

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Fiber Installation near Moxee Substation

Project No.: LURR 20230336

Project Manager: Valorie Connell – TERR-Pasco

Location: Yakima County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable; B4.9 Multiple Use of Powerline Rights-of-Way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow Advanced High Speed Internet to make upgrades to associated equipment located within BPA's rights-of-way near the Moxee Substation facility in Yakima County, WA. Project actions would include the upgrade and installation of two new underground fiber cables and associated equipment to support Advanced High Speed Internet's communication equipment. The proposed upgrades to the equipment would involve an approximately 90-foot-long (3-feet deep by 1-foot in depth) trench to supply a new 4-inch-diameter conduit cable feed from an established utility vault on BPA's fee-owned property to a new utility vault located outside of BPA's fee-owned property.

Equipment used would likely include pickup trucks, a small backhoe, and powered hand tools.

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.

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur

Sarah T. Biegel
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.

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Project Site Description

All work would occur within the BPA fee-owned or easement rights-of-way and Yakima County transportation property. The project site is located in Yakima County, WA. The legal parcel description is Township 13 North, Range 19 East, Section 24, and Township 13 North, Range 19 East, Section 25. The proposed site of construction has previous ground disturbance and is located in areas that are graveled, paved, or have compacted soils. The established low rise concrete utility vault is located outside and west of the fenced-in Midway-Moxee fiber communications building and equipment yard and is separated by low-lying vegetation and disturbed soils.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work does not include activities that would affect cultural or historic resources. BPA historian review has shown that the proposed project would have no potential to cause effect to historic properties or cultural resources.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance would occur at the existing communication site; however, the area of ground-disturbing activities would take place in and around previous ground disturbance. These disturbed areas include graveled, mulched, paved, and/or compacted soils. The Midway-Moxee fiber site would be returned to pre-project conditions surrounding the proposed construction area.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minimal disturbance is anticipated. The project would be occurring in the BPA fee-owned property which is managed for low-growing vegetation. The project locations are both vegetated and non-vegetated with native and non-native grasses. There are no Federal or state special-status species and/or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no Federal or state special-status species or habitats at any of the sites that would be impacted by the project. Workstation sites are located within well-established areas outside designated critical habitat. Temporary disturbance to non-sensitive wildlife may occur during work periods, but it is anticipated that wildlife would distribute to adjacent habitats and that noise disturbance would be consistent with ongoing operations of the sites.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: No water bodies, floodplains, or fish disturbance would occur at the existing communication sites.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetlands at the existing communication site.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Ground disturbance would occur at the existing communication site; however, the construction area would take place in and around previous ground disturbance. These areas include graveled, paved, and/or compacted soils. No disturbance to groundwater and aquifers would take place.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There would be no change to land use at any of the locations. None of the sites are in specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The presence of the proposed associated equipment would have no effect to the visual quality and would be similar to pre-project conditions.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction; however, there would be no significant changes to air quality during or after construction.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Construction noise would be temporary and would only occur during daylight hours. Operation noise would not change.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed work would improve work areas and structural integrity of structures that support network operations and would maintain reliable access for associated equipment.

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: The BPA Midway-Moxee fiber compound and substation is located on BPA-owned property, no additional notification is required for work on BPA property; however, additional landowner notification, involvement, or coordination with Yakima County Lands and Transportation would be required by Advanced High Speed Internet.

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

Signed:

Sylas Daughtrey
Environmental Protection Specialist