

Categorical Exclusion (CX) Determination

Proposed Action: Bristol to Groton Transmission Line upgrade project.

Description of Proposed Action: The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) Bristol to Groton 115kV Transmission Line is to be upgraded in association with the Just Wind Napoleon Wind Farm (Figure 1 and Exhibit A). The Just Wind Napoleon Wind Farm will produce 367 MW when complete. Plans call for production of 100 MW at the end of 2010, with the remaining 267 MW coming online at a later date. The existing 115-kV conductor will need to be replaced with a new 795 MCM 115-kV conductor line before the full 367 MW comes online (Dirk Shulund, WAPA, 3/5/2010 email to Jeff Irwin, WAPA). At the Groton Substation, existing disconnect switches will need to be replaced with three new 1200 amp 115-kV disconnect switches. Additional modifications may be necessary at the Groton and Bristol Substations. The Bristol to Groton Transmission Line is over 50 years old and WAPA had requested an evaluation of the property (transmission line, substations and associated facilities) for National Register of Historic Places eligibility pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act.

The majority of the transmission line poles and all conductors are original equipment and over 50 years old. The line went into service on 12/1/1953. The Bristol Substation was added to the line in 1982, and the Groton Substation received a substantial upgrade in the past ten years. The transmission line poles are standard H frames and are non-distinctive. The Bristol to Groton Transmission Line is recommended as not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places due to the limited integrity and non-distinctive character of the property. The historic study was completed on March 2, 2010. The South Dakota State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with WAPA's findings on April 27, 2010.

Number and Title of Categorical Exclusions Being Applied: 10 CFR 1021.410 Subpart D, Appendix B, B4.11: Construction of electric power substations...or modification of existing substations and support facilities.

Regulatory Requirements for CX Determination: The DOE Guidelines for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements for the National Environmental Policy Act at 10 CFR 1021.410(b), require the following determinations be made in order for a proposed action to be categorically excluded from National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review:

- 1) The proposed action fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B to Subpart D.
- 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.

Results of Review: In accordance with DOE environmental regulations (10 CFR 1021), WAPA has reviewed the proposed action in terms of the level 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 lists actions not normally requiring the preparation of either an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or an Environmental Assessment (EA), provided the actions meet the integral elements defined in Appendix B. The proposed action fits into the categorical exclusion listed under B4.11 "Construction of electric power substations... or modification of existing substations and support facilities...".

Determination: Based on my review of information provided to me concerning the proposed action as NEPA Compliance Officer, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is categorically excluded from further requirements of NEPA review.

for 

Nicholas J. Stas
NEPA Compliance Officer, UGP

10-17-11

Date