

# Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration  
Department of Energy



**Proposed Action:** Toledo Substation Breaker Addition Project

**Project No.:** P02230

**Project Manager:** Rasha Kroonen, TEPS-TPP-1

**Location:** Lincoln 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:** Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to install two new breakers, associated electrical equipment, and new stormwater infrastructure at BPA's Toledo Substation. The installation requires an about 40,800 sq. ft. (120 feet by 340 feet) substation expansion to the south.

Preparations for expanding the substation yard would require the demolition of the existing perimeter fence along the southern end of the substation, excavation of a linear soil berm (up to 22 feet below grade in some areas) down to the same elevation as the existing substation yard, and installation of a cast-in place retaining wall and grounded security fence where the berm is currently located. The expanded substation yard would be backfilled using previously-excavated soils, graded flat, and rocked. Excess soil would be disposed of offsite at a BPA approved location.

Protection and control equipment would be upgraded within the existing control house. The new breakers and associated equipment would be installed on concrete footings. The proposed equipment includes one 230kV breaker with associated disconnects, and another 69kV breaker and associated disconnect switches. Following installation of the breakers, a substation disconnect switch would be removed from service.

New drainage and stormwater management infrastructure would be installed in the expansion area, including a 10-foot by 43-foot-long detention pond.

**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/ Becky Hill

Becky Hill  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Carol Leiter

Carol Leiter  
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Katey C. Grange                      May 11, 2021

Katey C. Grange                      Date  
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:** Toledo Substation Breaker Addition Project

## **Project Site Description**

The project area is located within and immediately adjacent to BPA's Toledo Substation on BPA fee-owned property. The substation is located on the eastern side (inland) of the coastal town of Toledo, Oregon, and is surrounded by lowland pastures, wetlands, coastal creeks and streams, and semi-rural residences. Sturdevant Road runs north-south between Toledo Substation and Olalla Creek and its associated slough and floodplain. The project area is located about 650 feet east of Ollala Creek and about 300 feet east of the slough and floodplain habitat associated with the creek. The project area is located about 100 feet east of a FEMA Q3 floodplain boundary line associated with Ollala Creek.

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

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

**Explanation:** The BPA archaeologist initiated Section 106 consultation on October 5, 2020 with the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and the Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

On December 11, 2020, the BPA archaeologist determined that implementation of the proposed undertaking would result in no adverse effect to historic properties.

SHPO concurred with BPA's determination on January 8, 2021 and requested that an Inadvertent Discovery Plan be in place and on-site during construction activities. No responses were received from the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde or the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.

**Notes:**

- An Inadvertent Discovery Plan with contact information would be supplied to the construction contractor prior to commencing construction work. Should any cultural resources be discovered during project activities, then all project work must stop in the area, and the cultural resources lead should be notified immediately.

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

Potential for Significance: No

**Explanation:** A site-specific Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan has been developed to ensure that erosion and sedimentation from excavated soils do not enter waterways. All excavated soils that cannot be reused on site would be disposed of at a BPA-approved disposal location.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed project area has no Federal or state listed special-status plant species that would be impacted by the project. Vegetation that would be removed as a result of the substation's expansion include the following: Douglas-fir, hemlock, maple and cedar trees, sword and bracken fern, salmonberry, Scotch broom, salal, trailing and Himalayan blackberry, and rushes and cattail.

Notes:

- A native erosion control seed-mix would be sowed in disturbed areas after construction is completed.

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

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: The proposed project area has no Federal or state listed special-status wildlife species or habitat that would be impacted by the project. Less than 1 acre (about 40,800 sq. ft.) of moderate quality, mixed conifer hardwood wildlife habitat would be removed as a result of the project. Vegetation removal associated with the substation expansion is expected to begin in the fall of 2021 and would only remove a portion of the mixed conifer hardwood habitat that is available in the stand located to the south of the substation. It is anticipated that wildlife would relocate to this remaining segment of forest habitat. This work would occur outside of the nesting and sensitive breeding seasons for most birds and wildlife species, thereby reducing the potential impacts to wildlife species at their most vulnerable time of the year to a low level.

Notes:

- Vegetation removal would occur outside of the nesting and sensitive breeding seasons (February 15 through August 15) for most birds and wildlife species.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project area does not contain any water bodies, floodplains, or surface connectivity to fish streams. Olalla Creek and its adjacent slough habitat are used by Coho and fall Chinook salmon, and coastal cutthroat trout and winter steelhead, and is designated critical habitat for Coho salmon. There would be no impacts to these resources due to the distance of the work areas from the waterbodies and the implementation of erosion control BMPs.

### 6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There are no wetland in or near the work areas. There is an area about 5 sq. ft. in size, located on the southern side of the Toledo substation that exhibits some wetland characteristics (e.g., aquatic vegetation and small puddle of standing water during the winter months). However, because of the lack of hydric soils due to its location in a previously disturbed substation perimeter area, its isolated location wedged in a narrow depression between the soil berm and the substation's gravel apron, and the minimal size of potential impacts, proposed work in this wet area would not require a permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers or the State of Oregon Department of State Lands.

## 7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Spill prevention measures would be utilized during construction activities. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination.

## 8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The Toledo Substation is not located in a specially-designated area and is situated within a larger parcel of land owned in fee by BPA. The limits of the BPA-owned parcel would not change as a result of the substation expansion and would not infringe upon nearby easements or adjoining properties. Land use of the expansion area would change from mixed forest habitat to developed substation property, as was BPA's original intention when BPA acquired the lot. The substation expansion would be consistent with adjacent land uses such as the ongoing operation and maintenance of the Toledo Substation and transmission line corridors.

## 9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: While there would be a reduction in forest vegetation, but the substation's expansion and installation of new equipment would be consistent with the overall existing visual quality. Therefore, the project would not substantially change the visual quality of the site.

## 10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: There may be a small amount of temporary dust and vehicle emissions during construction; however, there would be no substantial changes to air quality after construction is completed.

## 11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No with Conditions

Explanation: Three residences are within 1,000 feet of the project area, with the closest being about 200 feet south of the project area. Some temporary construction noise would occur during intermittent periods of time during daylight hours during the fall and the spring for one construction season. After project completion, the operational noise at the substation would not change. The project would not substantially change the noise quality of the area, beyond temporary construction-related noise impacts.

Notes:

- Best management practices for noise avoidance would be implemented, if feasible

## 12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During project activities, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Therefore, project activities would not impact human health or 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: The project would only occur on BPA fee-owned property; however, nearby landowners would be notified of the project prior to construction by the BPA Realty Specialist.

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

Signed: /s/ Becky Hill May 11, 2021  
Becky Hill, ECT-4 Date  
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist  
Flux Resources, LLC