

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** East Hills Substation Sale and Equipment Relocation

**Project No.:** L0478 and LURR 20200210

**Project Manager:** Mike Henjum -TEPS-TPP-1

**Location:** Cassia County, Idaho

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B1.24 Property transfers; B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way; B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

## **Description of the Proposed Action:**

- BPA would be selling the East Hills Substation to South Side Electric.
  - o The new change of ownership at East Hills Substation would be the point at which the BPA-owned jumpers from the 138kV bus connect to the new customer-owned circuit switcher.
- BPA would also be retiring the following equipment:
  - o The 138-34.5kV transformer bank #1 (T-1264) and associated bus work, grounding, conduits, and cabling.
  - o The 138kV fused disconnect switch.
  - o The 34.5kV rack structure and associated equipment, grounding, and conduit.
  - o The 34.5-12.5kV transformer bank #2.
- BPA would be installing:
  - o Standoff insulators and bus work in place of the existing 138kV fused disconnect switch.
  - o Repairs to the ground grid.
- BPA would also be relocating the 138kV-34.5 transformer bank #1 to Idahohome Substation.
  - o All of this work would also be within the existing substation fence.

**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/ Christopher H. Furey  
Christopher H. Furey  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel 09/01/2023  
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:** East Hills Substation Sale and Equipment Relocation

## **Project Site Description**

The project area is located at BPA's East Hills Substation in Township 11 South, Range 24 East, Section 11 in Cassia County, Idaho. The East Hills Substation is located about 2.4 miles south of the small town of Declo. The immediate surrounding area is mostly irrigated farmland with some rural residences. Large expanses of dry land exist 1.5 miles to the east of the substation and irrigated farm land continues in the other three directions of the substation. The nearest wetland is a riverine wetland located 0.45 miles to the north of the substation. Marsh Creek is located about 2.3 miles north of the substation.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: BPA archaeologist and historian reviewed the proposed activities and determined, per 36 CFR 800.3(a)(1), that this undertaking is a type of activity that does not have potential to cause effects on historic properties, assuming such historic properties were present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed activities would not require ground-disturbing activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts expected for any Federal or state special-status species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts expected to wildlife or habitats for this work.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no in-water work occurring. Work would occur within gravel areas of substations.

## **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work would occur in existing, graveled facilities; no wetlands present.

## **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not impact groundwater or aquifers. Infiltration to groundwater and aquifers would not be adversely impacted by the project activities.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The change in ownership and movement of equipment would not change type of land use.

## **9. Visual Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No change in the visual character of the facility areas would occur.

## **10. Air Quality**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor, temporary generation of emissions associated with vehicle traffic and equipment use would occur during project activities.

## **11. Noise**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary construction-type noise would occur during daylight hours. No ongoing noise increase expected.

## **12. Human Health and Safety**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No impacts to human health and safety would be expected. Any hazardous materials such as batteries generated would be disposed of at a designated hazardous waste disposal facility.

### **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 is in coordination with South Side Electric.

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

Signed: /s/ Christopher H. Furey  
Christopher H. Furey  
Environmental Protection Specialist

09/01/2023  
Date