

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: T-Mobile Wireless Snoqualmie Ridge Antenna Upgrade

Project No.: W0860

Project Manager: Nathan Mullen, TELP

Location: King 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 the T-Mobile Corporation to remove and replace existing wireless antennas, remote radio units (RRUs), and associated equipment on their Snoqualmie Ridge facility located on the BPA Echo Lake-Monroe No.1 500 kV, operating mile four, structure number three transmission line tower. T-Mobile would replace the six existing panel antennas, six RRUs, two ultra-site cabinets with the similar size new antennas, RRUs, and cabinets. The new cabinets would be installed on in the existing footprints of the current cabinets located within the footprint of the transmission line structure. The total number of antennas installed on the BPA Echo Lake – Monroe structure would not change. The existing chain-link fence gates would be replaced with like, in kind using existing fence pole hardware. Additionally, the footings of the transmission line structure have become exposed and would be backfilled using approximately 1,182 cubic yards of fill. The area would be re-seeded using a native grass seed mix post construction.

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/ Nicholas Johnson
Nicholas Johnson
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

<u>/s/ Sarah T. Biegel</u>	<u>June 15, 2023</u>
Sarah T. Biegel	Date
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: T-Mobile Wireless Snoqualmie Ridge Antenna Upgrade

Project Site Description

Project site is located within the existing BPA Echo Lake-Monroe No.1 500 kV transmission line corridor located approximately two miles northwest of Snoqualmie, Washington, township 24 North, Range 7 East, and Section 25. Access to each site would be via the existing access road network. This site is located within a greenway between neighborhoods. The nearest water body is an unnamed stream approximately 650 feet to the west of the project area.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Proposed actions would have no potential to affect cultural resources. BPA cultural resources issued a No Potential to Cause Effect memorandum initially on July 15, 2021. BPA project engineers identified the need for backfill in April of 2023 and BPA cultural resources reviewed and updated the No Potential to Cause Effect memorandum on May 12, 2023.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be minimal planned ground disturbance to occur with the proposed back filling of the tower footings. No significant impacts to soils would occur.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known occurrences of threatened or endangered plants are located with the project area. No impacts would occur to local vegetation as proposed by project actions.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No known occurrences of threatened or endangered wildlife are located within the project area. Project locations are not located within any defined designated critical habitat areas. Some project sites are located in the vicinity (less than a mile) of potential suitable habitat of marble murrelet and northern spotted owl. However, project actions would not be conducted in actual habitat and project actions would be conducted outside critical

breeding and nesting periods. Local wildlife could be momentarily disrupted during the short 1-2 day installation period at the project locations.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project locations are not located within waterways, riparian areas, floodplains, or fish habitat. Silt fencing and bio-bags would be installed prior to backfilling of the structure footings. Disturbed soils would be reseeded after construction. Proposed actions would not affect nearby water resources.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project location is not located within known wetland areas.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions would not affect groundwater resources.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions are co-located within existing wireless communication facilities in the BPA transmission Rights-of-Way. Land use would remain the same.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions would replace existing equipment with similar size and dimensions. Visual quality would be similar to existing conditions and would not change the overall visual quality of the location.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project actions could create some dust associated with vehicle traffic on ROW roads and general construction actions. Air quality impacts from dust would be relatively minimal and short.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Project would have noise associated with the general construction equipment used. Noise would be occurring during daylight hours and occurring for one to two days per location.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Crews would follow all applicable health and safety protocols.

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 T-Mobile Corporation has existing access and use rights through BPA's existing easements. No landowner notification or coordination would be needed for the proposed actions. BPA's real property services group would be the primary point of contact concerning any adjacent landowner concerns.

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

Signed: /s/ Nicholas Johnson June 15, 2023
Nicholas Johnson, ECT Date
Environmental Protection Specialist