

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Gigapop Lane-Wendson Fiber Optic Connection

Project No.: F0060

Project Manager: James Hall – TPC-TPP-4

Location: Lane County, OR

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B.4.7 Fiber Optic Cable

Description of the Proposed Action: The proposed project would involve the fiber customer, Gigapop, installing their conduit and cable to connect with BPA's Lane-Wendson Dark Fiber Route. BPA would allow the customer to trench approximately 4 feet in depth and about 60 feet in length to install 2 inch conduit in the ground on the north side of Wendson Substation property and to install a 4x4x4 customer vault. BPA and Gigapop would perform the necessary fiber splicing for this connection and BPA would act as a safety watcher while Gigapop is performing splicing work. The site is located in Township 18 South, Range 11 West, Section 16.

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/ Christopher H. Furey
Christopher H. Furey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel December 16, 2021
Sarah T. Biegel Date
NEPA Compliance Officer

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 installation of the fiber optic cable and vault would be on maintained BPA right-of-way and substation property outside the fence line on the north side of Wendson Substation. The project area consists of a portion of the Wendson Substation property and is located in a grass area on the north side of the Wendson Substation that is managed for low-growing vegetation. The surrounding topography consists of rolling and flat areas with some forested area and cleared lands, farmed land, and rural home sites. The project area is about 3.9 miles east of Florence, Oregon. There is marbled murrelet and spotted owl critical habitat located over 5,500 feet east of the project area. A review of the National Wetland Inventory, soil information, topography, and aerial photos did not reveal any wetlands or waterbodies at the site. A freshwater emergent wetland is located about 1,900 feet south of the project site. The Siuslaw River is located approximately 1,350 feet to the south of the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA archaeologist reviewed proposed activities and determined that these activities at the project area for the installation and connection of the underground fiber line and fiber vault would not have the potential to cause effects to historic or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be some soil disturbance for the installation of the underground fiber optic cable and vault. Some digging would be expected for the new underground line and fiber vault installation at a depth of four feet.

Notes:

- Use of BMPs for dust and soil control would be expected to be used. Reseeding of disturbed grass area would be recommended.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be occurring on the north side of the Wendson Substation property that is currently managed for low-growing vegetation with minimal impacts to non-listed plants. There are no listed or special-status plant species present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would be in established BPA right-of-way on the north side of Wendson Substation. Installation of the underground fiber line and fiber vault is expected to occur during daytime hours with no effect to any non-listed, listed, or special-status wildlife species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The nearest waterway is the Siuslaw River located about 1,350 feet south and east of the project area. A freshwater emergent wetland is over 1,900 feet south of the project location. There would be no in-water work occurring and project activities would not be in any river, creek, or wetland area.

Notes:

- Use of BMPs for dust and erosion control would be expected to be used at the project site.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present at the project area. A freshwater emergent wetland exists approximately 1,900 feet south of the project location.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The shallow digging for the project would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no impact to the BPA Wendson Substation land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during installation.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase is expected.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts expected.

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: BPA is the owner of Wendson Substation. The customer would be in coordination with BPA for this project.

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

Signed: /s/ Christopher H. Furey December 16, 2021
Christopher H. Furey Date
Environmental Protection Specialist