

**ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

**Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration**

**Loveland Power Marketing Operations Center**

**CenturyLink Fiber Optic Installation**

**Larimer County, Colorado**

- A. **Brief Description of Proposal:** Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to install new conduit for fiber optic communications cable at the Loveland Power Marketing and Operations Center (PMOC) facility in Larimer County, Colorado. This work is necessary to provide communications resiliency (redundancy) for Western dispatch and control. The installation will be done using directional boring from CenturyLink's telecommunications vault approximately 5-feet outside the perimeter fence of the PMOC. The PMOC is located at 40° 26' 15.325" North and 104° 59' 55.364" West; within Sections 33 and 34, Township 6 North, Range 68 West, of the 6th Principal Meridian. The facility is a paved and landscaped property containing several buildings and storage yards, surrounded by a chain-link security fence. The CenturyLink vault is immediately outside this security fence, between the PMOC fence and Byrd Drive, in utility and road right-of-way (ROW), within disturbed soil. Total ground disturbance from directional boring is expected to be approximately 150 square feet (0.0035 acre). All work will occur in previously disturbed areas.
- B. **Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied:** (See text in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.)

**B4.7 Fiber Optic Cable:**

**Adding fiber optic cables to transmission facilities or burying fiber optic cable in existing powerline or pipeline rights-of-way.** Covered actions may include associated vaults and pulling and tensioning sites outside of rights-of-way in nearby previously disturbed or developed areas.

- C. **Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):** (See full text in regulation and attached checklist.)
- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix A or B to Subpart D.

For classes of actions listed in Appendix B, the following conditions are integral elements. To fit within a class, the proposal must not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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

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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; those listed in paragraph B. (4) (see Attachment A).

- 2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.
- 3) The proposal is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

**D. Special Stipulations Pertaining to the Proposal:**

If the scope of work of this project changes, Western's Environmental Division must be contacted for additional environmental review.

This Categorical Exclusion is valid only from signature date through the end of calendar year 2015. If construction has not commenced within that time, Western's Environmental Division must be contacted for an updated environmental review prior to construction.

All work will be conducted using an existing access road. Access road repair or maintenance may be required after work described herein.

There is no natural landscape in the work area or on immediately surrounding land. Western shall conduct this construction operation to prevent any unnecessary destruction, scarring, or defacing of surroundings in the project vicinity and return ground to existing topography. Except where clearing is required for permanent works, approved construction roads, or excavation operations, vegetation shall be preserved and shall be protected from damage by Western's construction operations and equipment. All vehicles will use existing access roads and ROW.

If work is scheduled during the typical bird nesting season of January to July, a nesting bird survey will be required to identify any nesting migratory birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, Western's Preservation Officer shall be contacted, and the material be evaluated by an archaeologist or historian meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualification Standards (48 FR 22716, Sept. 1983).

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- E. Determination:** Based on my review of information provided to me and in my possession concerning the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from requirements for an EA or an EIS.

Gene Iley, Jr.  
Signature

Date: 6/16/15

Gene Iley, Jr.  
NEPA Compliance Officer  
Rocky Mountain Customer Service Region  
Western Area Power Administration

Prepared by: Jeffrey G. Trow

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**ATTACHMENT A**

**Conditions That Are Integral Elements of the Classes  
of Actions in Appendix B That Apply to This Proposal**

Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix 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>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B.</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,	X		

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statue, 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:			
(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		

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(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		
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