Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration
Department of Energy

Proposed Action: Hurley-Tracy Insulator Replacement Landing Zones

Project No.: 100153087

Project Manager: James Hill

Location: Sacramento County (1) and west-central San Joaquin County (4), CA

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B1.3 Routine maintenance

Description of the Proposed Action:

Western Area Power Administration, Sierra Nevada Region (WAPA) is responsible for the operation and maintenance of several federally owned and operated transmission lines throughout California, including the Hurley-Tracy (HUR-TRY) line, located in central California. Part of this responsibility includes ensuring WAPA maintains reliable operation of the transmission system.

WAPA proposes to replace insulators along a portion of the HUR-TRY transmission line. To aid in this process, five helicopter landing zones were selected which are off of WAPA's right-of-way (ROW). All are in disturbed gravel or unpaved lots or agricultural grassland.

Approximate addresses of the sites are as follows:

10900 West Stockton Blvd, Elk Grove
4500 Otto Dr, Stockton
6514 Jacobs Road, Stockton
11433 South Tracy Blvd, Stockton
16500 Clifton Court Road, Stockton

This document examines the use of these areas for this project.

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), WAPA 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, WAPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Signed: Latisha M. Saare Digitally signed by Latisha M. Saare Date: 2022.01.13 15:49:07 -08'00' Date: 1/13/22

Attachment: 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.

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Project Site Description

The proposed landing zones are in rural portions of Stockton and Elk Grove, California. The surrounding land use is primarily agricultural, including rice fields and row crops. All landing zones are in disturbed lots or agricultural grassland.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. **Historic and Cultural Resources**	☑	☐

Explanation:

The landing zones are previously disturbed. WAPA conducted a desktop survey, and no cultural resource concerns were identified. Natural Resources will be contacted immediately if archeological, paleontological, or historic evidence is found.

2. **Geology and Soils**

Explanation: ☑ ☐

Ground disturbance is not anticipated in this project; therefore, no impacts would occur.

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

Explanation: ☑ ☐

No special-status plants are known or expected in the project area. The sites are sparsely vegetated disturbed areas.

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

Explanation: ☑ ☐

Desktop and/or field surveys were conducted for all five sites. No wildlife resources of concern were identified in these surveys. Sites are disturbed areas with limited habitat.

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

Explanation: ☑ ☐

The project area and adjacent areas do not have any water bodies, floodplains, or fish; therefore, no impacts would occur.

6. **Wetlands** ☑ ☐

Explanation:

The project area does not have wetlands; therefore, no impacts would occur.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers** ☑ ☐

Explanation:

Spill prevention measures, including secondary containment at the landing zone, will be used during operations. The project would not provide a pathway for groundwater contamination. In the event of a hazardous material/waste spill, Environment will be contacted, WAPA Dispatch notified, and the appropriate Federal, State, and local regulating authority notified depending on the type and size of the spill

8. **Land Use and Specially-Designated Areas** ☑ ☐

Explanation:

The land use would not change at the project site. Nor is the project within, or near, any specially designated areas, such as National Scenic Rivers.

9. **Visual Quality** ☑ ☐

Explanation:

The visual quality would be consistent with the existing transmission right-of-way corridor and surrounding agricultural land. There would be no significant change to the visual quality.

10. **Air Quality** ☐ ☑

Explanation:

Air quality emissions would be from short-term helicopter use with only a few hours at each location and exhaust from worker's vehicles. The Project would be exempt from federal General Conformity Analysis and Determination because project emissions do not exceed de minimis levels for O&M activities, including helicopter emissions. Project emissions would not exceed local air quailty district standards. The contractor is expected to adopt WAPA's procedures during the project:
AQ-SOP-1: The Contractor will adhere to all applicable requirements of those agencies having jurisdiction over air quality matters, and any necessary permits for O&M will be obtained.
AQ-SOP-2: Machinery and vehicles will be kept in good operating condition and older equipment will be replaced with equipment meeting applicable emission standards; appropriate emissions-control equipment will be maintained for vehicles and equipment, per EPA and/or WAPA air-emission requirements.
AQ-SOP-3: Idle equipment will be shut down when not in active use; visible emissions from stationary generators will be controlled.
AQ-SOP-4: Dust –control measures will be implemented in road construction and maintenance, as needed. Trucks transporting loose material will be covered or maintain at least two feet of freeboard and will not create any visible dust emissions.
AQ-SOP-5: There will be no open burning of construction trash.
AQ-SOP-6: Grading activities will cease during periods of high winds (as determined by local air quality management districts.
AQ-SOP-7: Major operations will be avoided on days when the local Air Quality Index is expected to exceed 150.
AQ-SOP-8: Include dust-control measures such as water or chemical suppressants.
AQ-SOP-9: Re-seeding of ground surfaces that have been significantly disturbed to prevent wind dispersion of soil.
AQ-SOP-10: Regular watering of exposed soils and unpaved access roads during maintenance activities.
AQ-SOP-11: Use reasonably practicable methods and devices to control, prevent, and otherwise minimize atmospheric emissions or discharges of air contaminants.

11. **Noise** ☑ ☐

Explanation:

Residences are located about 415 feet east of tower 51-2 (Otto Drive). Helicopter noise would be temporary for a few hours and intermittently at each location for landing and takeoff, and would occur only during daylight hours.

12. **Human Health and Safety** ☑ ☐

Explanation:

During project activities, all standard safety protocols would be followed. Project activities would not impact human health or safety. Contractor shall be required to follow the OSHA standards set forth in 29 CFR 1910.269. Contractor shall also adhere to the requirements under Title 8 Cal OSHA Electrical Safety Order specifically Subchapter 5 and Subchapter 7. Contractor shall maintain a safe working distance from conductors as described in the above OSHA standards. If a safe working distance cannot be maintained, a clearance shall be requested 3 days in advance.

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, if necessary:

☑ Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

☑ 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, if necessary:

☑ 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, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: WAPA would work closely with the landowners to provide adequate notification of construction timing.

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

Signed: Latisha M. Saare Digitally signed by Latisha M. Saare Date: 2022.01.13 15:48:44 -08'00'

Date: 1/13/22