

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Fiber Installing, Splicing, and Leasing at Existing BPA Facilities – 2025 through 2029

**Project Manager:** Multiple

**Location:** Multiple locations in California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.7 Fiber optic cable

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install new fiber optic cables in existing conduit, splice existing fiber optic cables in or on existing structures, and allow customers to lease excess conduit space or operational fiber on existing BPA fiber optic cables at BPA-owned facilities throughout the BPA service territory in 2025 through 2029. Access to the fiber cables would be gained by splicing into cables or installing new fiber cables in existing conduit located on existing structures or in existing vaults owned by BPA or the customer at the BPA facilities. Ground disturbance, including excavation, would not be permitted.

Each project would be reviewed by the BPA NEPA lead to ensure that the activities fall within the range of those described in this Categorical Exclusion prior to work. Customers would be responsible for complying with applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations for their actions, including for any work off BPA-owned property.

**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.

Jillian Cosgrove  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

CC:

Jillian Cosgrove – ECT-4

Katey Grange – EC-4

Sarah Biegel – EC-4

Official File – EC (EQ-15)

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[https://portal.bud.bpa.gov/orgs/efw/KEC/tsrvcs/Projects/CCX\\_Fiber\\_2025-2029.docx](https://portal.bud.bpa.gov/orgs/efw/KEC/tsrvcs/Projects/CCX_Fiber_2025-2029.docx)

# 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:** Fiber Installing, Splicing, and Leasing at Existing BPA Facilities – 2025 through 2029

## **Project Site Description**

Work would occur on existing BPA-owned transmission line structures, fiber vaults, or conduit. These facilities are typically located adjacent to or within BPA substations or maintenance headquarters. Work would occur within BPA's service territories in California, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA archaeologists and historians reviewed the proposed activities and determined that these types of activities do not have the potential to cause effects to historic properties.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground disturbance would occur. Existing access roads would be used to the extent possible. These types of actions would not impact geology.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would occur on existing structures, in existing vaults, or in existing conduit. No ground disturbance would occur. Standard construction best management practices would be used to minimize the spread of noxious weeds. These types of actions would not impact plants.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from construction noise but would be consistent with other activities occurring in the area. These types of actions would not impact special-status wildlife species and/or their habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance. The work would not involve use of hazardous materials that could contaminate waterbodies or floodplains. These types of actions would not impact water bodies, floodplains, or fish.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance. The work would not involve use of hazardous materials that could contaminate wetlands. These types of actions would not impact wetlands.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no ground disturbance. The work would not involve use of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. These types of actions would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would not involve changes to land use nor specially-designated areas.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would not involve changes to visual quality.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The work would cause a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change to air quality following these types of actions.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment would create noise above current ambient conditions. Noise impacts would be temporary and intermittent and would only occur during daylight hours. There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following these types of actions.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Standard construction best management practices would minimize risk to human health and safety. There would be no long-term change to human health and safety following these types of actions.

### **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: Coordination with underlying or surrounding landowners would be completed by BPA or the customer prior to work starting.

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

Signed:

Jillian Cosgrove  
Environmental Protection Specialist