

Categorical Exclusion Determination
Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Sale of Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) assets to Public Utility District No. 1 of Grays Harbor County (Grays Harbor) in exchange for BPA to acquire Grays Harbor-owned assets.

Project Manager: Chad Caldwell TPCV-Olympia

Location: Grays Harbor County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.24
Property Transfers

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA would sell equipment it currently owns at Grays Harbor's South Elma and Elma substations to Grays Harbor, including transformers, breakers, relays, bus work, and arrestors. In exchange, Grays Harbor would sell BPA 6.62 miles of its 6.79 mile Cosmopolis-Aberdeen No. 1 115kV line and existing rights-of-way.

The proposal is purely an ownership change; no construction or facility changes are proposed. The equipment exchange would simplify operations and maintenance of the facilities. The existing BPA-owned equipment is located in Gray's Harbor PUD's substations, and requires significant coordination to service. The Cosmopolis-Aberdeen transmission line runs between two BPA-owned substations with no customer tap point, but is owned and maintained by Grays Harbor PUD. Transferring this line to BPA ownership would allow BPA to operate and maintain the line without having to coordinate with Grays Harbor PUD.

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, July 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/ Douglas F. Corkran
Douglas F. Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel
Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: August 15, 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: Sale of Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) assets to Public Utility District No. 1 of Grays Harbor County (Grays Harbor) in exchange for BPA to acquire Grays Harbor-owned assets.

Project Site Description

The project is located in Grays Harbor County, Washington in and near the cities of Elma, Aberdeen, and Cosmopolis. In the town of Elma, BPA would transfer equipment at Elma Substation and South Elma Substations to Grays Harbor PUD. Elma Substation is located in the town of Elma near homes and businesses. The South Elma Substation is located in a rural residential area surrounded by small farms.

Grays Harbor PUD would transfer to BPA their Cosmopolis-Aberdeen No. 1 115kV transmission line that runs between BPA's Cosmopolis and Aberdeen substations (in the cities of Cosmopolis and Aberdeen, respectively). This line runs through a small amount of residential and industrial land in each city, and through hilly timbered terrain and valley bottom lands in between the cities. It crosses wetlands and creeks and the Chehalis River. The transmission line is adjacent to BPA ROW at each end.

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"/>

Explanation:

No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset swap. All assets that BPA is selling were installed in or after 1983, and are not part of the historic BPA transmission grid. BPA's cultural resources group has made a determination of no effect to historic properties or cultural resources. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to historic and cultural resources would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Explanation:

No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset swap. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and geology or soils would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to geology and soils would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

3. **Plants** (including federal/state special-status species)



Explanation:

No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset swap. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and plants would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to plants would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

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



Explanation:

No noise or vegetation disturbing work is associated with the asset swap. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and wildlife would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to wildlife would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

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



Explanation: The project crosses a large floodplain associated with the Chehalis River. No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset swap. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and waterbodies, floodplains, and fish would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to water bodies, floodplains, or fish would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The transmission line runs across a large area of wetlands in the Chehalis River valley. However, no ground disturbing work is associated with the asset swap. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and wetlands would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to wetlands would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation:

No ground disturbing work is associated with the asset swap. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and groundwater or aquifers would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to groundwater and aquifers would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

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



Explanation:

Use of the assets to be swapped would remain the same, just under different ownership.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation:

Existing conditions would remain unchanged. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and visual quality would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to visual quality would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation:

No dust or pollution would be released as part of the asset swap. Operations would continue in the same manner as they are carried out currently and air quality would not be affected by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any impacts to air quality would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

11. **Noise**



Explanation:

No noise would be produced as part of the asset swap. Equipment would continue to operate as it does currently after the asset swap and no new noise would be caused by the change in asset ownership. In the future, additional tree clearing and access road work to meet BPA standards may be required, but any noise impacts would be analyzed in a separate NEPA document if that were to occur.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation:

No new health or safety risks would be caused by the asset swap. BPA performed a site assessment to identify any hazardous materials on BPA and Grays Harbor property to be transferred that could pose a liability. No evidence of hazardous materials was found. Equipment would continue to operate as it does currently after the asset swap.

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: BPA Realty would notify affected landowners about the change in ownership.

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

Signed: /s/ Douglas F. Corkran
Douglas F Corkran ECT-4

Date: August 15, 2019