

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Shelton-Fairmount No. 2 Distressed Structure Project.

**PP&A No.:** 4895

**Project Manager:** Rusty Ludt IV - TEPL-TPP-1

**Location:** Jefferson County, WA

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.3: Routine maintenance.

**Description of the Proposed Action:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is proposing to address a distressed wood pole structure on the Shelton-Fairmount No. 2 transmission line at structure 44/3 in BPA's Olympia TLM Maintenance District. The replacement is necessary due to an active landslide that is currently affecting the stability of structure 44/3. Structure 44/3 would be eliminated. To meet the necessary engineering requirements due to the eliminated tower, structure 44/2 would be raised about 15 feet and moved 100 feet ahead on line. Structure 44/4 would be raised about 25 feet.

The project would also include improvements to existing access roads leading to structures 44/4 and 44/5. No new access roads would be added and no landing work would be needed.

**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/ Greg Tippetts*

Greg Tippetts, EPR-Olympia  
Physical Scientist - Environmental

Concur:

*/s/ Katey Grange*

Katey Grange      Date: March 15, 2023  
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:** Shelton-Fairmount No. 2, Distressed Structure Replacement Project.

## **Project Site Descriptions**

The project would be at a specific location in Jefferson County WA. in BPA's Olympia TLM Maintenance District. All work would be done in existing managed rights-of-way located on private timber land. The proposed work includes a crossing of US Highway 101. Site specific locations and details are listed in the following table.

Transmission Line	Structure(s)	Township	Range	Section	Land Use
Shelton-Fairmount No. 2	44/2, 44/3, 44/4	26N	2W	13	Private Timber

## **Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources**

### **1. Historic and Cultural Resources**

Potential for Significance: No

**Explanation:** The project areas were surveyed by a BPA archaeologist on September 23, 2022. Due to the urgency of the project, on October 21, 2022 BPA initiated consultation with and sent determination letters which stated no historic properties would be affected by project activities to the Jamestown S'Klallam Tribe, the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, the Skokomish Tribal Nation, the Squaxin Island Tribe, and the Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP). The Squaxin Island Tribe responded on October 31, 2022 stating the project is outside of their traditional area and they are not concerned with the project. No additional responses were received. If resources are discovered during construction activities, work would cease and the appropriate archaeological entities (BPA and WA DAHP) would be contacted.

### **2. Geology and Soils**

Potential for Significance: No

**Explanation:** The structure replacements involve removing the old poles and replacing them in similar kind near the same location. Minimal excavation for the new wood pole structures would be kept to only the amount necessary to set the new structure. Upon completion of project activities, any disturbed sites would be stabilized with native seed mix, or erosion control materials. Stormwater BMPs would be used during the project to protect the surrounding area from runoff and erosion issues.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor; minimal vegetation may be removed or crushed at the pole location sites. Some common native and non-native plants at the structure locations may be temporarily impacted. Disturbance would be surficial and these plants would be expected to recover naturally through propagation and via the existing seed bank in the area. Disturbed sites would be restored with native seed mix.

No special-status plants or Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed plants would be impacted from project activities. BPA obtained an official species list from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. No ESA-listed plant species are present in the project area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Any wildlife in the immediate work area would be temporarily disturbed by noise and increased human presence for up to about 6 days. BPA obtained an official species list for the project location in Jefferson County, Washington from the USFWS on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Work would occur in areas maintained as an open transmission line corridor with little wildlife habitat. The structure replacements are highly localized to the existing sites and all work would be confined to the existing right-of-way. Pole replacements would require 1-2 days of work at each structure location. The project locations are not within or near any designated critical habitats or 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:

No in-water work or ground disturbance near waterways is proposed. Sites would be stabilized upon completion of project activities.

### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project location is not within or near any wetlands.

### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project activities do not have the potential to impact groundwater or aquifers, including public and private water wells or springs. All spills would be addressed immediately and follow BPA protocol for cleanup and regulatory notifications.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project locations are confined to the existing transmission line right-of-way corridor and would be consistent with that land use. Surrounding land use is private timber. Project locations do not include any special 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 similar in-kind and would not be visibly different from the existing structures.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The projects are of a short duration and would involve 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 is located at the transmission line's crossing of US Highway 101 and is away from any populated areas and places of residence. 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. No traffic interruptions on US Highway 101 are anticipated and no flaggers would be required.

### **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: Notification via mailed letter has been sent to the current landowner. The letters provide contact information for BPA to allow feedback from landowners/managers concerning the proposed 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  
Greg Tippetts, EPR-Olympia  
Physical Scientist, Environmental

Date: March 15, 2023