

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: FY26 Black Canyon-Emmett and West Burley-Heyburn Priority Poles Replacement Project

PP&A No.: 6767

Project Manager: Jodie Anderson, TEPL-TPP-1

Location: Gem and Minidoka Counties, Idaho

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to replace in-kind wood pole structures and associated structural/electrical components (e.g., cross arms, insulators, guy anchors, etc.) along two transmission lines, Black Canyon-Emmett No. 1 and West Burley-Heyburn No. 1, in the Idaho Falls TLM District.

Two wood pole structures, structure 1/1 on Black Canyon-Emmett No. 1 and 4/7 on West Burley-Heyburn No. 1, would be replaced. Replacement poles would be placed within approximately 5 feet ahead or back on line from the existing structure.

The proposed project would allow safe and timely access to the transmission lines which would reduce outage times and maintain reliable power in the region. 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 1021.102 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; 90 FR 29676, July 3, 2025 [Interim Final Rule]) and *DOE National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Implementing Procedures* (dated June 30, 2025), BPA has determined the following:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021;
- 2) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion; and
- 3) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposed action that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal (see attached Environmental Evaluation).

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review. ¹

/s/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: October 20, 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 the interim final rule to revise DOE NEPA regulations implementing NEPA at 10 C.F.R. Part 1021 and NEPA Implementing Procedures (dated June 30, 2025), 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: FY26 Black Canyon-Emmett and West Burley-Heyburn Priority Poles Replacement Project

Project Site Description

All structure replacements would be at specific locations in Gem and Minidoka Counties, Idaho in BPA's Idaho Falls Maintenance District. All work would be done in existing managed rights-of-ways. Structure 1/1 of the Black Canyon-Emmett No. 1 is located within a Bureau of Reclamation substation. Structure 4/7 of the West Burley-Heyburn No. 1 is located in an industrial developed parking and storage area. Site-specific locations and details are listed in table 1.

Table 1. Structure replacements in the Idaho Falls District.

Transmission Line	Structure	TRS	County/State	Land Management
Black Canyon-Emmett No. 1	1/1	ID T17N R1W SEC22	Gem, ID	Bureau of Reclamation
West Burley-Heyburn No. 1	4/7	ID T10S R23E SEC16	Minidoka, ID	Private Industrial

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA initiated consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes of the Fort Hall Reservation, the Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Reservation, and the Idaho SHPO on November 1, 2024. On November 13, 2024, the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with the delineated Area of Potential Effect (APE). No other responses were received. BPA sent a no effect to historic resources determination on June 30, 2025, and ID SHPO concurred on July 16, 2025. No additional response was received within 30 days.

Notes:

- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA will 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. The BPA environmental lead, archaeologist, and project manager would be immediately notified. Reasonable measures would be taken to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All wood pole replacements would be in-kind and would be placed near the locations of the existing poles. Localized soil disturbance would occur during wood pole replacements. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized as necessary. Sites would be restored to pre-existing conditions following the construction activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Both project sites are located within industrial developed and maintained land that is not suitable for plant life. BPA obtained official species lists Under Section 7 of the ESA, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project areas on October 7, 2025. No ESA-listed plant species are present in the project areas. No federal special-status, state listed, or sensitive plants are present in the project areas.

However, if any federal or state listed plant species are unknowingly in the project area, project activities would be limited to the already impacted substation, industrial area, and adjacent areas and would not substantially alter existing plant communities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Both project sites are located within industrial developed and maintained land that is not suitable habitat for wildlife. BPA obtained official species lists Under Section 7 of the ESA, from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) for the project locations in Gem and Minidoka Counties, Idaho on October 7, 2025. Work would occur in areas maintained as an substation and industrial area with little wildlife habitat. During project activities, work with heavy equipment may cause temporary disturbance to wildlife near the project causing avoidance of the area. The disturbance would be of a short duration and would not affect any species' long-term activities.

No project locations are within or near any designated critical habitats on known occupied sites for listed species. Due to the lack suitable habitat and no known presence in the project areas, BPA has determined that the projects would have "no effect" on ESA-listed species or their critical habitat. No other special-status wildlife would be impacted by project activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Both project sites are located within industrial developed and maintained land.

No in-water work would be conducted as part of the project. Both structures are located near or adjacent to waterways. Structure 1/1 of the Black Canyon-Emmett No.1 is located within a Bureau of Reclamation substation at Black Canyon Dam, adjacent to the Payette River. Structure 4/7 of the West Burley-Heyburn No.1 is located within 50 feet of the Snake River. Standard construction erosion control measures would be utilized to stabilize the project sites during and after the construction activities.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are documented within the project area. Additionally, no documented wetlands are within the influence of the project sites.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities are not expected to impact groundwater or aquifers. The maximum depth of disturbance would be about 12 feet below ground surface.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Both project sites are located within industrial developed and maintained land. The project locations are confined to the existing transmission line right-of-way corridors. Surrounding land uses include Bureau of Reclamation, and private industrial lands. Structure 1/1 of the Black Canyon-Emmett No. 1 is located within a Bureau of Reclamation substation. Structure 4/7 of the West Burley-Heyburn No. 1 is located in a industrial developed parking and storage area. The project would not impact public land uses and no recreational areas would be impacted. Project work locations would be localized to the existing wood pole transmission structure and would not substantially impact the underlying properties. Project locations do not include any specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions at existing facilities would not alter or effect visual quality. Structure replacements are in-kind and would not involve any visual change from the existing structures.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project work would be of a short duration and involves normal construction equipment activities. A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions is expected due to construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would be located away from any populated areas in industrial areas. Noise disturbance would be limited to general construction equipment activities, would be for a short duration, and would occur during daylight hours.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project is considered normal construction and maintenance. The proposed work is necessary to ensure ongoing safe and reliable operation of the transmission line and to maintain power delivery 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: BPA Realty notified and coordinated with the landowners/managers in advance of the construction of the proposed project. The BPA realty specialist has been in contact with the Bureau of Reclamation and the private landowner and they were given advance notice of the project.

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

Signed: /s/ Greg Tippetts Date: October 20, 2025

Greg Tippetts

Physical Scientist (Environmental)