

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Big Eddy-Redmond 230kV No.1 Impairments (Update to CX dated October 6, 2022)

**PP&A No.:** 4845

**Project Manager:** Jay Chester, TEP-TPP-1

**Location:** Wasco, Jefferson, and Deschutes County, Oregon

**Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021):** B4.6 Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

**Description of the Proposed Action:** BPA proposes to correct 26 impairments on the Big Eddy-Redmond 230-kV No. 1 line. The impairments encroach on the maximum allowed distance (MAD) between the Big Eddy-Redmond conductor and another object, such as the ground surface. Correction of these impairments is necessary in order to bring the Big Eddy-Redmond No. 1 line into compliance and to accommodate the increased load from the interconnection of 202-MW from renewable energy generation projects. This CX has been updated from the October 6, 2022 version to reflect one additional impairment correction identified on the Big-Eddy-Redmond No. 1 line.

As part of the project, the existing Big Eddy-Redmond Line No.1 would be renamed by splitting it into two sections. The existing Maupin substation, located between Big Eddy and Redmond substations, would be a terminus for the new line names: Big Eddy-Maupin No.1 and Maupin-Redmond No.1. The existing tower markers would be replaced to reflect the name change, and would be done by helicopter, landing when necessary within the right-of-way.

The location of the impairments and associated structure numbers are shown below.

<b>OLD LINE NAME Big Eddy-Redmond No. 1</b>	<b>NEW LINE NAME Big Eddy-Maupin No. 1</b>	<b>Impairment Remediation</b>	<b>Landowner</b>
1/1	1/1	Move center wire and guy 4 feet down on existing pole	BPA
15/1	15/1	Install mid-span structure between 15/1-15/2	private
15/5	15/5	Excavate	private
18/3	18/3	Install mid-span structure between 18/3-18/4	private
18/4	18/4	Install mid-span structure between 18/4-18/5	private

<b>OLD LINE NAME Big Eddy-Redmond No. 1</b>	<b>NEW LINE NAME Big Eddy-Maupin No. 1</b>	<b>Impairment Remediation</b>	<b>Landowner</b>
20/4	20/4	Install mid-span structure between 20/4-20/5	private
21/1	21/1	Install mid-span structure between 21/1-21/2	private
21/3	21/3	Install mid-span structure between 21/3-21/4	private
21/5	21/5	Install mid-span structure between 21/5-22/1	private
27/4	27/4	Excavate	BLM
30/3	30/3	Excavate	private

<b>OLD LINE NAME Big Eddy-Redmond No. 1</b>	<b>NEW LINE NAME Maupin-Redmond No. 1</b>	<b>Impairment Remediation</b>	<b>Landowner</b>
31/7	1/7	Excavate	private
35/2	5/2	Excavate	BLM
35/5	5/5	Replace 5/6 with taller wood pole structure	private
41/6	11/6	Excavate	private
50/6	20/6	Replace 20/6 with taller wood pole structure	private
51/7	21/7	Replace 21/7 with taller wood pole structure	private
53/8	23/8	Excavate	private
59/4	29/4	Excavate	private
60/1	30/1	Excavate	private
62/1	32/1	Replace 31/7 and 32/1 with taller wood pole structure	private
72/5	42/5	Install mid-span structure between 42/5-42/6	private
82/2	52/2	Replace 52/2 with taller wood pole structure	US Forest Service
95/5	65/5	Replace 65/5 and 65/6 with taller wood pole structure	Bureau of Land Management

Impairments would be corrected by either adding a mid-span prop structure, replacing structures with taller structures, or by excavation underneath the line. Prop structures would be two-pole wood structures. Structures being replaced would be replaced in-kind and in the same location, with a taller wood pole structure. In locations being excavated, the soil would be placed near the

removal area within the existing right of way, maintaining similar topography to the surrounding area. In total, the seven excavation areas would be about 1.6 acres in size.

In eight locations, gravel landings ranging from 30-40 feet by 40-60 feet would be constructed adjacent to the structure to allow for the placement of cranes needed to replace structures. Additionally, one landing with dimensions 100 feet by 100 feet would be needed.

