

Ohio Power Siting Board

Staff Investigation Report and Recommendation

Case No.: 13-2112-EL-BTA

Project: Amendment to the East Springfield-London-Tangy 138 kV Transmission Line

Applicant: American Transmission Systems, Inc.

Report Date: 20 December 2013

Waiver Requests: None

Inspection Date(s): 7 & 15 November 2013

Staff Assigned: J. O'Dell & D. Rostofer

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

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with a Condition
Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Project Amendment Description

The Applicant is proposing seven minor adjustments to the original certificated route. The amendment was submitted to address four concerns: to accommodate directly impacted property owners, to avoid stormwater ponds, to avoid high quality wetlands and to facilitate substation engineering design. These route adjustments are expected to result in an overall reduction of potential ecological and social impacts.

Amendment Review

Social Impacts

Staff notes that a majority of changes proposed in this amendment are as a result of property owner requests, with one exception. In the case of Adjustment 3, the property owner generally objects to the placement of the facility anywhere on his property; however, this property owner considers the proposed adjustment preferable to the certificated alignment.

The amendment route adjustments would not significantly alter existing land use. No recreational or public parkland is crossed by this Amendment. Land use in proximity to this amendment comprises of agricultural, rural residential, commercial, institutional and limited suburban uses. No residences will need to be removed in order to accommodate this amendment proposal.

The Applicant is finalizing a Phase I Cultural Resources Survey for this project. Consistent with the original case, the Applicant will obtain comments and input on the amended cultural resources report from the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. Per Condition 10 of the original certificate, the Applicant is required to submit a mitigation plan or route modification to the Board if cultural, historical or archaeological resources are found to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

Proposed Route Adjustments

Adjustment 1 is located on two adjacent properties, immediately north of U. S. Route 40. In addition, approximately 30 feet of the certificated route on the south side of U. S. Route 40 would be shifted. The property owner on the south side of the highway has already granted an easement to incorporate the alignment shift. The proposed alignment adjustment on the northern property would move the line approximately 600 feet closer to the rear of 14 homes along Larchmont Drive. However, these 14 residential properties still would average over 250 feet of separation from the facility. Additionally, many of the 14 properties have existing vegetative screening in place. This screening poses no danger to the new transmission line location and thus would remain.

Adjustment 2 is being requested by the property owner to avoid placement of structures in stormwater ponds that have recently been constructed. This adjustment is within the boundaries of a large commerce park.

Adjustments 3 and 4 are located in agricultural areas. The proposed route changes shifts the new alignment further away from rural residences.

Adjustment 5 would be moved to parallel an existing electric distribution line and it would avoid crossing a larger portion of the owner's commercial business and stormwater pond.

Adjustment 6 is proposed by the Applicant to avoid impacts to Category 3 wetlands (high quality resources). The change would also avoid two wetlands entirely. The property owners have agreed to the proposed new alignment.

Adjustment 7 would allow the Applicant to enter the Tangy Substation in a more efficient manner that accommodates the existing substation design.

Ecological Impacts

The Applicant delineated water resources and searched for threatened and endangered (T&E) species within the right-of-way of the proposed adjustment corridor. There were no T&E species encountered by the Applicant. Impacts to water resources would still be minimal. Wetland impacts would also be decreased as a result of Adjustment 6. Staff would require the Applicant to conform to conditions of the original certificate in order to best protect ecological resources associated with this project.

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 condition specified in the section of this report entitled Recommended Condition.

Recommended Condition

- 1) The Applicant shall adhere to all conditions of the original Certificate for the East Springfield-London-Tangy 138 kV Transmission Line (Case No. 11-4884-EL-BTX).

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Summary: Report of investigation electronically filed by Mr. Adam S Bargar on behalf of Staff of OPSB