



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

Proposed Action Title: Easement to TVA for Bethel Valley Substation and Transmission Line Feeds and Clearing of Trees within the Project Area at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) (CX-ORR-13-007)

Program or Field Office: Office of Science - ORNL

Location(s) (City/County/State): Oak Ridge, Tennessee

Proposed Action Description:

The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) proposes to grant the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) an easement of approximately 15 acres of land for the purpose of constructing a 161-kV substation and installing transmission line feeds for the substation. This proposed project is located in Bethel Valley at the ORNL on the Oak Ridge Reservation (ORR). The purpose of the proposed action is to supply ORNL with additional power loads required to support computational facilities needed for a computer system being utilized for national security purposes. The proposed DOE action is for granting the easement and clearing of trees within the project footprint area. TVA actions for constructing the substation and transmission line feeds have been previously addressed in a categorical exclusion determination prepared by TVA (Tracking Number 28515). The area in which the substation will be located has been previously cleared of trees as part of DOE’s timber harvesting activities on the ORR.

The proposed action would include removal of trees where the transmission lines would be located and granting an easement to TVA to install and service the transmission lines and substation. A field survey has been conducted of the area where the transmission lines would be located to determine if the area could be potential bat habitat. Trees would not be cut within the current window for roosting bats established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (March 31 – October 15). Prior to initiating the proposed project, discussions would be held with the USFWS to determine if mitigation actions would be required. No other sensitive wildlife habitat would be potentially impacted by the project. No federal or state-listed plant species were observed during field surveys of the proposed project area. The majority of the proposed right of way does not possess the characteristics indicative of rare plant habitat. It was determined that the proposed project would have no affect on federal-listed plants. A limited amount of habitat for state-listed plant species occurs in the project area; however, precautions would be taken to ensure the proposed project would not significantly impact state-listed plant species.

This proposed undertaking falls under Section 5.1.1.3.A. of the Cultural Resource Management Plan (DOE/ORO 2085, July 2001); no National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)-included or NRHP-eligible properties are located within the area of potential effect (APE), and no cultural resources would be affected. The proposed undertaking is located in an area adjacent to a previously disturbed area. In addition, a Phase I archaeological survey was conducted by TRC Environmental, Inc., for TVA, and no historic properties were identified within the project APE.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

- B1.24 - Property transfers
 - B4.11 - Electric power substations and interconnection facilities
 - B4.12 - Construction of powerlines
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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.

The above description accurately describes the proposed action, which reflects the requirements of the CX cited above. Therefore, I recommend that the proposed action be categorically excluded from further NEPA review and documentation.

Program Point of Contact: Signed by Sherman R. Martin
Sherman Martin, DOE-OSO
DOE-OSO Program Manager

Date Determined: 9/11/2013

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: Signed by Gary S. Hartman
Gary Hartman, DOE-ORO
DOE-ORO NEPA Compliance Officer

Date Determined: 9/12/2013