

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Communications Upgrade at Sifton Substation

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: Clark County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow T-Mobile to upgrade its existing telecommunications facility located at the BPA-owned Sifton Substation in Vancouver, Washington. Work on an existing steel-lattice telecommunications tower would include removing six existing panel antennas, six existing tower-mounted amplifiers, and all existing coaxial cable. Six new panel antennas, four new remote radio units, and new hybrid coaxial cable would then be installed on the tower. In addition to upgrading tower-mounted equipment, removal and/or replacement of ground-level communications equipment, including cabinets, diplexers, remote radio units, and coaxial cable, would occur in T-Mobile's fenced equipment area adjacent to the tower. The project would not involve any soil excavation or grading and would use established access roads and work areas.

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), 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.

/s/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:



Nancy A. Wittpenn
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 19, 2019

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: T-Mobile Communications Upgrade at Sifton Substation

Project Site Description

The project site is an existing T-Mobile telecommunications facility on BPA fee-owned property located in the southwest corner of the BPA Sifton Substation in Vancouver, Clark County, Washington (Section 13, Township 2 North, Range 2 East). Access to the site is via an approximately 1,200-foot-long existing unpaved access road extending north from NE 39th Street.

The T-Mobile facility consists of an 150-foot-tall steel lattice communications structure and a fenced, ground-level equipment area adjacent to the base of the communications structure. The equipment area includes a utility H-frame structure, an ice bridge, and equipment cabinets mounted on a concrete pad. The project site is disturbed and of low ecological quality. Ground cover consists of gravel and little to no vegetation. The Sifton Substation yard is immediately to the north and east and similarly covered in gravel and limited vegetation. West and south of the site is BPA fee-owned transmission right-of-way, with low-growing vegetation maintained through regular mowing. There are no mapped surface water bodies within 1,000 feet of the site.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> A BPA Historian has determined that this undertaking has No Potential to Effect historic properties as no ground disturbance will occur and minor additive features do not adversely impact the integrity of historic transmission lines.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Geology and soils within and around the project site were previously disturbed during construction of the substation, the existing telecommunications facility, and the access road. Although no soil excavation or grading is proposed, minor soil compaction from vehicle and heavy equipment use would occur within the project area. T-Mobile and its delegates would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> Project-related activities (e.g. vehicle and equipment use) could cause removal of vegetative cover in small areas where vegetation is present. No additional tree or vegetation removal is proposed. There are no documented occurrences of any state special-status plant species or plant species projected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.		

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



Explanation: Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during project implementation. However, no state special-status wildlife species or wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA are expected to occur at the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species.

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



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any water bodies or floodplains, and there are no documented occurrences of any state special-status or ESA-listed fish or fish habitat near the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The project site is not in or near any mapped wetlands. The project would use established access roads and work areas and would not include ground excavation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project would not involve any ground excavation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater and aquifers.

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**



Explanation: There would be no change to land use at the project site. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change to visual quality at the project site. The tower-mounted equipment is consistent with the existing use of the site as a telecommunications facility.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary and minor dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area from use of vehicles and equipment during project implementation. There would be no long-term changes in air quality following completion of the project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Project-related noise would be temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change from current ambient conditions.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project activities.

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, if necessary:

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

Explanation, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

- 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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The project site is on BPA fee-owned property, and BPA would notify adjacent easement lessees of the upcoming project. There would be no affect to adjacent landowners.

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

Signed: W. Walker Stinnette
W. Walker Stinnette – EC-4
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Date: September 19, 2019