U.S. Department of Energy
Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title: Construction of the Rapid City-Dry 115kV Transmission Line

Program or Field Office: South Dakota Maintenance Office

Location(s) (City/County/State): Rapid City, Pennington County, South Dakota

Proposed Action Description:

Western Area Power Administration's Rapid City Substation and Basin Electric's Dry Creek Substation are part of the bulk electricity transmission system. North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) reliability standards govern operation of the bulk electrical system, and at times dictate construction of new transmission to improve or maintain reliability of the system. This 7.5 mile tie line project, running along Rapid Creek from the Rapid City Substation south to Dry Creek Substation near Old Folsom Road, will provide a direct connection between the two substations where none currently exists to improve system reliability in western South Dakota.

Woody vegetation within the 80 foot wide transmission line corridor will be mechanically removed. The ground surface will be leveled and graded to allow for tower placement at approximately 450 foot intervals. Poured concrete tower foundations will be constructed within the leveled areas, with four feet of the individual foundations protruding above grade to provide hard anchor points for the transmission line towers. Monopole towers will be placed on the tower foundations using a construction crane and other heavy equipment. Finally, electrical conductors will be strung along the length of the transmission line to connect the Western and Basin substations. Temporary construction impacts including surface disturbance of soil and removal of trees will occur within the right of way in the floodplain. Permanent impacts will include ongoing flail mowing within the right of way and placement of foundations for 18 transmission line towers within the floodplain and 8 transmission line towers within the floodway.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B4.12 - Construction of powerlines

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of 10 CFR Part 1021.

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (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.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that 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.

NEPA Compliance Officer: MATTHEW MARSH Digitally signed by MATTHEW MARSH DN: c=US, o=U.S. Government, ou=Department of Energy, cn=MATTHEW MARSH, 0.9.2342.19200300.100.1.1=89001000334842 Date: 2015.02.03 12:14:03 -07'00'

Date Determined: February 3, 2015

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