

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

### Rocky Mountain Region, Western Area Power Administration

#### Line Switch Replacements at Guernsey Rural, Worland, Refinery, Box Butte, and Morrill Taps Located in Wyoming and Nebraska

- A. **Brief Description of Proposal:** Western Area Power Administration (Western) proposes to replace the wood switch mounting structures and 115-kilovolt (kV) line disconnect switches with new switches and steel box mounting structures at the Guernsey Rural, Worland, Refinery, Box Butte, and Morrill County Taps located in Platte, Washakie, and Natrona Counties, Wyoming, and Box Butte and Morrill Counties, Nebraska.

All line disconnect switches are mounted on four pole wood structures with similar configurations. Many of the switches and wood structures were installed in the early 1950's, are original, obsolete, and difficult to find replacement parts. The mounting wood structures are deteriorating and have been rejected and require replacement. Western's proposed action would occur entirely within the fenced perimeter of each Tap as follows:

#### **Guernsey Rural Tap**

On the Glendo to Whiterock South 115-kV transmission line, Western will remove line disconnect switches 1961, 1963, and 1965, including the four pole wood structures, and replace them with new switches mounted onto a new steel box structure. This work may also require replacing wood pole Structure 17/5 on the Glendo to Whiterock North 115-kV line to allow for adequate line clearance for other lines underneath.

#### **Worland Tap**

On the Lovell to Thermopolis 115-kV transmission line, Western will remove line disconnect switches 3060, 3061, and 3065, including the four pole wood mounting structures, and replace them with new switches mounted onto a new steel box structure.

#### **Box Butte Tap**

On the Box Butte to Snake Creek 115-kV transmission line, Western will remove line disconnect switch 5961, including the wood pole mounting structures, and replace it with a new switch mounted onto a new steel box structure. Also, on the Box Butte to Chadron 115-kV transmission line, Western will remove the line disconnect switches 5965 and 5970, including the wood pole mounting structures, and replace them with new switches mounted onto a new steel box structure.

#### **Morrill County Tap**

On the Scottsbluff to Snake Creek 115-kV transmission line, Western will remove line disconnect switches 2361 and 2365, including the wood pole mounting structures, and replace them with new switches mounted onto a new steel box structure.

#### **Refinery Tap**

On the Glendo to Casper PACE 115-kV transmission line, Western will remove line disconnect switches 765 and 761, including the wood pole mounting structures, and replace them with new switches mounted onto a new steel box structure.

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**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.**

**B4.11 Electric power substations and interconnection facilities**

Construction or modification of **electric power substations** or interconnection facilities (including, but not limited to, **switching stations** and support facilities)

**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 A or B to Subpart D.

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.

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- 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 only from signature date through the end of calendar year 2013. If construction has not commenced within that time, Western's Environmental Division must be contacted for an updated environmental review prior to construction.

The findings of this Categorical Exclusion depend on the contractor's execution of, or compliance with, Western's construction specifications for the project, specifically, Division 13 – Environmental Quality Protection.

If any cultural materials are discovered during construction, work in the area shall halt immediately and Western's Environmental staff shall be contacted.

- 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.

  
Signature

Date: 7/30/12

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

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
(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>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B.</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,	X		

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statue, 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:			
(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		

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(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		
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