

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: City of Ellensburg Water and Gas Pipeline Installations on East Ellensburg Tap to Columbia-Ellensburg No. 1

Project No.: LURR-20210048

Project Manager: Keith D. Kistler, TERR-SICKLER

Location: Kittitas County, Washington

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.9 Multiple use of powerline rights-of-way

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to allow the City of Ellensburg (the City) to install underground gas and water pipelines on BPA fee-owned property immediately south of the East Ellensburg Tap to Columbia-Ellensburg No. 1 between transmission structures 1/6 and 1/7 near Ellensburg, Kittitas County, Washington (Township 18 North, Range 18 East, and Section 35). The proposed action is part of the City's larger project to install new pipelines along the existing West Helena Avenue.

On BPA property, the City would install approximately 20 feet of new 4-inch-diameter polyethylene gas pipeline and approximately 100 feet of new 16-inch-diameter ductile iron water pipeline in one shared trench. The maximum buried depths would range from 3 to 13 feet (typically 3 to 4 feet), with the maximum depth in the western portion of BPA property for the approach under the existing Town Canal located off the BPA property farther to the west.

The proposed action would require the use of an excavator and a front-end loader. No materials or heavy equipment staging would occur on BPA property.

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/ Sarah T. Biegel October 5, 2021

Sarah T. Biegel 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: City of Ellensburg Water and Gas Pipeline Installations on East Ellensburg Tap to Columbia-Ellensburg No. 1

Project Site Description

The project site is located on BPA fee-owned property that is parallel to and immediately south of BPA's East Ellensburg Tap to Columbia-Ellensburg No. 1 transmission line between transmission structures 1/6 and 1/7 in Ellensburg, Kittitas County, Washington (Township 18 North, Range 18 East, Section 35). The pipelines would be installed for the entire length of the BPA property within the existing, graveled West Helena Avenue roadbed. Little to no vegetation is present within the project site, with the exception of some regularly mowed grasses along the road margins. Town Canal, an artificial irrigation canal, is located approximately 30 feet west of the BPA property. The underlying Brickmill soil series is not hydric, and no wetlands are present within or near the project site. A private residence is located on the north side of West Helena Avenue, and a recently installed gravel parking lot is immediately south of the road. Surrounding land uses consist of low-density residential and agricultural properties.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: On March 18, 2021, BPA initiated National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation with the following parties:

- Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation
- Washington Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation (DAHP)

On August 12, 2021, BPA determined that the proposed undertaking would result in no historic properties affected (BPA CR Project No.: WA 2021 064; DAHP Log No.: 2021-03-01635-BPA). Concurrence with BPA's determination was received from DAHP on August 12, 2021. No other comments were received.

Notes:

- Implement an IDP in the unlikely event that cultural material is encountered during the implementation of this project. BPA would require that work be halted in the vicinity of the finds to ensure integrity of the site and materials until they can be inspected and assessed by BPA in consultation with the appropriate consulting parties.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action includes excavation of an approximately 100-foot trench typically 3 to 4 feet deep; although up to 13 feet deep on the approach to Town Canal. The trench would be excavated within the existing West Helena Avenue roadbed. Standard construction best management practices would prevent soil erosion and sedimentation, and the site would be returned to original grade following installation of the pipelines.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action could crush, strip, or cover some regularly mowed, low-growing grasses along the margins of West Helena Avenue. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status plant species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status plant species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Minor and temporary wildlife disturbance could occur from construction noise. However, wildlife species that could be present in the area would likely be habituated to this level of disturbance given surrounding land uses. There are no documented occurrences of any special-status wildlife species near the project site, and no suitable special-status species habitat is present. Therefore, the proposed action would have no effect on special-status wildlife species or habitats.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Town Canal is located approximately 30 feet west of the BPA property. The proposed action would require minor ground disturbance, and standard construction best management practices would prevent soil erosion and sedimentation from impacting the canal. No special-status fish species 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: No wetlands are present within the project site. Standard construction best management practices would prevent soil erosion and sedimentation from impacting off-site wetlands, if present. Therefore, the proposed action would not impact wetlands.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would not generate or use hazardous materials that would contaminate groundwater or aquifers, if present. No new wells or other uses of groundwater or aquifers are proposed. 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 would temporarily and intermittently impact adjacent residential properties and traffic flow on West Helena Avenue due to construction noise, traffic restrictions, and blocked access. Traffic would be limited on West Helena Avenue to the north side of the road during construction. Construction would be temporary (up to two weeks) and would intermittently impact access during typical working hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). Access would remain open at all other times. The City has been, and would continue to be, in coordination with all abutting property owners to maintain private property access through completion of the project. There would be no permanent change in land use, and the proposed action would not impact any specially-designated areas.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, the presence of construction equipment and general construction activities, including trench excavation and minor vegetation disturbance, would cause temporary visual impacts. However, no above ground structures are proposed, and disturbed areas would be returned to original conditions. There would be no permanent change in visual quality following completion of the proposed action.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would cause a minor and temporary increase in dust and vehicle emissions in the local area from general construction activities. Standard construction best management practices would minimize dust. There would be no long-term change in air quality following completion of the proposed action.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: During construction, use of vehicles and equipment and general construction activities would create noise above current ambient conditions. Construction noise would be audible from residential properties located near the project site. Noise impacts would be temporary (up to two weeks) and intermittent and would only occur during typical working hours (approximately 7 AM to 7 PM). There would be no long-term change in ambient noise following completion of the project.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The proposed action would be completed by professionals trained in proper techniques and equipment use. The project would not generate or use hazardous materials and would not create conditions that would increase risk to human health and safety. Therefore, no impacts to human health and safety are expected as a result of the proposed action.

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 City has been coordinating with adjacent landowners and would be responsible for continued coordination through completion of the project.

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 October 5, 2021
W. Walker Stinnette, EC-4 Date
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Salient CRGT