



Categorical Exclusion Determination

Western Area Power Administration

U.S. Department of Energy



Proposed Action Title:	Cottonwood Substation Access Road
WAPA Region:	Sierra Nevada Region
Location (County/State):	Shasta County, California
CX Determination Number:	2026-SNR-006
CX Determination Expiration Date*:	12/31/2028

**CX is valid until the date above (no longer than five years from when document was signed) or completion of work started prior to the expiration of the CX Determination, unless there are substantial changes to the scope of work, location, or applicable regulations. If such changes occur prior to the expiration of the CX, the Region Environmental Program will review the analysis to ensure the CX is still applicable.*

Proposed Action Description:

Although a prior categorical exclusion (CX-028370) addressed acquisition of land, substation assets, and an access road easement for the Cottonwood substation, including a reasonably foreseeable action to install a gate, it also stated numerous times that the proposed action consisted of administrative, strategic, and financial activities. This categorical exclusion is prepared to clearly analyze the action of realigning and improving an access road of approximately 350' in length between the public road and WAPA's Cottonwood substation.

The existing access road consists of a dirt road which WAPA uses for transmission line access but which curves around and has no direct access to the substation. This project would reduce the curvature of the road, widen it to 25' width, and harden the surface of the road with road base, making it suitable for the larger and heavier vehicles that typically access the substation. Embankment slopes to maintain an even grade to the substation level may extend outside the 25' width road surface but would remain within the easement. The final improved surface would consist of road base/gravel, and this would be treated with herbicide to prevent growth of vegetation in the road. Short segments of fence would also be installed and tied to existing fences on site to maintain current access control.

Environmental Requirements during Project Implementation:

- A cultural monitor is required during road work. If cultural or paleontological materials are identified during implementation, work will halt within a 50-foot buffer of the discovery. Work may resume following the assessment.
- WAPA would employ air quality SOPs consistent with the Environmental Assessment for the North Area Right-of-Way Maintenance Program.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied (Number and Title):

B1.11 Fencing

B1.13 Pathways, short access roads, and rail lines



Findings:

For the DOE procedures regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see 10 CFR 1021.102 and Appendix B to [10 CFR Part 1021](#), and also Section 5.4 (Applying one or more categorical exclusions to a proposal) and Appendices B and C of [DOE's National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures](#) (July 13, 2026).

Requirements and guidance in 10 CFR 1021.102 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures: (See full text in regulation and in Implementing Procedures)



The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B or C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures. Additionally, for CXs adopted pursuant to NEPA Section 109 (see DNIP, Appendix C), the originating Federal agency's integral elements or extraordinary circumstances must be in accordance with the applicable requirements.



There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. DOE or an applicant may modify the proposal to avoid reasonably foreseeable adverse significant effects such that the categorical exclusion would apply.



The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

[Note: For proposals that fit within the categorical exclusions listed in Appendix C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, see DOE's notice of adoption for the subject Appendix C categorical exclusion for additional considerations. DOE notices of adoption for other agency categorical exclusions may be found on [DOE's Section 109 webpage](#).]

Determination:

Based on my review of the proposed action, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other requirements and guidance set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

WAPA Authorized Official Signature:

Title: Sierra Nevada Region Environmental Manager