

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Albany Substation Septic System Decommissioning

PP&A No.: 5023

Project Manager: Scott Mecalis, NWMS-1

Location: Linn County, Oregon

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration proposes to decommission the septic system and connect to the public sewer system at the Albany Substation, located on federal (BPA) and private land. For decommissioning, the project would remove the existing 500-gallon steel septic tank. All other components of the septic system would be abandoned in place including the broken, failing 4-inch-diameter ceramic septic drain sewer piping and leach field drain assemblies. To connect to the public sewer system, the project would install a 6-inch-diameter sewer line, utilizing 6-inch-diameter PVC pipe beyond the substation property and connect to the 12-inch-diameter lateral City of Albany sewer connection. The new sewer line would be approximately 130 feet in length and buried up to 10 feet deep where it connects to the public sewer line. A combination of horizontal directional drilling and excavation would be used to install the new piping. Most of the excavated soil would be used onsite as backfill. Any excess soil not suitable as backfill and the removed tank would be sent to an appropriate off-site disposal facility. The site would be accessed via existing routes of travel.

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; 89 FR 34074, April 30, 2024), 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



Aaron Shurtliff
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

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

The project is in a flat, residential area on BPA fee-owned and private property. The ground surface consists of a paved parking lot and gravel road.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Pursuant to its responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and implementing regulations 36 CFR 800, BPA initiated consultation with the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community of Oregon, Klamath Tribes, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) on March 20, 2025. BPA had previously determined that the Albany Substation is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. There are no other known historic properties within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and BPA found that the project would result in no adverse effect to historic properties. The Oregon SHPO confirmed receipt of the consultation materials on March 24, 2025. No other responses were received.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include hand digging, horizontal directional drilling, and the use of a small excavator for some trenching. Excavated soil would be temporarily stockpiled onsite and used to backfill the removed septic tank area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. Additionally, the directional drilling entry and exit locations are in a paved parking lot and a gravel road—no surface vegetation would be impacted.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise and human presence during construction. However, wildlife species that could be present would likely be habituated to this level of human activity due to the proximity to a public road.

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 are present in or near the project site.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present in or near the project site.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur below groundwater level.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The city sewer connection piping would primarily be on BPA-owned property with a small portion on private property. The project would have no permanent impact or change on land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All work would be below ground and upon restoration would have no impact on visual quality.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities may temporarily create dust or vehicle emissions. There would be no long-term change to air quality.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. Noise would be temporary and intermittent and would only occur during daylight hours. There are no noise-sensitive receptors near the project site, and 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: Final site conditions would be consistent with existing conditions.

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: Project activities would be coordinated with the private landowner.

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

Signed: 

Date: May 1, 2025

Physical Scientist (Environmental)