

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Ostrander Substation Reactor Bank and Disconnect Switch Replacements

Project No.: P03622

PP&A Project No.: 4968

Project Manager: Matt Joerin, TEPP-TPP-1

Location: Clackamas County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.7 Electronic equipment; B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes required maintenance at the existing BPA Ostrander Substation in Clackamas County, Oregon. The proposed work includes removal and replacement of a 500-kilovolt (kV) reactor bank (with three single phase units), multiple 500-kV motor operated disconnect switches, and associated actions to replace concrete support pedestals, electrical bus, low voltage electrical panels, conduit, storm drainage, oil containment, grounding, and removal of electrical equipment barrier fence. The new reactor bank would require the installation of an oil containment liner and conveyance that would tie into the existing system at the site. The majority of the proposed maintenance actions would occur in the 500-kV reactor yard and substation bays 5, 6, and 7.

The proposed ground-disturbing actions at Ostrander Substation (i.e., excavating to install new footings, grounding, conduit, and oil containment) would be entirely within the existing, fenced electrical substation yard. No excavation or other actions would extend beyond the perimeter previously disturbed during construction and installation of the substation. Excavated material would be stored temporarily onsite for use as backfill and excess material would be hauled off site for disposal. The equipment necessary for construction may include a crane, excavator, bulldozer, dump truck, vacuum truck, and typical electrical substation maintenance trucks.

All new or replaced relay equipment would be installed on existing racks or new in-kind rack positions inside the control house. No significant interior or exterior building additions or modifications would be required for the proposed action.

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/ Greg Tippetts

Greg Tippetts, EPR-OLYMPIA
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Sarah T. Biegel

Sarah T. Biegel
NEPA Compliance Officer Date: November 28, 2023

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: Ostrander Substation Reactor Bank and Disconnect Switch Replacements

Project Site Description

The Project would occur inside the existing BPA Ostrander Substation on BPA fee-owned property in Clackamas County, Oregon. All proposed actions, including any material laydown or equipment staging, would occur within the existing footprint of the fenced substation yard which has been heavily disturbed and consists of electrical yard rock that is maintained clear of vegetation. No wetlands or water bodies are present within 500 feet of the project site. Outside of the substation yard, the surrounding area is primarily characterized by agricultural land use interspersed with isolated, undeveloped grasslands.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All ground-disturbing activities would occur within the previously-disturbed Ostrander Substation yard. Although Ostrander Substation has been determined eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), the proposed undertaking would not alter the integrity or eligibility of the property. Therefore, the proposed undertaking would have no potential to cause effects on historic properties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Localized ground and soil disturbance would occur during construction in the existing yard. Installation of the new footings and oil containment liner may involve limited excavation into native soils below the substation select fill and yard rock, and the project could generate excess material beyond what could be used as backfill. Standard erosion control measures would be implemented to prevent sediment migration off site. Any excess spoils generated during project activities shall be hauled off site to an approved site.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed work would occur within the existing substation yard, which is maintained clear of vegetation. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed work would occur within the existing substation yard. A species list was generated from the USFWS ECOS-IPaC website on June 27, 2023, pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act to review if any species which are listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area. A review of this list and other resources for the surrounding area found no potential to effect listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species, designated or proposed critical habitat, candidate species, or other special-status species of concern.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed work would occur within the existing substation yard, and no water bodies, floodplains, or fish-bearing streams are present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact water bodies and floodplains and would have no effect on special-status fish species or habitats.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All proposed work would occur within the existing substation yard, and no wetlands are present. Any wetland areas within proximity of the substation footprint would not be impacted by the proposed project.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground excavation for footings and oil containment upgrades could reach groundwater depth below the substation yard. Standard construction Best Management Practices (BMPs) would reduce the potential for inadvertent spills of hazardous materials that could contaminate groundwater or aquifers. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. The project includes adding oil containment upgrades around transformers that would capture oil in the event of equipment failure or spill and minimize any potential for impact to groundwater in the future. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact groundwater or aquifers.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action is consistent with current land uses and the project site is not located in a specially-designated area. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact land use or specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The equipment replacements are similar in size and appearance to existing equipment, and the associated footing modifications in the substation yard would not have a noticeable impact on the baseline visual quality at the site.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction activities have the potential to result in minor and temporary increases in dust and emissions in the local area. Standard erosion and sediment controls would be implemented, as needed. There would be no change to air quality from existing conditions once construction is complete.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project site is in a rural area surrounded by trees and other electric transmission lines and equipment. The activities in the substation yard would be consistent with routine operation and maintenance of an electrical facility. During construction, use of vehicles and equipment, and other general construction activities, could temporarily and intermittently produce noise at levels higher than current conditions. There would be no change in ambient noise from existing conditions once construction is complete.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: All standard safety protocols would be followed throughout project construction, and standard construction BMPs would minimize risk to human health and safety. Therefore, the proposed action would not be expected to impact human 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: 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: Project activities would only occur on BPA fee-owned property inside the existing, operating electrical substation. If needed, a realty specialist would contact adjacent landowner(s) prior to starting construction activities.

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

Signed: /s/ Greg Tippetts
Greg Tippetts, EPR-OLYMPIA
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: November 28, 2023