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OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 12-2666-EL-BLN
Project Name: Davis-Besse to Hayes 345 kV
Transmission Line Construction
Project Location: Ottawa, Sandusky and Erie counties, Ohio
Applicant: American Transmission Systems, Inc.
Application Filing Date: 4 October 2012
Filing Type: Letter of Notification
Inspection Dates: 1 & 15 November 2012
Report Date: 28 November 2012
Automatic Approval Date: 6 December 2012
Projected Docket Closure Date: 1 June 2016
(if approved by the Board)
Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. O'Dell, C. Burri & G. Zeto

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Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description

This project involves installing approximately 30 miles of new 345 kV conductors on the open arms of existing structures. No new r-o-w is required. One new structure would be installed at the Davis Besse Substation. This project is part of a series of transmission upgrades in the area and utilization of the existing structures significantly minimizes impacts. New permanent access roads are not required. A majority of the project work would be accomplished using helicopter installation techniques. A few conductor-pulling locations would be located in non-sensitive areas during construction.

Site Description

The existing r-o-w has been well maintained and no significant vegetative clearing is needed for line installation. Upon completion of line installation and prior to energizing the line, some routine maintenance clearing and removal of danger trees (vegetation that presents a threat to the safe operation of the line) is expected. Land use in proximity to the project is mainly agricultural, rural residential and recreational. Adequate access is generally readily available for construction; however, the Applicant will need to prepare an access plan to avoid ecologically sensitive areas.

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Staff Report of Investigation

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Conditions:

- 1) The Applicant shall prepare a construction access plan based on final plans for the access to the stringing locations and transmission line, and types of equipment to be used. At least 15 days prior to commencement of construction, the Applicant shall submit the plan to Staff, for review and confirmation that it complies with this condition;
- 2) The Applicant shall coordinate with ODNR if final plans indicate that wetlands, or other environmentally sensitive areas containing threatened and endangered species, will be impacted during construction or through access for the project;
- 3) The Applicant shall coordinate with USFWS on precautions to be taken during construction to minimize impacts to raptors and their nesting sites.

Conclusion

No significant vegetative clearing is required. With the adoption of these conditions, the construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and ecological impacts.