

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: City of Forest Grove Powerline Upgrades

Project No.: LURR 2001 0522

Project Manager: Jenny Tuck TERR-Chemawa

Location: Washington County, OR

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power (BPA) proposes to allow the applicant, City of Forest Grove, to install two separate underground powerlines along the south end of BPA's fee owned right-of-way property at Forest Grove Substation. The proposed project would involve excavating a trench, approximately 15 feet wide, 4 feet deep, and 174 feet long, outside of BPA's fenced-in substation yard on BPA fee-owned land to install a 12.4kV and 34.5kV electrical line for additional circuit feeder capabilities. All lines would be installed inside electrical conduit and would maintain a minimum clearance of 25 feet between BPA's equipment and transmission line conductors with a minimum distance of 50 feet from the steel lattice enclosure surrounding the energized substation yard.

BPA authorizes the use of and manages its fee-owned lands pursuant to its authority under sections 2(e) and 2(f) of the Bonneville Project Act. 16 U.S.C. § 832a(e)-(f).

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

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist

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.

Proposed Action: City of Forest Grove Powerline Upgrades

Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned right-of-way at the Forest Grove Substation in Washington County, OR (Township 1 North, Range 3 West, Section 31). Neighboring parcels consist of residential properties and semi agricultural land uses. Current vegetation within the proposed project site consists of maintained non-native grasses.

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 Preservations Act and implementing regulations 36 CFR 800, BPA initiated consultation with the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) case number 25-1036, Confederated Tribes of the Siletz nation and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde of Oregon on May 5, 2025. BPA conducted background research utilizing the Oregon Archaeological Records Remote Access (OARRA) database followed by an intensive field survey of the Area of Potential Effects (APE).

The Oregon SHPO concurred with the APE and the finding of no adverse effect to historic properties on June 3, 2025. No other responses were received within 30 days. In the unlikely event that cultural resources or historic properties are inadvertently encountered during the implementation of the project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Impacts to soils are anticipated due to the removal of soils and placement of the underground powerline within BPA's right-of-way. The depth of disturbance from soil excavation would be approximately 4 feet deep 15 feet wide and 174 feet long. The area of ground-disturbing activities would take place in and around previously-disturbed areas. Any excavated soils would be used to backfill the exposed trench, and all excess material would be disposed of in coordination with BPA at a proper state approved disposal facility. Best Management Practices (BMPs) such as the use of erosion control devices if needed would be implemented during construction and following construction. Temporary disturbed soils would stabilize as vegetation is reestablished following completion of construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no special-status plant species present within the project area. Disturbed areas would be stabilized and seeded with a native seed mix following construction.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no special-status wildlife species documented within a half mile of the project area, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. The construction and work area are located within well-established areas outside critical habitat. The proposed action may temporarily increase disturbance for locally non-sensitive wildlife species resulting from noise and human presence, but it is anticipated that wildlife would distribute to adjacent habitats and that noise disturbance would be consistent with ongoing operations surrounding the construction area. The proposed action would have no effect on special-status species of habitat.

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 are present within or near the project site. No impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish are expected.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site. No impacts to wetlands are expected.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Excavation is unlikely to reach depth to groundwater and aquifers, if present. No impacts to groundwater and aquifers are expected.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would have no changes to existing land use and specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is located along a rural road with minimal pedestrian access. Some temporarily minor visual changes associated with the presence of excavation equipment and bare ground would occur but would be similar to current visual quality once construction is completed. No significant long-term changes to visual quality are expected.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary, minor fugitive dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction. No long-term changes to air quality would occur. No significant impact to air quality is expected from the project.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary noise from equipment and vehicles would occur during construction and during daylight hours that would be consistent with noise generated from operation of the substation and the surrounding land uses. No significant impact from noise is expected.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No hazardous materials would be used during construction of the project. No impact to human health and safety is expected.

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 action would occur on BPA fee-owned property. For portions of the larger project not occurring on BPA property, the applicant would be responsible for any landowner notification, involvement, or coordination.

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

Signed:

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist