



NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: X Office of Planning & Research
1400 Tenth Street, Rm.121
Sacramento, CA 95814

X County Recorder
County of Nevada

From: Nevada County Planning Department
950 Maidu Ave., Nevada City, CA

Applicant: Cory Hawkins, NV Energy
6100 Neil Rd S4B20
Reno, NV 89511
775 298-9759

Project Title:

Transmission Lines 101, 102, and 133 Rebuild Project located between Verdi and Donner Summit

Project Location – Specific:

Line 101 runs from the NVE California Substation in Verdi, CA over Verdi Peak, near Stampede and Prosser Reservoirs, into Truckee, CA in Nevada County where it terminates at the NVE North Truckee Substation. Line 102 runs from the NVE California Substation in Verdi, along Henness Pass, near Stampede Reservoir where it parallels Line 101, through Carpenter Valley, over Donner Ridge, and up Donner Summit where it terminates at Summit Metering Station, in Nevada County, CA. Line 133 runs from the NVE North Truckee Substation in Truckee up to Donner Summit where it also terminates at the Summit Metering Station.

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

NVE plans to rebuild 53.8 miles of aging 120-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines from Verdi to Donner Summit, which includes the 101, 102 and 133 transmission lines. The proposed Verdi to Donner Summit (101-102-133) Transmission Line Rebuild Project (hereafter Project) would replace aging transmission lines and structures constructed in the 1940s and 1950s, which would result in reduced wildfire risk and disruption of service associated with wildfire hazards, lessen the number of outages experienced by NVE customers, and update compliance with applicable federal and state standards. The proposed Project would also improve access to the transmission lines for maintenance activities, which would allow NVE to quickly restore outages and implement integrated vegetation management activities within the existing Right-of-Way (ROW) corridor to ensure electrical clearance requirements are met.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project:

Nevada County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project (Applicant):

NV Energy

Exempt Status: (Check One)

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268
- ☐ Declared Emergency
- ☐ Guidelines for Implementation (State Guidelines §15004(b)(2)(A))
- ☐ Emergency Project [Sec. 15071 (b) and (c)]
- ☒ Categorical Exemption. 15302 – Replacement or Reconstruction

Reasons why project is exempt:

The Class 2 categorical exemption (15302) is for the replacement or reconstruction of existing structures and facilities where the new structure will be located on the same site as the structure replaced and will have substantially the same purpose and capacity as the structure replaced. In particular, 15302 includes “replacement or reconstruction of existing utility systems and/or facilities involving negligible or no expansion of capacity.”

The NV Energy 101, 102, and 1333 Transmission Line Rebuild project proposes to replace aging transmission lines and structures with equipment that meets current State and Federal standards. The project is proposed in the right-of-way (ROW) for the existing transmission lines and will have the same purpose as the transmission equipment that is proposed to be replaced.

CEQA guidelines Section 15300.2 lists exceptions where a categorical exemption such as 15302 would not apply and states “a categorical exemption shall not be used for an activity where there is a reasonable possibility that the activity will have a significant effect on the environment due to unusual circumstances.” As discussed below, there are no unusual circumstances associated with the project.

The replacement of the aging equipment would result in decreased wildfire risk and more reliable utility service. The existing utility ROW is mostly clear of hazard trees and combustible fuels, however, there are four trees proposed to be removed. There may be some short-term reductions in foraging and nesting habitat quantity for management indicator species, but in the longer term the amount of habitat that is currently present will remain. Some project actions may have unintentional short-term adverse effects on individual birds, eggs, or nests, but adverse effects at the species population level would not be expected due to the large amount of habitat within and adjacent to the project area and across the forest. Habitat fragmentation would not occur as tree removals are in isolated locations in the wire pull sites and are a small fraction of the existing early and mid-seral coniferous forest habitat. Given the type and small number of invasive plant infestations within and surrounding botanical study area, the project biologist anticipates that native vegetation would not be significantly threatened by invasive plant species. Due to the use of pre-existing access roads and ROWs for the proposed Project, a minimal increase in vectors for spread of invasive species could occur from Project implementation.

The United States Department of the Interior and the United States Forest Service concur that the proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect Sierra Nevada yellow-legged frog or its designated critical habitat. This determination was made because the project design avoids direct impacts to aquatic habitats and maintains a 100-foot buffer around these sensitive areas, minimizing the risk of direct harm to individuals or aquatic life stages.

In August 2025, a Cultural Resource Inventory Report, Determination of Eligibility, Finding of Effect Line 133 of the Nevada Energy Verdi to Donner Summit Transmission Line Rebuild Project, Nevada and Placer Counties, California. Report was prepared by InContext for WSP on behalf of Nevada Energy. Tahoe National Forest Cultural Resource Report R2023051700065.

The area of potential effects (APE) identified in the report encompasses 281.96 acres and includes the transmission corridor, associated pull and staging sites, access roads, the permanent 100 foot ROW and a 400-foot-wide corridor on TNF. The entire length of the corridor is approximately 8.4 miles long. Holes for pole installation will be augured approximately three feet in diameter and approximately 6 to 12.5 ft deep, depending upon the height of the structure. Additionally, angle structures will require anchored guy wires. The depth of the holes for the anchors will be approximately 6 to 11 ft, depending on the height of structures.

