

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Schultz-Echo Lake #1 Line Impairment Remediation

Project Manager: Chad Caldwell

Location: Kittitas County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way.

Description of the Proposed Action: BPA proposes to allow Puget Sound Energy (PSE) to relocate one of their structures on BPA right-of-way (ROW) in Kittitas County, WA that crosses under BPA's Schultz-Echo Lake #1 line between structures 34/2 and 34/3, to minimize the risk of contact or arc flash between two lines. Puget Sound Energy would move existing tower 67/6 on their Cascade-White River 230kV transmission line approximately 60 feet to the SE and shorten it by 5 feet. Moving PSE's tower would increase the distance between the conductors of the two lines and improve safety and reliability under worst-case conditions.

The work would take place using typical line crew equipment- bucket trucks, truck-mounted augers, backhoes, etc.

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: January 14, 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.

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Project Site Description

The project is located in central Washington, in Kittitas County, just south of the town of Easton. The area is flat rural pasture land, with rural residences nearby and surrounded at a distance by forested areas of the eastern Cascades. An active rail line and Interstate 90 runs parallel to the ROW approximately 0.25 mile north.

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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> A cultural resource survey was conducted of the area and no cultural or historic resources were identified in or near the project area. The Washington SHPO concurred with BPA's determination of No Adverse Effect on January 7, 2019.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Ground disturbing work would take place at the existing PSE tower site and approximately 60 feet to the SE at the new tower site. Soil disturbance would consist of augering new holes for the towers and some minor surface disturbance associated with vehicles traveling in the work area. Impacts to soils within the work area would be minimal and surrounding soils and geology would not be affected by the project.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The area of disturbance is located within a fenced pasture that appears to be periodically mowed for hay. No plants would be affected by the project.</p>		
4. Wildlife (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The area of disturbance is located within a fenced pasture that appears to be periodically mowed for hay. Wildlife habitat is low quality in the project area and project activities would have only very minor noise-related impacts to common wildlife species during construction. No sensitive or listed wildlife species are documented in or adjacent to the project area. Wildlife species would not be adversely affected by the project.</p>		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The area of disturbance is located within a fenced pasture. The nearest waterbody is the Yakima River, which is several hundred yards to the south. There is no direct connection between the project area and the river, and any spills or sediment would not be able to reach the river. No water bodies, floodplains, or fish would be affected by the project.</p>		

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: The area of disturbance is located within a fenced upland pasture, with no wetlands. No wetlands would be affected by the project.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The area of disturbance is located within a fenced upland pasture. There is no evidence of shallow groundwater. Any spills of gas, diesel, or hydraulic fluid would be quickly contained and cleaned up and are unlikely to reach groundwater or aquifers.

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



Explanation: The project would not change the current land use of the area; it would continue to be used as transmission line ROW and pasture land.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: Moving the tower approximately 60 feet to the SE of its current location may slightly change the views from nearby residences. The replacement tower would be of the same style and material as the existing tower. There would be no adverse impacts to visual quality as a result of the project.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Minor releases of fugitive dust would likely occur during the tower removal and installation associated with the project. These impacts would be temporary and transient, with no long-term or permanent impacts to air quality due to the project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Minor construction noise would be produced as part of the tower removal and installation activities. Once the project is complete there would be no change to existing noise conditions and thus no noise-related impacts due to the project.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No new health or safety risks would be caused by the project. The increased distance between BPA and PSE's transmission lines would reduce the chance of faults or arcs, and would improve the safety of both lines. The project would have no adverse impacts to health and safety.

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: Puget Sound Energy would coordinate with adjacent landowners to conduct the work.

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: January 14, 2019