

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Whatcom PUD Interconnection at Bellingham Substation

Project No.: L0471

Project Manager: John E. Brank, TPCF-OLYMPIA

Location: Whatcom County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.8 Electricity transmission agreements

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to increase loading by up to 35 megawatts (MW) through an existing interconnection at BPA's Bellingham Substation in Bellingham, Whatcom County, Washington (Township 38 North, Range 3 East, Section 9). The Public Utility District No. 1 of Whatcom County (Whatcom PUD) is requesting the increased load to serve one electric retail customer at a nearby refinery. All facilities and equipment required to accommodate the 35 MW load increase would be constructed and owned by Whatcom PUD. BPA would not be required to construct or modify any facilities or equipment.

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

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 not require any on-the-ground work at a project site.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed undertaking would have no potential to affect historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no impact on geology and soils.

3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no impact on water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on protected fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no impact on groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would require no change in land use and would have no impact on any specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not change visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not change air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would not change ambient noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no impact on 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: N/A

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: N/A

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: N/A

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: N/A

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would be required as no on-the-ground work is proposed.

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

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

December 10, 2020

Date