

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY25 Expedited Priority Poles Restricted Construction Method

Project No.: 6736

Project Manager: Amanda Williams, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Multiple counties, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine Maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to replace multiple deteriorating wood pole structures and associated hardware at specific locations in multiple BPA districts. The structures proposed for replacement are listed below in Table 1. For all structures, the work would include removing the existing wood pole structures and replacing them in kind in the same location. Trucks and equipment would be staged in work areas about 50 feet by 50 feet at each of the structure replacement locations. Existing access roads would be used to access the work areas and no additional ground disturbance beyond the existing pole holes is proposed. Digging to level vehicles and equipment would not be allowed. Only rubber tired vehicles would be used, no tracked vehicles would be allowed. A hole may be augered after the original pole is removed in order to allow placement of the new pole. The auger would be roughly the same size as the original pole diameter. No helicopter use would be required. Fire wraps would also be added where appropriate.

Table 1. List of proposed structures to be replaced.

| Maintenance Headquarters | Line Name | Mile | Structure |
|--------------------------|--|------|-----------|
| Bell | Addy-Cusick No 1 | 26 | 7 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 1 | 7 | 6 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 1 | 12 | 8 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 2 | 7 | 8 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 2 | 10 | 2 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 2 | 12 | 4 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 2 | 12 | 7 |
| Bell | Bell-Trentwood No 2 | 12 | 9 |
| Bell | Green Bluff Tap to Bell-Trentwood No 2 | 8 | 2 |
| Bell | Libby-Bonnars Ferry No 1 | 49 | 6 |
| Bell | Sacheen-Albeni Falls No 1 | 2 | 5 |

| Maintenance Headquarters | Line Name | Mile | Structure |
|---------------------------------|---|-------------|------------------|
| Bell | Sacheen-Albeni Falls No 1 | 5 | 4 |
| Bell | Sacheen-Albeni Falls No 1 | 8 | 3 |
| Chehalis | Chehalis-Olympia No 1 | 4 | 4 |
| Chehalis | Chehalis-Olympia No 1 | 17 | 7 |
| Chehalis | Holcomb-Naselle No 1 | 5 | 5 |
| Chehalis | Holcomb-Naselle No 1 | 9 | 1 |
| Chehalis | Holcomb-Naselle No 1 | 11 | 1 |
| Chehalis | Holcomb-Naselle No 1 | 19 | 2 |
| Chehalis | Lexington-Longview No 1 | 7 | 1 |
| Chehalis | Mossyrock-Chehalis No 1 | 10 | 8 |
| Chehalis | Mossyrock-Chehalis No 1 | 15 | 8 |
| Chemawa | Carlton-Tillamook No 1 | 9 | 4 |
| Chemawa | Forest Grove-McMinnville No 1 | 11 | 4 |
| Chemawa | Forest Grove-McMinnville No 1 | 16 | 7 |
| Chemawa | Forest Grove-McMinnville No 1 | 17 | 2 |
| Chemawa | Keeler-Oregon City No 2 | 16 | 7 |
| Chemawa | Timber Tap to Forest Grove-Tillamook No 1 | 11 | 6 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 10 | 9 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 11 | 1 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 15 | 3 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 16 | 5 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 17 | 8 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 17 | 13 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 18 | 5 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 18 | 9 |
| Ellensburg | Grandview-Red Mountain No 1 | 18 | 10 |
| Kalispell | Columbia Falls-Kalispell No 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Kalispell | Libby-Bonnars Ferry No 1 | 11 | 4 |
| North Bend | Fairview-Bandon No 1 | 15 | 2 |
| North Bend | Fairview-Bandon No 1 | 15 | 4 |
| North Bend | Tahkenitch-Reedsport No 1 | 1 | 5 |
| Olympia | Chehalis - Olympia NO. 1 | 21 | 3 |
| Olympia | Chehalis-Olympia No 1 | 24 | 8 |
| Olympia | Chehalis-Olympia No 1 | 26 | 1 |
| Olympia | Fairmount-Port Angeles No 1 | 1 | 11 |
| Olympia | Fairmount-Port Angeles No 1 | 9 | 7 |
| Olympia | Fairmount-Port Angeles No 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Olympia | Fairmount-Port Angeles No 2 | 7 | 4 |
| Olympia | Kitsap-Station X No 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Olympia | Kitsap-Station X No 1 | 2 | 8 |
| Olympia | Olympia-Shelton No 1 | 17 | 6 |
| Olympia | Olympia-Shelton No 1 | 18 | 5 |

