

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: PGE Reconductor Project Crossing BPA's Keeler-Oregon City-2 on BPA Fee-Owned Right-of-Way

Project No.: LURR 19680131

Project Manager: Darin Smith

Location: Washington County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to authorize Portland General Electric (PGE) access to BPA fee-owned right-of-way (BPA ROW) to reconductor two 230kV PGE overhead conductors which cross over BPA's Keeler-Oregon City No 2 (KEEL-OREC-2) transmission line between structures 19/6 and 19/7. The overhead conductors would be attached to two PGE tower structures, one existing and one new, both of which would be located outside of BPA ROW. Expected equipment within BPA ROW could include trucks, cranes, excavation equipment, and conductor pulling/stringing equipment. The use of stationary equipment in BPA ROW would be minimal and for limited duration (i.e., trucks with telescoping booms positioned with roller guards to protect overhead wires from falling onto BPA transmission lines and adjacent roads during the restringing process). No excavation or new transmission structures would occur within BPA ROW.

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. ¹

¹ BPA is aware of the November 12, 2024, decision in *Marin Audubon Society v. Federal Aviation Administration*, No. 23-1067 (D.C. Cir. Nov. 12, 2024). To the extent that a court may conclude that the Council on Environmental Quality regulations implementing NEPA are not judicially enforceable or binding on this agency action, BPA has nonetheless elected to follow those regulations at 40 Code Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) §§ 1500– 1508, in addition to the US Department of Energy's NEPA implementing procedures at 10 C.F.R. Part § 1021, to meet the agency's obligations under NEPA, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4321 *et seq.*

Justin Olmsted
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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed action would be located in Washington County, Oregon (Township 2 South, Range 1 West, Section 28). The surrounding area is a mix of commercial, industrial and agricultural land, with a private heavy equipment parking on the eastern border of the ROW. The Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge is located 0.25 mile to the west. The section of BPA ROW being accessed by PGE is a flat area with a gentle downward slope northward. The ROW is maintained for low growing vegetation, which is a mix of native and invasive grasses, forbs, and shrubs.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Based on the nature of the undertaking, BPA Cultural Resources Staff has determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that does not have the potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation or grading would take place. Minor and temporary soil compaction and rutting could occur from operating vehicles and heavy equipment in vegetated areas. Temporarily disturbed soils would stabilize as vegetation is re-established. No long term impacts to geology and soils are expected.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would require equipment to be used within BPA fee-owned ROW which would crush or bury low-growing common grasses and shrubs. Disturbed vegetation areas would be reseeded with native seed mix. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

Notes:

- Reseed disturbed areas during the appropriate time period for germination with a native, regionally-appropriate seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary disturbance of normal wildlife behavior and wildlife displacement could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, there would be no permanent impacts to wildlife habitat, and temporarily disturbed or displaced wildlife would likely reoccupy the site following completion of the proposed action. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is located outside of floodplains and away from streams and other water bodies. No impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish would occur.

Notes:

- PGE would not be authorized to use or store hazardous materials or refuel equipment within BPA ROW.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is located in a dry upland area with no wetlands present. No impacts to wetlands would occur.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No ground-disturbing work that could impact groundwater or aquifers would take place. The proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action could briefly impact nearby commercial, industrial, and agricultural land uses within the area due to construction noise and increased construction traffic. The proposed action would be consistent with the current land uses and no permanent changes in land use would occur on BPA ROW. The proposed action would not impact land use or specially-designated areas, including the nearby Tualatin River National Wildlife Refuge.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the presence of construction equipment and reconductoring activities would briefly cause temporary visual impacts. The proposed action would not impact long-term visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would produce minor and temporary dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the use of vehicles and equipment, and the performance of general construction activities would temporarily and intermittently produce noise at levels higher than current ambient conditions. Construction-related noise would be audible from properties located near the transmission line, including commercial, industrial, and residential properties. There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout project construction, and standard construction BMPs would minimize risk to human health and safety. The proposed action 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: The proposed action would occur on existing BPA fee-owned ROW and PGE property. PGE would notify affected property owners as needed.

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

Signed:

Justin Olmsted
Environmental Protection Specialist