Efforts identified ten previously identified cultural resources overlapping the APE. The Tahoe national Forest has evaluated and determined seven resources ineligible according to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) criteria. Three resources remain unevaluated, and TNF proposes to treat the resources eligible for the NRHP for the undertaking only because they will be avoided in their entirety through the implementation of a 20-meter buffer fence/flag avoidance area. Following TNF's efforts, it was determined that the undertaking will result in a finding of no adverse effect to historic properties.

Contact Person – Cory Hawkins

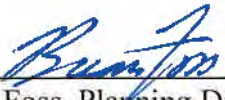
Telephone: (775) 298-9759

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the Public Agency approving the project?

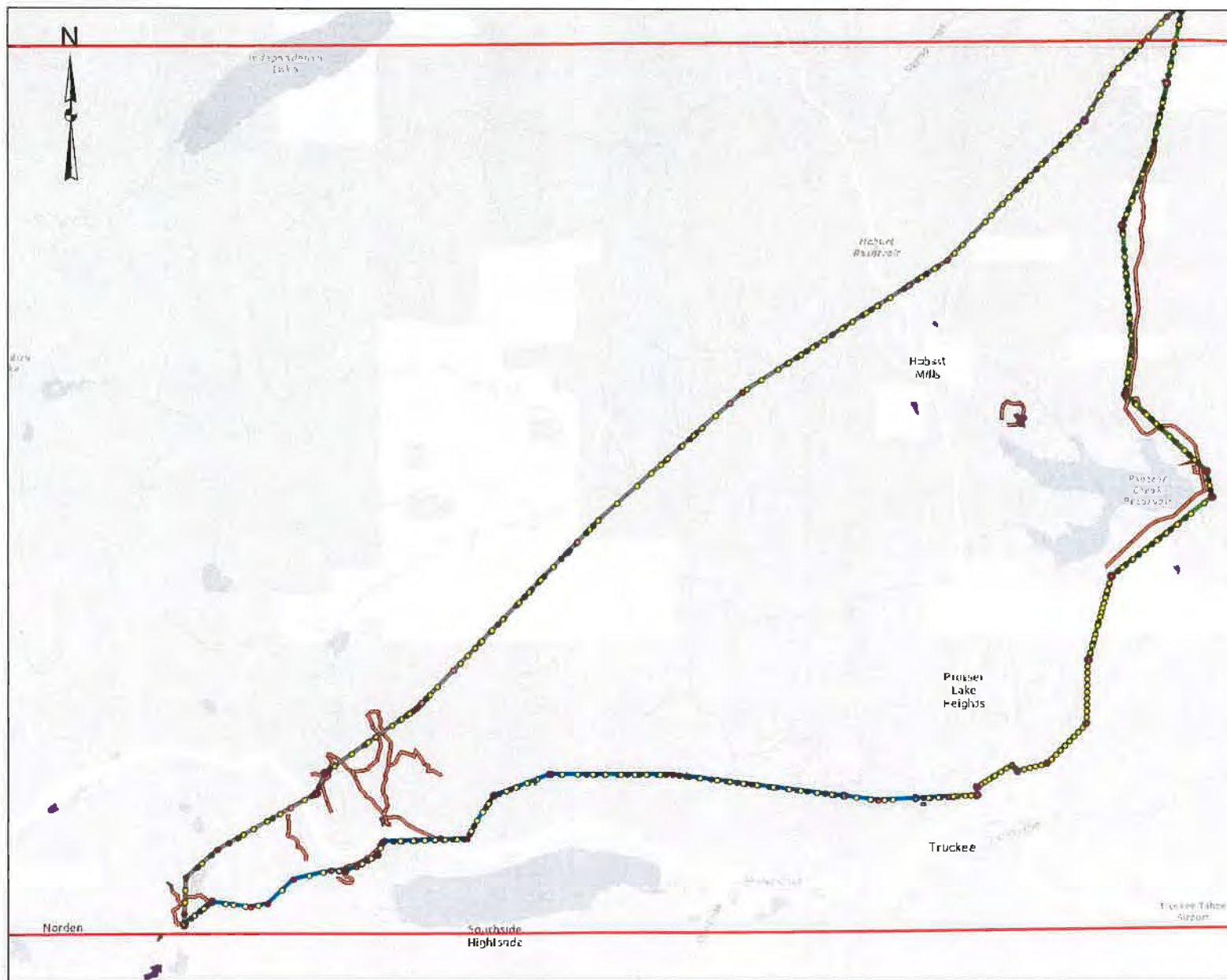
Yes X No

Date Received for Filing: _____


Brian Foss, Planning Director

Date 1/15/26

Nevada County Planning Department



LEGEND

Proposed Structures

- Single Pole
- H Frame (3-pole)
- ▭ Nevada County
- Pull Sites
- Staging/Landing Areas
- Existing Structures
- Rebuild Powerlines 133
- Rebuild Powerlines 102
- Rebuild Powerlines 101
- Access Road to Construction Site



NOTES/Sources:

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Esri, USGS

CLIENT NV ENERGY		
PROJECT NVE TRANSMISSION LINES 101-102-133		
TITLE PROJECT OVERVIEW- NEVADA COUNTY		
CONSULTANT 	YYYYMMDD	2025-10-13
	DESIGNED	JL
	REVIEWED	JP
	APPROVED	JP
PROJECT NO. US-EI-32708HN005	CONTROL A1	FIG. NO. 1