ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW for CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION
Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration

Archer 230-kV Bay Addition for New Point of Delivery – Stage 07

A. **Brief Description of Proposal:** Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, Inc. (Tri-State), has requested an interconnection to Western Area Power Administration's (Western) Archer 230/115-Kilovolt (kV) Substation (Archer Substation). The Archer Substation is a Designated Point of Delivery from Western to Tri-State as set forth in Exhibit A of Contract No. 87-LAO-172 (TS-89-0005), Firm Electric Service (Contract). The purpose of the request from Tri-State is to serve the load of its member cooperative, High West Energy. The request was made and is being considered under the provisions of the Contract.

If the request is approved, Western will review and approve the design of necessary equipment and facilities as described in Letter Agreement No. 11-RMR-2267; own and operate new equipment and facilities associated with the project within the Archer Substation; and provide access to Tri-State and its contractors to Western's Archer Substation and other property and facilities for the installation of necessary interconnection equipment.

Specifically, Tri-State will design and construct, or contract for the construction of, one (1) 230-kV terminal to be located at Archer Substation. The terminal will consist of one (1) 230-kV breaker; three (3) 230-kV disconnect switches; one (1) 230-kV line disconnect switch with ground switch; one (1) 230-kV take-off structure (TOS) and other line structures as needed; associated buses, foundations, relay and control equipment; one (1) revenue meter; and 230-kV revenue quality instrument transformers.

All new equipment and facilities installations lay within the footprint of the existing Archer Substation, or on Western's fee property.

RMC Consultants, Inc. (RMC), surveyed the Area of Potential Effects and prepared a report for Tri-State to meet requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) and 36 CFR 800, Protection of Historic Properties. Their report concluded and Western concurs that the proposed action will have no adverse effect on property determined eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

B. **Number and Title of the Categorical Exclusion Being Applied**: (See text in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.)

B4.6. Additions and modifications to transmission facilities

Additions or modifications to electric power transmission facilities within a previously disturbed or developed facility area. Covered activities include, but are not limited to, switchyard rock grounding upgrades, secondary containment projects, paving projects, seismic upgrading, tower modifications, load-shaping projects (such as the installation and use of flywheels and battery arrays), changing insulators, and replacement of poles, circuit breakers, conductors, transformers, and crossarms.

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 B.

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 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 for 3 years after the signature date. If construction has not commenced within that time, Western's Environmental Division must be contacted for an updated environmental review prior to construction.

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately, Western and the Wyoming SHPO staff 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 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. **Date:** 3/8/12
Signature

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

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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

Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)	Disagree	Agree	Unknown
(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. 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, statue, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government,	X		

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		

(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		

Applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, including requirements of DOE and/or Executive Orders (in addition to those listed above)

Department of Energy Floodplain and Wetland Regulations (10 CFR 1022)
Complies with Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (February 11, 1994, with Presidential Memorandum)