

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Addition of Regional Remedial Action Scheme Controllers at Schultz Substation

**Project No.:** P06122

**Project Manager:** Jennifer Bachman, TEPF-CSB-2

**Location:** Kittitas County, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.7 Electronic Equipment

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install regional remedial action scheme (RAS) controllers inside the control house at BPA's Schultz Substation to support several new generation projects in the Mid-Columbia region. The work involves installing two electrical panels and associated controllers and equipment to the interior of the Control House. Future projects would add communication inputs to and outputs from these RAS controllers. Vehicle traffic associated with the project would be limited to existing roads and the substation yard. No ground disturbance would occur.

The Federal Columbia River Transmission System Act directs BPA to construct, acquire, operate, maintain, repair, relocate, and replace the transmission system, including facilities and structures appurtenant thereto. (16 United States Code [U.S.C] § 838i(b)). The Administrator is further charged with maintaining electrical stability and reliability, selling transmission and interconnection services, and providing service to BPA's customers. (16 U.S.C § 838b(b-d)). The Administrator is also authorized to conduct electrical research, development, experimentation, tests, and investigation related to construction, operation, and maintenance of transmission systems and facilities. (16 U.S.C § 838i(b)(3)).

**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.<sup>1</sup>

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Jillian Cosgrove  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

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Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

# 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:** Addition of Regional Remedial Action Scheme Controllers at Schultz Substation

## **Project Site Description**

The project area is located entirely within the control house of the Shultz Substation, owned by BPA in fee. The surrounding area is mostly undeveloped semi-arid land dominated by shrub-steppe vegetation with low density rural residential properties. There are no wetlands nor special-status species or habitats within or near the project area.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA Cultural Resources review on October 22, 2024 found that the proposed project would have no potential to cause effect to historic properties. The Schultz Substation was originally energized in 1992 and does not fall into the period of significance outlined in the BPA Pacific Northwest Transmission System Multiple Property Submission (1938-1974), and as such is not a historic resource. Additionally, the proposed work does not include any ground disturbing activities that would affect subsurface resources.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would take place within the control house of the existing substation and does not include any ground disturbing activities that would affect geology or soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would take place within the control house of the existing substation and does not include any ground disturbing activities that would affect plants, including special-status species and their habitats.

### **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. Work would not occur near known populations of special-status wildlife species nor their habitats. Therefore, the proposed work would have little impact on wildlife.

**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-bearing streams would be present within or near the project area.

**6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would not occur within or near wetlands.

**7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no subsurface work that would reach groundwater or aquifers. The proposed work would not involve use of hazardous substances, so there would be no risk of contaminating groundwater or aquifers.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur on existing BPA facilities and would not involve changes to land use nor specially-designated areas.

**9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would occur within the control house of the existing BPA substation and would not involve changes to visual quality.

**10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed 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 the proposed action.

**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.

**12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Control House was built in 1992 and does not contain lead. Standard construction best management practices would minimize 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: The proposed work would occur entirely on existing BPA fee-owned property and would not require coordination with landowners.

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