

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Tiger Mountain Antenna Upgrade

Project No.: W0906

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TEPF-CSB2

Location: King County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological, and radio towers; B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way; B1.31 Installation or relocation of machinery and equipment.

Description of the Proposed Action: The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow T-Mobile to upgrade the existing wireless antennas at the Tiger Mountain wireless site, located on Structure 4/3 of BPA's Echo Lake-Maple Valley No. 1&2 Transmission Line in King County, Washington. The proposed upgrade would remove six existing antennas on the tower and add three new antennas with associated equipment. On the ground level, new associated telecommunication equipment would be installed in the existing cabinets located on the concrete pad below structure 4/3. T-Mobile also proposes to add a select amount of $\frac{3}{4}$ inch minus rock backfill that would be applied on top of all four structural foundation pads for a maximum of 1 feet deep, 21 feet long, 27 feet wide, and tapered on all ends for a total estimate of 567 cubic square feet per footing for an estimated total of 2,268 cubic square feet for all four footings. BPA is proposing the backfill to pass the structural analysis based on BPA's analysis of the tower with new equipment; the select amount of rock backfill would be applied per BPA construction specification 31.01.10. Equipment used would likely include pickup trucks, a dump truck, a bucket truck, and hand tools.

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/ Syllas Daughtrey
Syllas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah Biegel May 1, 2023
Sarah Biegel Date
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist



NPCE memo

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

All work would occur on and around the surrounding footprint area of Structure 4/3 of BPA's Echo Lake-Maple Valley No. 1&2 transmission line and within the fenced-in T-Mobile telecommunication site in King County, WA. The legal parcel description is Township 23 North, Range 7 East, Section 20. The proposed site of construction has previous ground disturbance, and is located in areas that are graveled, mulched, paved, or have compacted soils. There are no water bodies or wetlands within close proximity to the project location. The T-Mobile telecommunication site is surrounded by undeveloped and harvested timberland.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would not include any ground-disturbing activities that would affect cultural or historic resources. The footprint of BPA's transmission tower structure and the fenced-in area of the T-Mobile transmission facility structure is highly unlikely to have archaeological resources identified in the work area. BPA Historian and Cultural review has shown that the proposed project would have no potential to cause effect to historic properties or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance would occur at the existing communication site. The area of ground-disturbing activities would take place in and around previously-disturbed areas. These previously-disturbed areas include graveled, mulched, paved, and/or compacted soils. The T-Mobile communication site would be returned to pre-project conditions from all disturbed soils surrounding the proposed rock fill construction area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project location would be occurring on the area of BPA's transmission structure and its footprint that is currently managed for low-growing vegetation with minimal impacts to non-listed plants; therefore, there would be no impacts to vegetation, including Federal or state special-status species and/or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federal or state special-status species or habitats at the project site. If any active nests are found on the tower prior to the project activities, the work would be delayed until the nest is unoccupied. The construction and work area is located within well-established areas outside any designated critical habitat. Temporary disturbance to non-sensitive wildlife may occur during work periods, but it is anticipated that wildlife would distribute to adjacent habitats and that noise disturbance would be consistent with ongoing operations of the sites. Proposed construction 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: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish disturbance would occur at the existing communication site as none are present.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands at the existing communication site; therefore, there would be no impacts to wetlands or specially-designated areas.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance is proposed in the construction area; however, the construction area would take place in and around areas with previous ground disturbance. No excavation is proposed; therefore, no disturbance to groundwater and aquifers would take place.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use is proposed; therefore, there would be no impacts to land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be limited visual changes to the project area or surrounding environment; however, no change in the appearance of the telecommunication site is proposed. Therefore, there would be no impacts to visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All applicable safety standards would be followed during project work. The project would not create conditions that would increase risk 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: 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 owns the land where work would occur. T-Mobile would be responsible for coordinating landowner notifications to gain access.

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

Signed: /s/ Sylas Daughtrey May 1, 2023
Sylas Daughtrey Date
Environmental Protection Specialist