

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration
Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Grand Coulee Switchyard Asset Transfer Project

PP&A No.: 4740

Project Manager: Roy Slocum – TPOP-TPP-4

Location: Grant County, WA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.24 Property Transfers

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes a transfer of assets from the United States Department of Interior (DOI) Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) to BPA at Grand Coulee including the Grand Coulee 500kV, 230kV and 115kV switchyards and associated tie lines. Reclamation would transfer the following transmission assets to BPA:

- Grand Coulee 500 kV Switchyard
- Grand Coulee 500/230 CSY Tie line (Line Circuit 7)
- Grand Coulee 230 kV Switchyard
- Grand Coulee 230/115 kV Tie (Line Circuit 6)
- Grand Coulee 115 kV Switchyard
- Grand Coulee 11.95 kV Switchgear (located inside the 115 kV Switchyard)

The proposed transfer of assets would not require any alterations or modifications and the assets would operate in a similar manner. There would be no ground disturbing activity and there would be no transfer of land ownership. The only change would be in ownership of assets, through an intergovernmental asset transfer of the specified assets, all other equipment and assets would be retained by USBR.

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/ Adrienne Wojtasz

Adrienne Wojtasz

Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Concur:

/s/ Katey Grange

Katey C. Grange

NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 27, 2021

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: Grand Coulee Switchyard Asset Transfer Project

Project Site Description

The project area is located on Bureau of Recreation-owned property adjacent to the Grand Coulee Dam and Lake Roosevelt. The 115 kV and 230 kV substations are adjacent to one another, located on the western side of the Grand Coulee Dam, at an elevation of approximately 1,650 feet above sea level. The 500 kV substation yard is located approximately one mile west of the 115 kV and 230 kV substation yards at an elevation of approximately 2,400 feet above sea level. The project area consists equipment within these substation yards; however, the Bureau of Reclamation would retain ownership of the land. The vegetation surrounding the substation is sparse grassland. The surrounding land use is recreational and undeveloped

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

1. Historic and Cultural Resources

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The 500kV Switchyard (Property ID: 720944) was evaluated by BPA and determined eligible through the Grand Coulee Grid Modernization Project (BPA CR Project No.: 2019 237, DAHP Log No.: 2019-12-09531). A historic property report was submitted through WISAARD on February 11, 2020. The 500kV Switchyard is eligible under Criterion A for its significant role in the production of power, and the expansion of production of power for the region and its association with the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam Third Power Plant. The 500kV Switchyard is a contributing resource to the Grand Coulee Dam Historic District (not yet listed in the National Register). The 115kV Switchyard (Property ID: 586391) was previously determined not eligible in 2012 and the 230kV Switchyard (Property ID: 586392) was previously determined eligible in 2012.

BPA initiated consultation with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation (CTCR), Washington Department of Archaeology & Historic Preservation, and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) on June 17, 2021 and determined that the transfer of assets would have no adverse effect on historic properties. SHPO concurred with the determination on August 17, 2021; no response was received from the CTCR or Reclamation.

2. Geology and Soils

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Acquisition of equipment would not involve any ground-disturbing work.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Acquisition of equipment would not involve any ground-disturbing work.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Acquisition of equipment would not involve any ground-disturbing work.

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

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Acquisition of equipment would not involve any ground-disturbing work.

6. Wetlands

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Acquisition of equipment would not involve any ground-disturbing work.

7. Groundwater and Aquifers

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Acquisition of equipment would not involve any ground-disturbing work.

8. Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will be retaining underlying land ownership.

9. Visual Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Transfer of assets would not involve any changes to the transmission or substation facilities.

10. Air Quality

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Transfer of assets would not involve any work or electrical changes that would affect emissions.

11. Noise

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: Transfer of assets would not involve any work or electrical changes that would produce noise.

12. Human Health and Safety

Potential for Significance: No

Explanation: The project would not create additional health and human safety hazards.

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 Parties have agreed to BPA acquisition of Reclamation owned Grand Coulee Switchyards through an intergovernmental asset transfer per MOU.

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

Signed: /s/ Adrienne Wojtasz
Adrienne Wojtasz – EPR-BELL
Physical Scientist (Environmental)

Date: September 27, 2021