

## **Ohio Power Siting Board**

### **Staff Investigation Report and Recommendation**

**Case No.:** 11-1220-EL-BTA

**Project:** Amendment to the Geauga County 138 kV Transmission Line Supply

**Applicants:** American Transmission Systems, Inc.  
The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company

**Report Date:** 17 June 2011

**Waiver Requests:** None

**Inspection Date(s):** 4 May 2011

**Staff Assigned:** J. O'Dell

**Summary of Staff Recommendations (see report text for discussion):**

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions  
Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

### **Project Amendment Description**

The Applicant is proposing four minor adjustments to the original certificated route. The Applicant submitted the amendment at the request of directly impacted property owners. These route adjustments are expected to result in a reduction of potential ecological impacts.

- 1) The first adjustment is north of Whitney Road. This modification would straighten the original alignment, thus reducing the need to add more extensive guying support wires.
- 2) The second change is located south of Rock Creek Road and it would have less impact to priority trees.
- 3) The third modification was requested by property owners to relocate the original alignment from their residential frontage to generally follow their agricultural fields along property lines.
- 4) The fourth change is located north of Burrows Road and it would avoid a wetland that is expanding due to beaver activity. This change also would also allow the Applicant to avoid a conservation easement.

## **Amendment Review**

The Applicant delineated water resources and searched for threatened and endangered (T&E) species within the right-of-way (r-o-w) of the proposed adjustment corridor. The water resources delineated include nine streams, seven wetlands and two ponds. There were no T&E species encountered by the Applicant. Impacts to the water resources would be minimal. There will also be some woodlot clearing but less than the amount associated with the original route. Wetland impacts would also be decreased as a result of the adjustments in the route. The ponds will not be impacted. Staff would require the Applicant to conform to conditions of the original certificate (Case No.07-171-EL-BTX) in order to best protect ecological resources associated with this project.

Staff notes that the majority of changes proposed in this Amendment are as a result of property owner requests. For the four amended segments under consideration, the Applicant has obtained necessary options or easements in order to alter the routing as proposed in this Amendment for 11 of the 12 affected parcels. The one exception is an instance where the Applicant has attempted to contact a property owner without success, and additionally, the applicant believes this property is presently in foreclosure.

The amendment as proposed will not significantly alter existing land use. No recreational or public parkland is crossed by this Amendment. The impacted land for this amendment is predominately agricultural, wooded, and rural residential. No residences will need to be removed in order to accommodate this amendment proposal. In analyzing the four amended sections of transmission line, there were four residences within 100 feet of the originally certificated line, and there are now no residences within 100 feet of the proposed amendment. There were 14 residences within 1,000 feet of the originally certificated line and there are now eight residences within 1,000 feet of the proposed amendment.

As noted in the 07-0171-EL-BTX Staff Report, the project will introduce aesthetic impacts to the rural area. To help minimize these effects, the Applicant will continue to utilize wood structures in lieu of steel pole or tower structures in the amended sections.

