

United States Government

Department of Energy
Bonneville Power Administration

memorandum

DATE: January 13, 2010

REPLY TO
ATTN OF: KEC-4

SUBJECT: Environmental Clearance Memorandum

TO: Charla Burke
Electrical Engineer – TESD-CSB-2

Proposed Action: Flathead Substation Bay Addition - L0307

Budget Information: Work Order # 00004866, Task 04

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.6 “Additions or modifications to electric power transmission facilities that would not affect the environment beyond the previously developed facility area...”

Location: Flathead County, Montana (T29N, R21W, Section 30)

Proposed by: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and Flathead Electric Cooperative (FEC)

Description of the Proposed Action: FEC has requested a new 230-kilovolt (kV) point of delivery at BPA’s Flathead Substation to serve FEC’s new 230/69-kV transformer and 69-kV system upgrades. FEC is upgrading their 34.5-kV sub-transmission system to 69-kV operation to serve continued load growth in the greater Kalispell, Montana area. In order to accommodate this request, BPA proposes to expand the Flathead Substation yard to convert an existing bay (Bay #15) to connect FEC’s new transformer and relocate the equipment from the converted bay to a new bay (Bay #16).

BPA would expand the 305 foot length of the substation yard approximately 80 feet to the north, including extending the perimeter fence, ground mat, substation rock and drainage ditch. Within the existing and expanded electrical yard, the project would require a new termination dead-end structure, circuit breakers, disconnect switches, metering, connection of equipment to the ground mat, and bus-work. The yard expansion area is located in an existing, cleared right-of-way, directly beneath BPA’s Libby-Conkelley #1 230-kV transmission line.

BPA would also construct a new intermediate H-frame steel-pole structure between structures 68/3 and 68/4 on the existing Libby-Conkelley #1 230-kV transmission line, adjacent to the substation. The new structure is needed to provide adequate clearance between the transmission line and the new Bay #16 disconnect switches below. The 2-pole structure would be located in a previously disturbed area, currently used as an agricultural field. BPA would be responsible for all work within BPA’s electrical yard and for construction of the new intermediate line structure.

Findings: BPA has determined that the proposed action complies with Section 1021.410 and Appendix B of Subpart D 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). The proposed action does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. The proposal is not connected [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(1)] to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts [40 C.F.R. 1508.25(a)(2)], and is not precluded

by 40 C.F.R. 1506.1 or 10 C.F.R. 1021.211. Moreover, the proposed action would not (i) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, (ii) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities, (iii) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases, or (iv) adversely affect environmentally sensitive resources.

BPA would be conducting work within the existing disturbed electrical yard; there is no vegetation in the yard and no habitat or special areas of interest that would be disturbed from this work. The yard expansion area and intermediate line structure are on BPA fee-owned property and right of way located in an agricultural field within 0.25 miles of residential housing and commercial development. No suitable habitat for threatened or endangered species is present in the project vicinity.

There will be no effect to floodplains or wetlands and no tree clearing required for the proposed project.

An historic evaluation of the Flathead Substation found that the substation was not eligible for the National Registry, and a pedestrian survey did not find evidence of cultural resources in the vicinity of the expansion area or new intermediate tower site. On December 15, 2009, the Montana State Historic Preservation Office concurred with BPA's determination that no historic properties will be affected by the proposed project.

Based on the above information and the attached environmental checklist, this proposed action meets the requirements for the Categorical Exclusion referenced above. We therefore determine that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

/s/ Makary Hutson

Makary Hutson
Environmental Project Manager

Concur:

/s/ Katherine S. Pierce

Katherine S. Pierce
NEPA Compliance Officer

DATE: January 13, 2010

Attachment:

Environmental Provisions

ATTACHMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL PROVISIONS

This categorical exclusion will meet the following provisions:

1. In the unlikely event that cultural resources are uncovered during construction, work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery will be halted, and BPA will consult with the Montana State Historic Preservation Officer, the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation, and a BPA Archaeologist.
2. All standard erosion and sediment control Best Management Practices (BMPs) will be used for any ground disturbances and road improvements to avoid/minimize excessive erosion, soil sloughing, and other surface alterations during the construction phase.
3. No in-stream work. All ground disturbing work, refueling of vehicles and vehicle maintenance should not take place where any spilled material may enter any natural or manmade drainage conveyance including ditches, catch basins and pipes. Drip pans and absorbent pads will be placed under all leaking construction equipment.
4. Maintain appropriate emergency spill response materials on-site to control unexpected and unanticipated releases of petroleum-based products or other hazardous materials. Have emergency supplies in an easily accessible location and clearly marked. Disposal of any spill material will be in accordance with applicable state and Federal requirements. Immediately notify the KEP Environmental Lead in the event of a spill or release to the environment.
5. If there are any changes in construction activities that require relocation or change of work parameters, or for sites that have not been previously identified as work sites, construction shall not proceed until the KEP Environmental Lead for this project can evaluate those changes.

Environmental Checklist for Categorical Exclusions

Name of Proposed Project: Flathead Substation Bay Addition – L0307

Budget Number: Work Order 00004866, Task 04

This project has been found to not adversely affect the following environmentally sensitive resources, laws, and regulations:

Environmental Resources	No Adverse Effect	No Adverse Effect with conditions
1. Cultural Resources Concurrence with BPA's determination of no affect to historic properties was received from the Montana SHPO on 12/15/2009, and from The Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes of the Flathead Nation on 12/24/2009.	X	
2. T & E Species, or their habitat(s) No T&E species or their habitats are present in the project area.	X	
3. Floodplains or wetlands No floodplains or wetlands are present in the area.	X	
4. Areas of special designation There are not any areas of special designation present in the project vicinity.	X	
5. Health & safety There are no known health and safety concerns from the proposed project.	X	
6. Prime agricultural lands The project is not located on prime agricultural lands.	X	
7. Special sources of water There are not any special sources of water present in the project area	X	
8. Consistency with state/local laws and regulations There are no state or local laws or regulations applicable to the interconnection work.	X	
9. Pollution control at Federal facilities Typical construction wastes may be generated (oil and vehicle fuel). Control measures would help prevent accidental release of hazardous materials and clean-up and disposal would be according to applicable hazardous waste laws and regulations.	X	

Note: Supporting documentation is in the official project file.

Signed: /s/ Makary Hutson

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