



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: Blythe-Knob 161-kV Transmission Line, Pole Replacements at Interstate 10 Crossing

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration, Desert Southwest Region

Location(s) (City/County/State): Blythe, Riverside County, California

Proposed Action Description:

Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to replace two existing wood pole structures on the existing Blythe-Knob 161-kV transmission line in Blythe, Riverside County, California. The original wood structures on the Blythe-Knob 161-kV transmission line have been in service since 1950s. The two structures on either side of Interstate 10 (1-2 and 1-3) recently failed wood pole testing and must be replaced: structure 1-2, north of the freeway, is 65 feet tall and structure 1-3, south of the freeway, is 60 feet tall. The project is needed to ensure the safe and continuous operation of the bulk electrical system, and to prevent hazards to traffic on Interstate 10 below the affected span. The project is on private land in Township 6 South, Range 22 East, Sections 32 and 33 (San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian) in Blythe, Riverside County, California.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.3 - Routine maintenance

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of [10 CFR Part 1021](#).

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) 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; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) 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 listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Date Determined:

8-3-15

Blythe-Knob 161-kV Transmission Line
Pole Replacements at Interstate 10 Crossing, Blythe, California
Categorical Exclusion Continuation Sheet

Project Description

The scope of work is to replace the two wood H-frame structures with new wood pole structures and associated hardware. The new structures will be installed within five to fifteen feet of the existing structure locations. The conductors will be pinned to the new structures prior to unpinning from the old structures, thereby reducing risk of unfastened conductors reaching the Interstate 10 roadway during change-over. The old wood poles will be cut off at ground level or fully removed once change-over is complete. The proposed work will be conducted by staging equipment and vehicles within a 150-foot by 100-foot work area, centered at the structure and within the existing 100-foot right-of-way (ROW). Access will be via existing public and right-of-way roads.

The proposed work will begin no sooner than August 10, 2015. The new structures will be installed first; the old structures will be removed two to three weeks later. All project work is expected to be complete by September 31, 2015.

Special Conditions

1) BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

- a) Project activities will be conducted outside the breeding bird season, as feasible. If ground- or vegetation-disturbing project activities will occur during the breeding bird season (generally February 15 to August 31), a qualified biologist will conduct pre-construction surveys for nesting birds.

2) CULTURAL RESOURCES

- a) In the event of cultural, archaeological, or paleontological discoveries, work activities will cease in the vicinity of the discovery and Western's Archaeologist (303-328-1779) and Environmental Manager (602-605-2524) must be notified immediately. Work will not proceed until directed to do so by Western's Archaeologist.

3) HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

- a) Treated wood product scrap, poles, and crossarms transported off-site for disposal or storage shall be accompanied by a bill of lading. Transport of treated wood items shall be coordinated with Western's Environmental Affairs (602-605-2764).

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

| Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410) | Disagree | Agree | Unknown |
|---|----------|-------|---------|
| (b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix A or B to subpart D. | | X | |
| (b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources | | X | |
| (b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation. | | X | |
| B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B. : | NO | YES | UNKNOWN |
| (1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders. | X | | |
| (2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; | X | | |
| (3) 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; | X | | |
| (4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to: | X | | |

| | | | | |
|-------|---|---|--|--|
| (i) | Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places; | X | | |
| (ii) | Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally- proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act); | X | | |
| (iii) | Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor); | X | | |
| (iv) | Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries; | X | | |
| (v) | Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions, or its successor; | X | | |
| (vi) | Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and | X | | |
| (vii) | Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests.; or | X | | |
| (5) | 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. | X | | |



