

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: AT&T Lake Alice, Snoqualmie Ridge and Tiger Mountain Wireless Upgrades Project

Project Manager: Chuck Wedick TELP-TPP-3

Location: King County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.19 Microwave, meteorological and radio towers.

Description of the Proposed Action: AT&T proposes to upgrade their wireless communications infrastructure that is currently located on BPA's existing transmission line towers on the Echo Lake-Monroe No. 1 line (towers 2/3 for Snoqualmie Ridge site and 4/1 for Lake Alice site) and the Echo Lake-Maple Valley No. 1 and 2 line (tower 2/4 for Tiger Mountain site). At each site, AT&T would remove the existing two-foot diameter microwave antennas and replace them with four-foot microwave antennas and install new waveguides. The towers would be accessed by existing access roads and no ground disturbance would be required.

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/ Douglas F. Corkran

Douglas F. Corkran
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange

Katey C. Grange
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: January 8, 2020

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: AT&T Tiger Mountain, Snoqualmie Ridge and Lake Alice Wireless Upgrades

Project Site Description

The proposed project sites are located in and around the town of Snoqualmie WA. The Alice Lake site is located on a steel lattice tower that is located in the middle of a golf course. The Snoqualmie Ridge site is located just north of Interstate 90 in a rural residential area. The site is located on an existing steel lattice tower in actively maintained right-of-way. The Tiger Mountain site is surrounded by fir tree plantations last logged in the 1990's. The site is also located on an existing steel lattice tower in actively maintained right-of-way.

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"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place. BPA's cultural resources department and historian reviewed the project and determined that the proposed project would have no potential to affect cultural or historic resources.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore no soil disturbance would occur. No impact to geology and soils is expected.		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore no disturbance to plants would occur. No impact to plants is expected		
4. Wildlife (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> No ground-disturbing work would take place; therefore no disturbance to ground-dwelling wildlife would occur. Noise disturbance during construction may briefly affect nearby wildlife however; few wildlife species are expected to be present near the Snoqualmie Ridge and Alice Lake sites. At the Tiger Mountain site, ambient noise and disturbances are relatively high in the area due to the nearby Highway 16, and high levels of recreational use, so most wildlife species are habituated to the types of disturbance that would occur during project implementation. There is no habitat suitable for marbled murrelets or northern spotted owls in or near the project area, so the project would have no effect on Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed species. Overall, minor, if any, impacts to wildlife are expected.		
5. Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish (including Federal/state special-status species, ESUs, and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Explanation:</u> The proposed project would occur on existing towers and would have no effect on water bodies, floodplains or fish.		

6. **Wetlands**
Explanation: No ground-disturbing work would occur, therefore; no impacts to wetlands are expected.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**
Explanation: No ground-disturbing work would take place, therefore no impact to groundwater or aquifers is expected

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas**
Explanation: None of the sites are in a specially-designated area. The proposed project would continue existing uses and would not cause changes or impacts to land use or specially-designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**
Explanation: The existing AT&T antennas would be replaced with antennas of similar appearance but slightly larger. These antennas would not appreciably change the appearance of the tower. At the Snoqualmie Ridge site there are nearby residences, but they are mostly screened from the site by terrain and vegetation. There are no sensitive viewer areas that would be affected by changes in visual appearance at the other sites. No impacts to visual quality are expected.

10. **Air Quality**
Explanation: Some minor emissions would occur from the equipment and vehicles used to remove and install the antennas and cables during construction, but these would not appreciably affect air quality.

11. **Noise**
Explanation: Some minor noise would be generated by the equipment and vehicles used to remove and install the antennas and cables during construction. No additional noise would be generated by operation of the equipment. No impacts from noise are expected.

12. **Human Health and Safety**
Explanation: The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health or safety. No impacts to human health and safety are expected.

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: All three sites are existing AT&T sites with regular maintenance work and activities occurring. AT&T would be responsible for notifying landowners about the project.

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

Signed: /s/ Douglas Corkran
Douglas Corkran ECT-4
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: January 8, 2020