

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Webber Canyon Land Purchase

**Project Manager:** Rasha Kroonen - TEPS-TPP-1

**Location:** Benton County, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.24 Property Transfers

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to purchase a portion of a parcel of Washington State-owned land that is managed by the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in rural Benton County, WA, near County Well Road. BPA's Ashe-Marion 500 kilovolt (kV) transmission line runs through the parcel and BPA's acquisition of the parcel would allow BPA to accommodate future development and projects in the area that may need to connect to the existing transmission line. BPA would acquire 187 acres of the 620-acre DNR parcel. BPA will conduct separate environmental analysis for any proposed facility or new construction on the parcel if and when the actions are proposed.

**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.

Douglas Corkran  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
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.

**Proposed Action:** Webber Canyon Land Purchase

## **Project Site Description**

The parcel of land BPA would acquire is in unincorporated Benton County, Washington, where agriculture is the predominant land use. The parcel is currently used for agriculture. The surrounding area is also predominantly agricultural, with most parcels used for dryland wheat farming. The landscape is flat to gently rolling with small, dry drainages interspersed throughout. Vegetation is limited to crops and small areas of weedy vegetation next to roads.

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

## 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The property is currently used for agriculture under a 10-year Washington DNR lease that expires in September 2032. This lease would be vacated during the ownership transfer. Depending on future uses, some, all or none of the parcel could be leased again for agriculture. If no future agricultural leases are issued, the 187 acres would be taken out of agricultural production, but given the 613,562 acres of existing active farmland in the County, removal of this small amount would not appreciably affect the availability of farmland. Therefore, there would be low impacts to Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no effect due to the property purchase, which does not include on-the-ground disturbance. Property acquisition only.

### 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: BPA conducted a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for the Washington Department of Natural Resources which did not reveal any environmental factors that would pose a significant liability for remedial action or cleanup under CERCLA.

**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 has worked with Washington DNR and the lessees have been notified.

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

Signed:

Douglas Corkran  
Environmental Protection Specialist