

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Bundled T-Mobile Telecommunications Upgrades at Petrovitsky and Tahoma

Project Manager: Jonathan Toobian – TELP-TPP-3

Location: King County, Washington

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

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow T-Mobile to upgrade two of its existing telecommunications facilities collocated with BPA-owned transmission structures in King County, Washington. The work would vary slightly between the two sites and would generally consist of removing and/or installing structure-mounted telecommunications equipment, including panel antennas, tower-mounted amplifiers, remote radio units, pendants, and coaxial cables. In both cases, the quantity and/or configuration of equipment on the transmission towers would change slightly from the current state.

To ensure safety, BPA and its subcontractors would complete the equipment removal and installation on the transmission structures. In addition to upgrading equipment on the transmission structures, removal and/or replacement of telecommunications equipment would occur in T-Mobile's fenced equipment areas, which are located on the ground underneath or adjacent to the transmission structures. The project would not involve any soil excavation or grading and would use established access roads and work areas. No vegetation removal is proposed.

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/ W. Walker Stinnette

W. Walker Stinnette
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol P. Leiter

Carol P. Leiter

Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Date: January 8, 2020

Katey Grange

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: Bundled T-Mobile Telecommunications Upgrades at Petrovitsky and Tahoma

Project Site Description

The project site consists of two existing T-Mobile telecommunications facilities collocated with BPA-owned transmission structures in eastern King County, Washington:

Petrovitsky: Tower 6/3 on the Covington-Maple Valley No. 2 transmission line (Section 6, Township 22 North, Range 6 East)

Tahoma: Tower 4/5 on the Covington-Maple Valley No. 2 transmission line (Section 18, Township 22 North, Range 6 East)

Each facility has a fenced telecommunications equipment area on the ground beneath or adjacent to the transmission structures. Both facilities are located within BPA's transmission right-of-way (ROW) easement on privately-owned property. The ROW contains features consistent with rural residential land use, including graveled and paved roads and driveways, fencing, low-lying buildings, and vehicle and materials storage. Ground cover around the telecommunications facilities is characterized by low-growing native and non-native herbaceous and shrub species. Outside of the ROW, the surrounding land use is rural residential, with a mosaic of forested, agricultural, and cleared land. There are no wetlands mapped within 500 feet of the project site. The closest surface water body is a small pond located approximately 280 feet east-southeast of the Tahoma facility.

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"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> As no soil excavation would occur as a result of this undertaking, and minor additive features do not adversely impact the integrity of historic transmission infrastructure, BPA has determined that this undertaking has No Potential to Effect historic properties. No additional review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act is required for this action at this time.</p>		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Minor soil compaction from vehicle and equipment use could occur within the project site. However, geology and soils within and around the project site were previously disturbed during construction of the transmission towers, telecommunications facilities, and access roads.</p>		
3. Plants (including Federal/state special-status species and habitats)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> Project-related activities (e.g. vehicle and equipment use) could cause removal of vegetation cover in small areas where vegetation is present. No additional tree or vegetation removal is proposed. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species or plant species protected under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) near the project site. The project site does not contain habitat suitable for protected plant species. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected plant species.</p>		

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



Explanation: There are a total of ten documented bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) occurrences within 5 miles of either facility. The two closest occurrences are approximately 0.9 miles west of the Tahoma facility and approximately 1.1 miles north-northwest of the Petrovitsky facility. Minor and temporary disruption of normal wildlife behavior could occur from elevated noise and human presence during project implementation. However, wildlife species that may be present in the area would likely be habituated to human activity, including noise from vehicles and equipment and other disturbances associated with rural residential land use. No other special-status wildlife species, wildlife species protected under the Federal ESA, or suitable protected species habitat are expected to occur at the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no effect on protected wildlife species.

If any active nests are found on the steel-lattice transmission structures, then the project would be delayed until the nests are unoccupied.

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



Explanation: The project would use established access roads and work areas, and no soil excavation is proposed. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status or ESA-listed fish or fish habitat near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on these resources.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: No wetlands are present within or near the project site. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: The project would not involve any soil excavation. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on groundwater and aquifers.

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



Explanation: There would be no change in land use at the project site. No specially-designated areas are in the project vicinity.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: There would be no change in visual quality at the project site. The final configurations of structure-mounted and ground level equipment would be consistent with the existing visual quality of the site.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: Temporary and minor dust and vehicle emissions would increase in the local area from use of vehicles and equipment during project implementation. There would be no long-term changes in air quality following completion of the project.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: Project-related noise would be minor and temporary and would occur during daylight hours. Operational noise would not change from current ambient conditions.

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 and safety. No impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of project activities.

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: The transmission structures are owned by BPA. T-Mobile is responsible for acquiring and maintaining easements for their facilities from underlying landowners.

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

Signed: /s/ W. Walker Stinnette Date: January 8, 2020
W. Walker Stinnette
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT