

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Southeast Idaho Load Service Market Purchase Agreements through 2031

Project Manager: Mark Miller, PTL-5

Location: Portland, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.1 Contracts, policies, and marketing and allocation plans for electric power

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to enter into agreements to provide power to serve six of BPA's customer electric utilities in Southeast Idaho. BPA has served these loads through local federal generation, and power wheeled (i.e. transmitted by an entity that does not own or directly use the power it is transmitting) from the Federal Columbia River Power System, or from market power purchases. BPA plans to utilize its existing Network Integration Transmission Service Agreement with PacifiCorp to wheel power through PacifiCorp's existing transmission lines to continue delivering power to Southeast Idaho loads. To meet a portion of these Southeast Idaho load requirements, BPA would enter into the proposed agreements with a wholesale market power supplier to buy blocks of unspecified (i.e., specific generation source would be unknown at time of the agreement) market-purchased energy ranging from 25MW to 175MW during certain hours throughout the year between September 1, 2026, and April 30, 2031. All power provided under the agreements would be sourced from existing generating resources operating within normal operating limits using the existing transmission system.

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

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.

Jeff Maslow
Senior 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.

Proposed Action: Southeast Idaho Load Service Market Purchase Agreements through 2031

Project Site Description

Existing power and transmission resources would be located within the Western Interconnection with all power delivered under the agreements wheeled across existing PacifiCorp transmission lines to reach customers located in Southeast Idaho.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would result in power delivered from existing facilities operating within normal limits over existing transmission lines and not involve any ground-disturbing activity, there would be no potential to affect historic and cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would result in power delivered from existing facilities operating within normal limits over existing transmission lines and not involve any ground disturbing activity, there would be no potential to affect geology and soils.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would result in power delivered from existing facilities operating within normal limits over existing transmission lines and not involve any ground disturbing activity, there would be no substantial change in existing effects to wildlife resulting from the operation of the existing generating facilities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would result in power delivered from existing generating facilities operating within normal limits over existing transmission lines and not involve any ground-disturbing activity, there would be no substantial change in existing effects to wildlife resulting from the ongoing operation of the existing facilities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would deliver power from existing generating facilities operating within the normal limits established under the applicable state and federal permit requirements, there would be no substantial change in effect from current levels of water use or discharges into waterbodies resulting from the ongoing operation of the existing facilities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would result in power delivered from existing generating facilities operating within normal limits over existing transmission lines, and not involve new construction, there would be no potential to affect wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would result in power delivered from existing generating facilities operating within normal limits over existing transmission lines, and not involve new construction, there would be no substantial change in effect to groundwater and aquifers resulting from the ongoing operation of the existing facilities.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would result in power delivered from existing generating facilities operating within normal limits over existing transmission lines, and not involve new construction, there would be no change in existing land use.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would deliver power from existing generating facilities operating within the normal limits established under the applicable state and federal permit requirements, and not involve new construction, there would be no substantial change in visual quality resulting from the operation of the existing facilities.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would deliver power from existing generating facilities operating within the normal limits established under the applicable state and federal permit requirements, there would be no substantial change in current levels of air-pollutant emissions from the operation of the existing facilities.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would deliver power from existing generating facilities within the normal limits established under the applicable state and federal permit requirements, there would be no substantial change in current noise levels from the operation of the existing facilities.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Because the energy purchase under the agreements would deliver power from existing generating facilities operating within the normal limits established under the applicable state and federal permit requirements, and not involve any new construction, there would be no change in effect to human health and safety from the operation of those facilities.

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: All generating facilities under the agreements would operate within normal operating limits established under the applicable state and federal permit requirements.

Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation: No new construction would occur under the agreements.

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: No new construction would occur under the agreements.

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: No landowner notification, involvement, or coordination would occur because the agreements would involve the operation of existing facilities generating power within the normal operating limits established that applicable state and federal permitting requirements.

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

Signed:

Jeff Maslow
Senior Environmental Protection Specialist