

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Benton PUD's Southridge Substation Interconnection

**Project No.:** L0372

**Project Manager:** Jared Lacambra – TPCF-MEAD-GOB

**Location:** Benton County, WA

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

**Description of the Proposed Action:** The Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to construction interconnection facilities (a tap) on the existing Franklin-Badger Canyon No.1, 115-kV transmission line between structures 12/4 and 12/5. The tap would allow Benton County Public Utility District (BPUD) to interconnect their proposed Southridge Substation into BPA's transmission system. The request was entered into BPA's Line and Load Interconnection Queue as Request No. L0372. Benton PUD's substation will serve load growth in the Tri-Cities area, including a nearby hospital, school, commercial, and residential buildings.

The tap would include installation of four sectionalizing disconnect structures and two switch stands. Each structure would be installed below the existing transmission line and would be approximately 60 feet in height. The switch stands would be mounted towards the top of the disconnect structures and connected to the existing transmission lines.

Ground disturbances around each of the six structures would occur within a 50 foot radius of the wooden pole and include guy wires, guy anchors, and electrical grounding. The disturbed area would be restored with native grasses upon project completion.

BPA would also install, own, and maintain a single non-redundant metering package pre-mounted on a free standing equipment rack at the proposed BPUD Southridge substation.

Access to BPA's proposed project area would occur via BPUD's new Southridge Substation, which would be located immediately to the South of BPA's project area.

**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/ Michael Henjum

Michael Henjum

Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: February 28, 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 proposed project area is located approximately 5 miles SW of Kennewick, WA and is located within a well-developed industrial complex. The industrial complex is approximately 60 acres in size and is shared by multiple private companies. The proposed project area is a heavily disturbed flat area that contains about 50% sparse, low growing vegetation, primarily grass. The remaining area contains non-native rock material that was brought in prior to BPA’s project initiation. To the north of the proposed project area is an engineered seasonal canal that has tall, reinforced walls to prevent water from departing from the designated route. Benton PUD’s new Southridge Substation would be located immediately to the south of the proposed project area. Adjacent to the industrial complex is a mix of rural, vacant land and small residential housing developments.

## Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

<b>Environmental Resource Impacts</b>	<b>No Potential for Significance</b>	<b>No Potential for Significance, with Conditions</b>
<b>1. Historic and Cultural Resources</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> BPA’s archaeologists determined that the proposed project would have no potential to affect historic properties or cultural resources. On January 25, 2019, the Washington State Department of Archaeology &amp; Historic Preservation concurred with this determination. The Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation were also consulted regarding the project. BPA did not receive responses from the tribes on project initiation nor on BPA’s determination of no effect.</p> <p>NOTE: Treat potential discoveries of archeological materials with the “inadvertent discovery” guidelines: Stop work, contact BPA ECT lead and BPA ECC archeologist for further notifications, and ensure integrity of site and materials until further instructions.</p>		
<b>2. Geology and Soils</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Soils within the project area consist of Warden silt loam, with 0 to 5 percent slopes. This soil type consists of very deep, well drained soils formed on a thin mantle of loess over lacustrine sediments. The well drained nature of the onsite soils and the nearly flat surfaces makes this project unlikely to negatively impact geology and soils.</p>		
<b>3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Temporal impacts to the existing vegetation, including low growing grasses and weeds, are likely for vehicle and construction equipment to work within the project area. Long-term impacts to vegetation within the project area are anticipated to be negligible and site restoration with native grasses is anticipated. Access to the project site would occur via Benton PUD’s existing gravel road.</p>		

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



Explanation: The project area is adjacent to well-developed mixed use industrial land and no suitable wildlife habitat was observed. The engineered canal to the north of the project area is bermed and appears hydrologically isolated from the project area. No other unique environmental features (e.g., water bodies, wetlands, topographic variation) exists within or adjacent to the project area. If any active bird nests are observed on the nearby towers prior to construction, the construction would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied.

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



Explanation: The engineered canal to the north of the project area is bermed and appears hydrologically isolated from the project area. No other water bodies, floodplains, or other fish habitat exists near the project area.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present or in close proximity to the project area.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: Construction BMPs would be required to mitigate against onsite erosion and offsite sediment transport.

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



Explanation: The project would be consistent with the existing, industrial land use. There are no specially designated areas.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The project area is surrounded by a variety of industrial activities and is within an existing BPA Right of Way (ROW). Adding the tap structures to BPA's existing transmission line would be consistent with the existing site conditions.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions may occur on a short term basis during construction. These short term effects are unlikely to contribute to significant air quality issues.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Installation noise would be minimal, temporary, and occur during daytime hours. Operational noise would not change.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: This project would require the review and approval of a site-specific safety plan, which would help keep construction personnel and potential public bystanders safe during the short-term project implementation phase. No long-term impacts to human health and safety are anticipated.

### **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:

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### **Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination**

Description: Rights to perform this work would be verified by BPA realty specialists prior to project implementation. No public outreach or involvement has occurred as part of this environmental review.

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

Signed: /s/ Michael Henjum  
Michael Henjum  
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: February 28, 2019