BPA may also need to conduct roadwork along its existing dirt access road leading to the structures. Road improvements could include the following activities: blading, shaping, grading, brushing, and placing surface rock on to the existing road prisms. General equipment used for these activities include, bucket trucks with crane, graders, rollers, bulldozers, excavators, and dump trucks. Four-inch aggregate road gravel would be used for this project. Geotextile fabric may be added as needed within the road prism for stabilization of road materials.

**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/ Aaron Shurtliff*  
Aaron Shurtliff  
Environmental Engineer

Concur:

*/s/ Katey C. Grange*  
Katey C. Grange      Date: September 8, 2023  
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:** Big Eddy-Redmond 230kV No. 1 Impairments (Update to CX dated October 6, 2022)

## **Project Site Description**

The project would take place at several locations along the Big Eddy-Redmond No. 1 line between structures 1/1 and 95/5. Land uses along the project include rangeland, agriculture, and rural residential on semi-desert land. The majority of the project is on private land. One structure is on the Crooked River National Grasslands, which is managed by the US Forest Service, and two are on federal lands managed by the Prineville District BLM.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: On June 25, 2021 BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area, the Bureau of Land Management Prineville District Office, the United States Forest Service - Ochoco National Forest, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), and received response from SHPO on June 25, 2021. Cardno, Inc. performed background research and field surveys within the Area of Potential Effect (APE). On September 6, 2022, BPA determined the proposed project would have no effect to historic properties, and no responses were received from consulting parties within the 30-day comment period. One additional impairment was identified after the initial consultation period concluded. Through additional consultation, BPA concluded no effect to historic properties, and consultation concluded for the additional impairment on September 2, 2023, after receiving no response within the 30-day comment period.

Notes:

- Wherever possible, site boundaries would be buffered 30 meters and avoided by all project activities. Where buffering is not possible, a BPA archaeologist would monitor project activities near sites.
- Cultural resource sites would be marked for avoidance or monitored as needed during construction activities.
- In the unlikely event that cultural material is inadvertently encountered during the implementation of this project, BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA and in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Ground disturbance would include excavation to remove the existing impairments, excavation to remove and install the new wood pole structures. Excavated soils for wood pole replacements would be temporarily stored onsite, then backfilled and graded to original contours. Excavated soil to increase the line clearance would be placed adjacent to the removal area, maintaining similar topography to the surrounding area and stabilized.

Notes:

- BPA would implement best management practices (BMPs) to address temporary erosion and sediment control, if required.
- BPA would minimize the work area and route of access to the smallest necessary to safely complete the project.

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

Potential for Significance: No with conditions

Explanation: Vegetation including grasses, forbs, and sagebrush would be crushed or excavated during project construction. In the long term, vegetation would be reestablished with seeding after project construction. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

Notes:

- BPA would perform seeding during the appropriate time period for germination, with a native seed mix, a seed mix recommended by BLM or USFS, or as agreed upon with landowners for use on their property.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from elevated noise from helicopters and equipment and human presence during construction. Noise disturbance would be of short duration and any wildlife disturbed would be expected to return to the area quickly after completion. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies or floodplains are located within the project area.

### **6. Wetlands**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No wetlands are located within the project area.

### **7. Groundwater and Aquifers**

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No excavation would occur below groundwater level.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not change existing land use or disrupt recreational use of the area, nor is the project within a specially-designated area.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would include the addition of new mid-span prop structures in some locations. The new structures would be located along the existing ROW. Towers being replaced with taller structures would remain in their existing locations and would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the area. Areas that would be excavated would be re-contoured to match to the surrounding topography to minimize the long term visual impact.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities would result in a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the project.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. There are no noise-sensitive receptors near the project work areas, and there would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Work crews would follow appropriate safety precautions. Final site conditions would be consistent with existing conditions.

### **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 has consulted with the private landowners, the Prineville District Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and Crooked River National Grasslands, managed by the US Forest Service Ochoco National Forest.

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

Signed: */s/ Aaron Shurtliff*  
Aaron Shurtliff, EP-4  
Environmental Engineer

Date: September 8, 2023