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) near the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.		

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



Explanation: Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during completion of the project. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status or ESA-listed wildlife species or protected species habitat near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species.

If any active nests are found on the transmission structure prior to project implementation, the project would be delayed until the nests become unoccupied.

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



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any mapped water bodies or floodplains, and there are no documented occurrences of any state special-status or ESA-listed fish or fish habitat near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any mapped wetlands. The project would use established access roads and work areas, and would not include ground excavation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project would not involve any ground excavation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change in land use at the project site. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change in visual quality at the project site. The newly installed equipment would be consistent with the existing use of the site as a telecommunications facility.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary and minor dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area from the use of vehicles and equipment during project-related activities. However, there would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Project-related noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. However, there would be no long-term change in operational noise following completion of the project.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project activities.

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 transmission structure is owned by BPA. T-Mobile is responsible for acquiring and maintaining easements for their facilities from underlying landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette

Date: September 27, 2019

W. Walker Stinnette – EC-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT