

Project title: **CRSP MC RMR SPP-RTO**

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Date Submitted: 09/20/2022      Date Required: 09/20/2022

### **Description of the Project**

Western Area Power Administration's (WAPA) two regions; Rocky Mountain Region (WAPA-RMR) and the CRSP Management Center (WAPA-CRSP) proposes to join the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). Also, the Upper Great Plains region (WAPA-UGP) proposes to expand its participation in SPP. WAPA-RMR and WAPA-CRSP's membership and WAPA-UGP's expansion in the SPP would not involve new generation or physical changes to the transmission system. If, at some point in the future during the course of implementing the agreement, WAPA nonetheless identifies previously unforeseen physical changes to the transmission system that are necessary to implement the agreement, WAPA will conduct the appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review for any such changes prior to implementation.

### **Background Information**

In October 2020, WAPA-RMR and WAPA-UGP executed Letters of Interest to investigate membership in SPP. In April 2021 WAPA-CRSP executed a non-binding letter. Each of these regions have now completed transmission cost studies, adjusted production cost modeling, and performed various other analyses. Based on these analyses and preliminary negotiations with SPP, WAPA-RMR and WAPA-CRSP propose to pursue final negotiations and join SPP. Also based on these analyses, WAPA-UGP proposes to expand its participation in SPP.

WAPA-UGP, markets the electrical production of the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Project—Eastern Division facilities. WAPA proposes to expand its participation in SPP with its Western Interconnection facilities. This proposal includes SPP assuming the balancing authority responsibilities for the Western Area Upper Great Plains West (WAUW) BAA that WAPA-UGP operates in the Western Interconnection today, as well as SPP implementing its Integrated Marketplace and Integrated Transmission Planning across a newly formed single SPP-West BAA.

WAPA-RMR's membership would include SPP assuming the balancing authority responsibilities for the Western Area Colorado Missouri (WACM) balancing authority area (BAA) that WAPA-RMR operates today, as well as SPP operating a newly formed single SPP-West BAA.

Any decision by WAPA to move forward in final negotiations with SPP will be consistent with WAPA-UGP, WAPA-CRSP and WAPA-RMR statutory requirements.

### **Category of Action**

#### **B4.4: Power marketing services and activities**

Power marketing services and power management activities (including, but not limited to, storage, load shaping and balancing, seasonal exchanges, and other similar activities), provided that the operations of generating projects would remain within normal operating limits.

## **Regulatory Requirements for a Categorical Exclusion Determination**

The Department of Energy (DOE), National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Implementing Procedures, 10 CFR 1021.410(b) require the following determinations be made in order for a proposed action to be categorically excluded (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.

## **Results of Review**

In accordance with DOE environmental regulations (10 CFR 1021), WAPA has reviewed the proposed action in terms of the level of NEPA review needed. Based on this review, WAPA has determined the proposal is encompassed within a class of action listed in Appendix B to Subpart D (10 CFR 1021.410) which do not require preparation of either an environmental impact statement (EIS) or an environmental assessment (EA).

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.

### Action taken

Note: All Documentation is Attached

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| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Categorical Exclusion (CX) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Integral Elements          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Assessment (EA)         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NEPA Attachment Sheet      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)  | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Requirements/Mitigation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Determinations:                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Maps/Figures                          |

**Determination:** Based on our review of information provided to us concerning the proposed action as NEPA Compliance Officers, we have determined that the proposed action meets the requirements for the categorical exclusion listed above. Therefore, we have determined that the proposed action may be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

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S. Clayton Palmer, CRSP NEPA Compliance Officer

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James Wood, RMR NEPA Compliance Officer

## Western Area Power Administration, NEPA Attachment Sheet

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.		<b>X</b>	
(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		<b>X</b>	
(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.		<b>X</b>	
<b>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B:</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>UNKNOWN</b>
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	<b>X</b>		
(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;	<b>X</b>		
(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;	<b>X</b>		

<p>(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:</p>	<p><b>X</b></p>		
<p>(i) Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance</p>	<p><b>X</b></p>		

<p>— designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;</p>			
<p>(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);</p>	<b>X</b>		
<p>(iii) Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: "Definitions," or its successor);</p>	<b>X</b>		
<p>(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;</p>	<b>X</b>		
<p>(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;</p>	<b>X</b>		
<p>(vi) Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and</p>	<b>X</b>		
<p>(vii) Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests.; or</p>	<b>X</b>		
<p>(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.</p>	<b>X</b>		