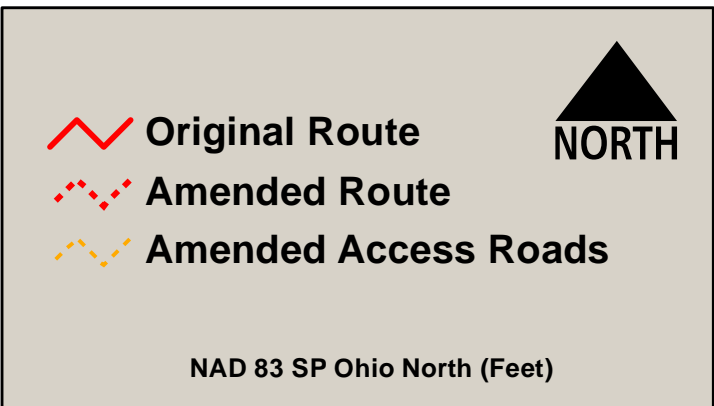
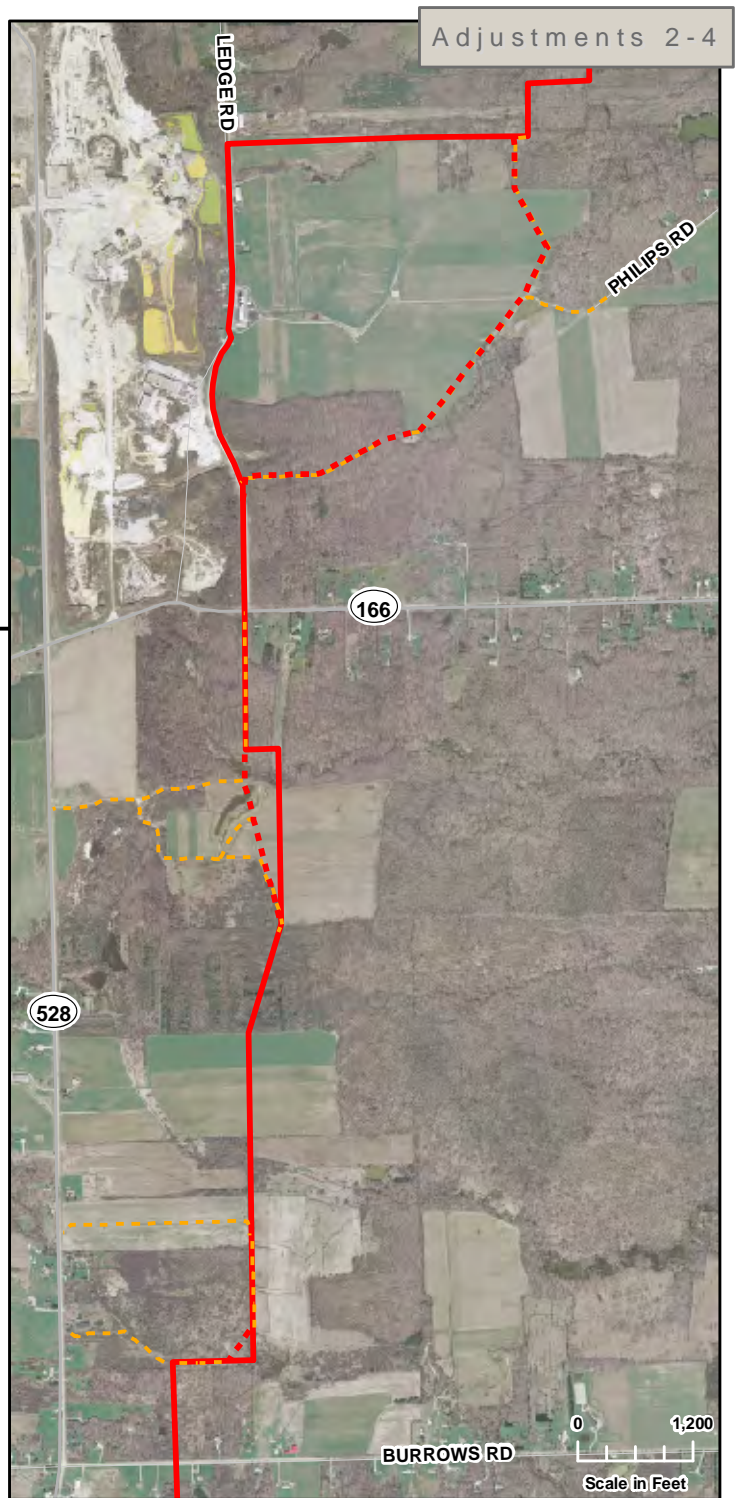
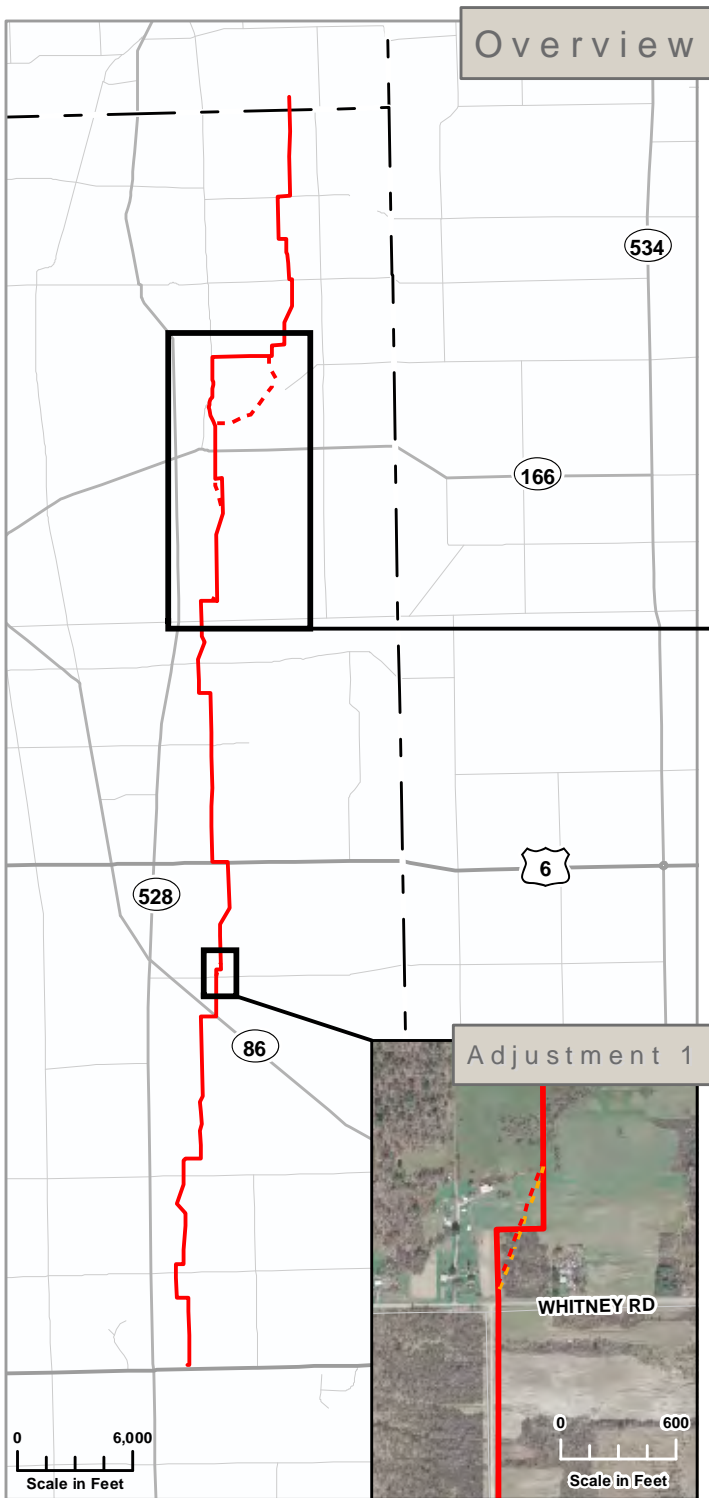
In January, 2011, the Applicant submitted a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for this project. In a letter dated March 21, 2011, the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) concluded from the Phase I Survey that no historic properties will be affected by this project. Staff notes that the same letter recommended that no further coordination with OHPO is necessary for this project “unless there is a change in the scope of work.” Staff finds the proposed amendment would constitute a change in the original scope of work, and has recently received an amended Phase I study from the applicant pertaining to the four new segments of transmission line. No issues were identified in this updated cultural resources survey. Consistent with the original case, the applicant will obtain comments/input on the amended cultural resources report from the OHPO.

## **Recommended Findings**

Staff recommends that the Board find that the proposed amendment to the Certificate poses minimal social and environmental impact, provided that the amendment include the conditions specified in the section of this report entitled Recommended Conditions.

**Recommended Conditions**

- 1) The Applicant shall adhere to all conditions of the original Certificate for the Geauga County 138 kV Transmission Line Supply Project (Case No. 07-0171-EL-BTX).
- 2) The Applicant shall provide Staff with an acceptable restoration plan for planting low-growing woody vegetation along the stream bank in the riparian areas that will have to be cleared east of Ledge Road as part of the transmission line realignment. This replanting will be designed to help stabilize the exposed stream banks, reduce future erosion, and accelerate the re-establishment of a woody, vegetated riparian corridor.



**11-1220-EL-BTA**  
amendment to  
**07-0171-EL-BTX**  
**Geauga County Supply Line**

*Maps are presented solely for the purpose of providing a visual representation of the project in the staff report, and are not intended to modify the project as presented by the Applicant in its certified application and supplemental materials.*

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

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Summary: Staff Report Filed electronically filed by Mr. James S. O'Dell on behalf of Staff of OPSB