| Maintenance Headquarters | Line Name | Mile | Structure |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| Olympia | Olympia-Shelton No 1 | 19 | 1 |
| Olympia | Olympia-South Elma No 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Olympia | Olympia-South Elma No 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Olympia | Port Angeles-Sappho No 1 | 5 | 1 |
| Olympia | Port Angeles-Sappho No 1 | 14 | 1 |
| Olympia | Port Angeles-Sappho No 1 | 14 | 5 |
| Olympia | Port Angeles-Sappho No 1 | 26 | 4 |
| Olympia | Port Angeles-Sappho No 1 | 27 | 2 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 6 | 5 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 11 | 1 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 11 | 3 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 27 | 7 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 41 | 3 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 46 | 9 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 47 | 6 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 47 | 8 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 48 | 2 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 50 | 7 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 50 | 8 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 51 | 4 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 51 | 5 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 53 | 6 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 57 | 8 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 57 | 9 |
| Olympia | Shelton-Fairmount No 2 | 59 | 7 |
| Pasco | Franklin-Walla Walla No 1 | 24 | 3 |
| Pasco | Franklin-Walla Walla No 1 | 25 | 5 |
| Pasco | Franklin-Walla Walla No 1 | 26 | 6 |
| Pasco | Franklin-Walla Walla No 1 | 29 | 4 |
| Pasco | Franklin-Walla Walla No 1 | 35 | 2 |
| Redmond | LaPine-Chiloquin No 1 | 22 | 1 |
| Snohomish | Murray-Custer No 1 | 6 | 2 |

The proposed action would maintain reliable power in the region. All work would be in accordance with the National Electrical Safety Code and BPA standards. 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 review¹.

/s/ Jonnel Deacon

Jonnel Deacon

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: April 7, 2025

Attachment(s): Environmental Checklist

¹ 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.

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Project Site Description

Structures being replaced are in a variety of environments across the northwest. All work would occur within existing, maintained transmission rights-of-way on private and public lands.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA 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: Localized soil disturbance within the previously-excavated hole would occur during wood pole replacement. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal or no disturbance to vegetation is anticipated. If vegetation would be impacted, it would be crushed in place. There would be no effect to ESA-listed plant species. No impacts to state or federally sensitive species are anticipated. Project activities would be limited to the already impacted access road and transmission line right-of-way and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: In general, the project would have a small impact to wildlife and habitat related to temporary disturbance associated with elevated equipment noise and human presence. The project would have no impacts to state or federally listed sensitive species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not impact water bodies that support resident, anadromous, or ESA-listed fish. Erosion control best management practices combined with the distance to the nearest waterbody would ensure that sedimentation would not enter into any water body.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Wetlands are documented within the project area. Structure replacements would occur within wetlands. All wetland impacts would be consistent with the Clean Water Act, Nationwide Permit 57, and would not exceed 1/10 of an acre of permanent impacts. Pole wraps would be installed to prevent wood pole preservative from entering the environment.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No use of groundwater proposed. Maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface, which would not intersect groundwater.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in land use would occur. No specially-designated areas are present in the work areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be performed within existing transmission line right-of-way. Replacement of the wood pole and associated components would be in kind and replaced in the same location; therefore, there would not be a change to the visual quality of the area.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would have a temporary impact on air quality from a small amount of vehicle emissions and dust generated during construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be temporary construction noise. Operational noise of the transmission line would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would allow safe and timely access to the transmission line which would help reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region.

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: All activities have been coordinated with land managers and landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ Jonnel Deacon
Jonnel Deacon
EPR-Olympia

Date: April 7, 2025