

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Grand Coulee Substation Temporary Trailers Project

**Project No.:** P02514

**Project Manager:** Darrell Hackworth - TF-OLYMPIA

**Location:** Grant and Douglas counties, Washington

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.15 Support buildings

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes installing four temporary trailers to provide workspace for BPA substation operators and support staff at Grand Coulee substation facilities. The temporary trailers would be in place for approximately two to three years during the initial phase of the Grand Coulee Switchyard Asset Transition from Bureau of Reclamation to BPA.

Two trailers would be installed on asphalt at the Grand Coulee 230-kV substation yard by semi-truck. The trailers would be connected to an existing water pipe associated with a hydrant located at the boundary of the asphalt and rock substation yard. A vacuum truck would remove about one cubic yard of substation yard rock to access the pipe. The exposed pipe would be connected to above ground piping leading to the trailers. Finally, the removed rock would be replaced. Alternately, the trailers would have self-contained water tanks and would not require a connection to water piping. Each trailer would have its own self-contained waste tanks. Power would be supplied from the existing control house and run above ground with the wire protected by drive-over-plate.

At the 500-kV substation yard, two trailers would be installed on compacted yard rock with the remaining scope of work being the same as described above at the 230-kV substation yard.

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>

Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey C. Grange  
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

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<sup>1</sup> BPA is aware that the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), on February 25, 2025, issued an interim final rule to remove its NEPA implementing regulations at 40 C.F.R. Parts 1500–1508. Based on CEQ guidance, and to promote completion of its NEPA review in a timely manner and without delay, in this CX BPA is voluntarily relying on the CEQ regulations, in addition to DOE's own regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021, to meet its 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:** Grand Coulee Substation Temporary Trailers Project

## **Project Site Description**

The Grand Coulee Substation Temporary Trailers Project would occur at substation facilities associated with the Grand Coulee Dam. The 230-kV substation is located in Grant County, Washington, in Township 28N, Range 30E, Section 2. The 500-kV substation is located in Douglas County, Washington, in Township 29N, Range 30E, Section 34. The substations are generally surrounded by shrub/steppe habitat and basalt outcrops.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA conducted Section 106 consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP) for the proposed actions on February 24, 2025. BPA received concurrence with our determination of no adverse effect from Washington DAHP on March 10, 2025. No other responses were received.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor ground disturbing activities would occur in previously disturbed non-native substation yard rock. Therefore, geology and soils would not be impacted due to the implementation of the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on asphalt or disturbed non-native substation yard rock where plants are not allowed to grow. Therefore, plants would not be impacted due to the implementation of the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have temporary noise and disturbance impacts to locally occurring wildlife related to trailer installation and human presence. There would be no effect to Federal/state special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on asphalt or disturbed non-native substation yard rock in a substation facility. Therefore, water bodies, floodplains, and fish would not be impacted due to the implementation of the proposed action.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on asphalt or disturbed non-native substation yard rock in a substation facility. Therefore, wetlands would not be impacted due to the implementation of the proposed action.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on asphalt or disturbed non-native substation yard rock in a substation facility. Therefore, groundwater and aquifers would not be impacted due to implementation of the proposed action.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would occur on asphalt or disturbed non-native substation yard rock in a substation facility. There would be no change to land use or specially-designated areas resulting from the proposed action.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Trailer installation would have minor impacts to visual quality which would be short-term and consistent with the existing substation facility.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of vehicle emissions would occur during trailer installation. However, there would be no substantial changes to air quality from the use of the temporary trailers.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of temporary noise would occur during trailer installation. However, there would be no substantial changes to the surrounding noise level from the ongoing use of the temporary trailers.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project implementation, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Therefore, implementation of the proposed action would have little to no impact to human health or 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 is coordinating Bureau of Reclamation, and no other landowner coordination is necessary.

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

Signed:

Laura Roberts  
Environmental Protection Specialist