

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Ziply Fiber Installation at Chemawa Substation

Project No.: LURR 2025 0171

Project Manager: Jenny Tuck – TERR-Chemawa

Location: Marion County, OR

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Ziply Northwest Inc. to install a new underground and overhead fiber cable within BPA's fee-owned rights-of-way (ROW) along the entire south side length of BPA's Chemawa Substation in Keiser, OR.

Actions would include underground boring, trenching, aerial fiber placement, and new anchor and guy wires within BPA's ROW. The proposed project would switch between underground and overhead installation methods. Underground work would include the placement of a 2-inch-diameter electrical conduit to accommodate the fiber with trenching and boring methods. All trenching and boring along BPA's ROW would be approximately 550 feet long (3 feet deep and 2 feet wide). The overhead installation would occur in two places, for a total distance of 760 feet, to accommodate Pacific General Electric's (PGE) electrical poles within BPA's ROW. For the aerial installation, the fiber would be strung on and between existing PGE transmission structures. Conduit risers would be attached to the PGE structures and the fiber would be strung aerially between the structures. To accommodate the new fiber, guy wires and associated anchors would be installed to the PGE structures for structural support. Once construction is completed BPA's property would be restored to pre-construction conditions by Ziply Fiber Northwest Inc.

Equipment used for the proposed project would include, but not be limited to, bucket trucks, dump truck, compactor, a vacuum truck, a backhoe, boring machine, cable feeder, hand power tools, and light and heavy duty trucks.

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 1021.102 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

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

Katey Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Attachment(s): Environmental Evaluation

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 Evaluation

This evaluation 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: Zipley Fiber Installation at Chemawa Substation

Project Site Description

The proposed construction area is located in Marion County, OR. All work would occur within the BPA Chemawa Substation. All structures within the construction area are accessible by access roads, security gates, driveways, or designated parking areas. The proposed area of construction has previous ground disturbance, and is located in areas that are graveled, mulched, paved, or have compacted soils. There are no water bodies or wetlands within close proximity (0.25 miles) to the Chemawa project location. Chemawa substation is surrounded by small business, residential parcels, and a railroad corridor which runs north to south and is located west of the substation.

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 Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) case number 25-1165, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Siletz Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde on August 26, 2025.

The Oregon SHPO concurred with the Area of Potential Effect (APE) and the finding of no adverse effect to historic properties on September 29, 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 this 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.

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project would involve disturbing existing soil within BPA's ROW. Temporary soil impacts would occur where the ground surface would be excavated and bored for cable installation. Soils that would be temporarily disturbed by the proposed action would stabilize as vegetation is reestablished and would eventually return to pre-existing condition following completion of the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Searches of state heritage database occurrences resulted in no records of sensitive state or federally-listed plant species within 5 miles of the proposed access road project and the project would have no effect on ESA-listed or sensitive plant species. Current vegetation within the proposed project site would involve temporary impacts that would include but not be limited to crushing, compacting, and vegetation removal due to

excavation. Only necessary vegetation would be removed or disturbed. Any disturbed areas surrounding the proposed access road would be stabilized and seeded with a regionally native seed mix.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Searches of state heritage database occurrences resulted in no records of sensitive state or federally-listed wildlife species within 3 miles of the proposed access road project. The proposed work site would be located within areas outside critical habitat and would have no effect on ESA-listed or sensitive wildlife species. Temporary disturbance to non-sensitive wildlife may occur during work periods due to construction noise from light duty construction vehicles and equipment. However, there would be no permanent impacts to wildlife habitat, and temporarily disturbed or displaced wildlife species that could be present in the area would likely be habituated to this level of disturbance given surrounding land uses.

4. 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.

5. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A review of the National Wetland Inventory, soil information, topography, and aerial photos did not reveal any wetlands or water bodies at or near the proposed site. Project design and construction would have no expected impact to wetlands as there are no wetlands present within the proposed project site or area.

6. 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.

7. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No changes would occur to land use or specially-designated areas for the proposed project.

8. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area is located along a lightly traveled business road with minimal pedestrian access. Visual changes, which may only be visible from nearby residential areas, from the proposed work would be minor and consistent with existing conditions.

9. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

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

10. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Some temporary, minor noise from equipment and vehicles would occur during construction and during daylight hours. No substantial impact from noise is expected.

11. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No hazardous materials except common fuel and oil products would be used during construction of the project. Appropriate spill prevention measures would be implemented to reduce the risk of hazardous materials entering the environment.

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: Ziply Fiber Northwest Inc. would be responsible for all 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