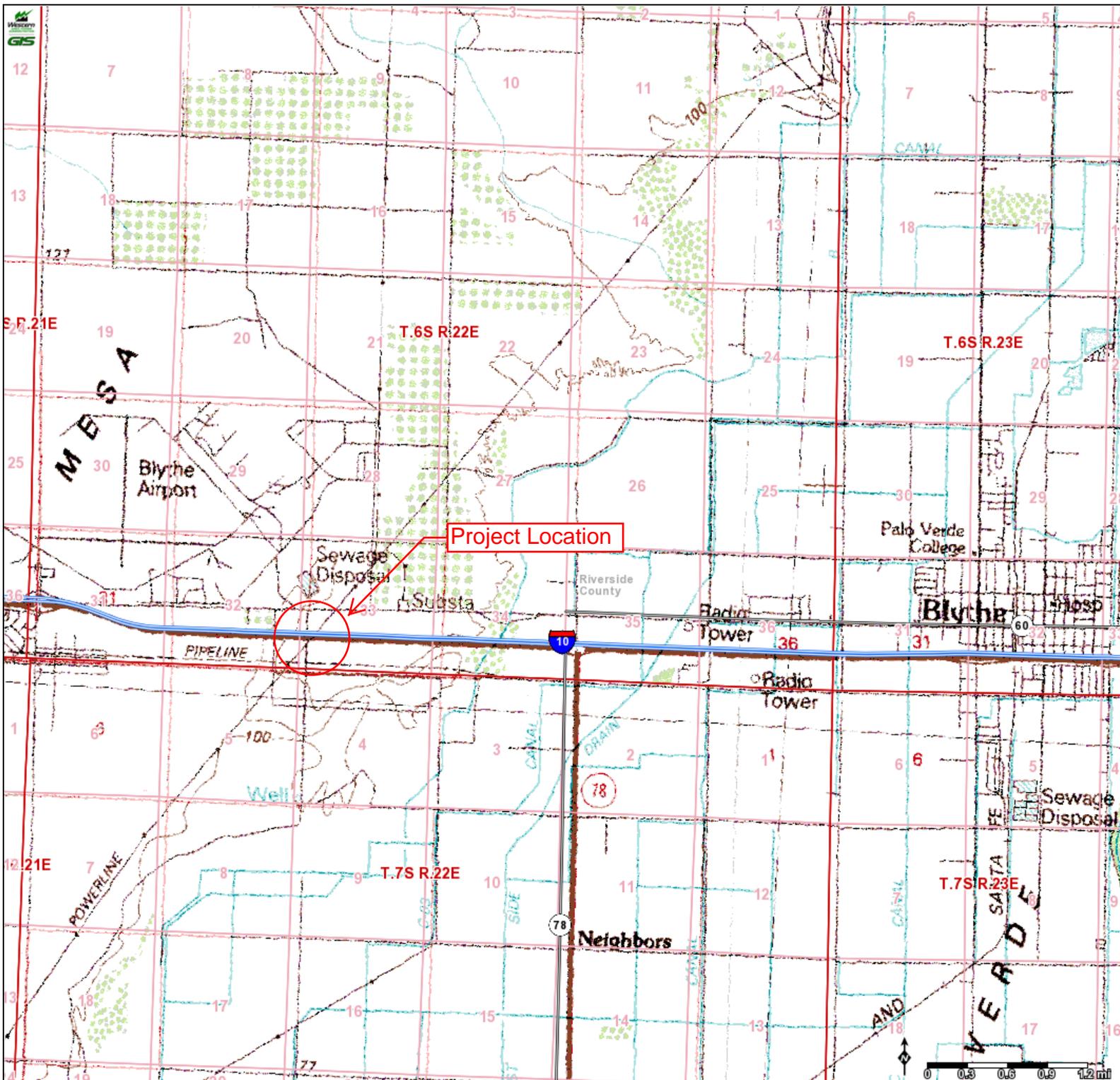
Desert Southwest Region
 Western Area Power Administration
 An agency of the U.S. Department of Energy

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- Proposed and Re-route Structure
- Complete Structure
- Incomplete Structure
- Distribution Structure
- Proposed or Re-route T-Line
- Complete T-Line
- Incomplete T-Line
- Distribution Line
- Underground T-Line
- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- MAJOR HIGHWAY (US/STATE)
- RESIDENTIAL ROAD
- RAMP
- UNPAVED ROAD
- ALLEY OR DRIVEWAY
- TRAIL
- RAILROAD
- Township & Range
- Sections
- Proposed Facilities
- Facility / Substation / Switchyard
- States
- Counties
- Google Aerials and Labels

Figure 2. Project Area



Desert Southwest Region
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- INTERSTATE HIGHWAY
- MAJOR HIGHWAY (US/STATE)
- Township & Range
- Sections
- States
- Counties
- USGS 100K Topo-Quads

Figure 1. Project Location