

BEFORE THE
OHIO POWER SITING BOARD

In The Matter Of:)	
The Application of American Transmission)	Case No. 14-0811-EL-BTA
Systems, Incorporated for the Third Amendment)	
to the Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and)	
Public Need for the East Springfield-London-Tangy)	
Transmission Line Project)	

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF

JESSICA THACKER

ON BEHALF OF

AMERICAN TRANSMISSION SYSTEMS, INCORPORATED

1 **TESTIMONY OF MS. JESSICA L. THACKER**
2

3 **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

4 **Q. PLEASE STATE YOUR NAME, EMPLOYER, BUSINESS ADDRESS AND**
5 **POSITION.**

6 A. My name is Jessica L. Thacker. I am employed by the FirstEnergy Service Company. My
7 business address is 76 South Main Street, Akron, Ohio 44308. I am an Engineer in the
8 Transmission Engineering Group of the Energy Delivery organizational unit. Additional
9 information regarding my education and work experience can be found in Attachment A.
10

11 **OBSERVATIONS THAT WILL ASSIST THE READER WITH UNDERSTANDING**

12 **THIS TESTIMONY**
13

14 **Q. BEFORE TURNING TO SUBSTANTIVE MATTERS, DO YOU HAVE ANY**
15 **OBSERVATIONS THAT WILL ASSIST THE READER WITH UNDERSTANDING**
16 **THIS TESTIMONY?**

17 A. Yes. My testimony is being submitted in the proceedings for the Third Amendment to the
18 Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the East Springfield-London
19 Tangy Transmission Line Project, Case No. 14-0811-EL-BTA.

20 Unless otherwise indicated, capitalized terms that are used in my testimony have the same
21 meaning as the same capitalized terms have in the Application. The common terms used in
22 my testimony are as follows:

1 **Application:** means the Application of American Transmission Systems, Incorporated for a
2 Third Amendment to the Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the
3 East Springfield-London-Tangy Transmission Line Project.

4 **Applicant:** means American Transmission Systems, Incorporated.

5 **Approved Route:** means the route of the East Springfield-London-Tangy Transmission
6 Line approved by the OPSB in Case No. 11-4884-EL-BTX on March 11, 2013, as
7 subsequently amended by the OPSB in Case No. 13-2112-EL-BTA on February 18, 2014.

8 **ATSI:** means American Transmission Systems, Incorporated.

9 **OPSB:** means the Ohio Power Siting Board.

10 **Project:** means the proposed Third Amendment to the Certificate of Environmental
11 Compatibility and Public Need for the East Springfield-London-Tangy Transmission Line
12 Project.

13 Also, I note that the Application is filed with the OPSB and posted on the Board's website,
14 and therefore available to parties and other interested persons for review.

15 Finally, and again speaking as sponsor of the Application, in the unlikely event that there is a
16 difference between data or information provided in the Applicants' prefiled testimony and
17 the Application, the data or information in the prefiled testimony will control.

18 **Q. WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF YOUR TESTIMONY?**

19 A. On July 18, 2014, the Administrative Law Judge in this matter set a hearing date and required
20 Applicant to file testimony related to the requested Third Amendment to the Approved Route
21 of the East Springfield-London-Tangy Transmission Line Project. The purpose of this
22 testimony is to sponsor the submittal of the Application to the OPSB, explain the reason for
23 the proposed 3rd amendment to the Approved Route and to provide information confirming

1 that the proposed amendment will not have any materially different adverse environmental
2 impacts than the Approved Route.

3 **Q. HOW IS THE APPLICATION ORGANIZED?**

4 A. The Application was submitted in Docket No. 14-0811-EL-BTA. The Application has been
5 prepared in accordance with statutory requirements and the OPSB's rules for Amendments to
6 Certificates of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need. As described in the OPSB's
7 rules, applications for amendments to Certificates are to be filed in the format most
8 appropriate for the type of change being proposed. In this case, the Letter of Notification
9 format was applicable, and the Application was prepared in accordance with the
10 requirements of Admin. Code Rule 4906-11-01 and is organized in accordance with those
11 rule requirements.

12 **APPLICANTS' WITNESSES' RESPONSIBILITIES**

13 **FOR SPONSORING THE APPLICATION**

14
15 **Q. PLEASE IDENTIFY THE APPLICANTS' WITNESSES THAT ARE SPONSORING**
16 **EACH PART OR SUBPART OF THE APPLICATION.**

17 A. I am sponsoring the Application as an entire document on behalf of ATSI.

18 **Q. WHAT DO YOU MEAN WHEN YOU SAY THAT YOU ARE SPONSORING THE**
19 **APPLICATION?**

20 A. That the data and information in the Application, including tables, figures and appendices,
21 were either prepared by or under my supervision as the person at ATSI responsible for the
22 overall preparation of the Application. For the parts of the Application where I relied on
23 technical knowledge or other information provided by consultants, experts or other

1 individuals working on behalf of ATSI, I am familiar with those portions of the Application
2 and the information provided therein, and I am sponsoring that information on behalf of
3 ATSI.

4 **Q. TO THE BEST OF YOUR INFORMATION AND BELIEF IS THE APPLICATION**
5 **SUBMITTED TO THE OHIO POWER SITING BOARD IN THIS PROCEEDING**
6 **COMPLETE AND ACCURATE?**

7 A. Yes, to the best of my information and belief, the information contained in the Application
8 that forms the basis of this proceeding is true, accurate and complete.

9 **Q. MS. THACKER, CAN YOU EXPLAIN FOR US WHY THIS 3RD AMENDMENT TO**
10 **THE APPROVED ROUTE WAS PROPOSED?**

11 A. The third amendment to the Approved Route was proposed to resolve right-of-way utilization
12 issues and associated discussions with property owners and tenants with the portion of the
13 Approved Route that is partially located on existing right-of-way and is located adjacent to
14 and / or passes through an active quarry. The third amendment proposes a route that partially
15 parallels an existing distribution line and is located parallel to the perimeter of the existing
16 quarry, adjacent to an identified potential expansion of the quarry and through open field to
17 connect to the Approved Route. This proposed route avoids placement of the line within the
18 quarry's current active footprint and allows for a potential expansion of the quarry to the
19 northeast and in particular the proposed route avoids the need to place fill materials or tall
20 structures supported on the floor of the quarry to support the transmission line. Further, and
21 based on information from the property owners that has been shared with ATSI, it is also my
22 understanding that when the quarry ceases operation, the pit of the quarry will be allowed to
23 fill with water. Although transmission lines can be installed to cross water bodies, in general,

1 ATSI prefers not to locate transmission lines over open water as this creates additional
2 obstacles for future maintenance and repair of the transmission line. The proposed 3rd
3 amendment to the Approved Route avoids this issue by proposing a route adjustment that
4 avoids the quarry pit.

5
6 ATSI has worked with the affected property owners in developing this amendment to the
7 Approved Route and all of the affected property owners have agreed to the proposed route
8 adjustment.

9
10 **Q. ONCE IT WAS DETERMINED THAT THE BEST APPROACH TO RESOLVING**
11 **THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES WITH THE APPROVED ROUTE WAS TO**
12 **RELOCATE A PORTION OF THE LINE, HOW DID ATSI GO ABOUT**
13 **PREPARING THE AMENDMENT REQUEST TO THE BOARD?**

14
15 **A.** Once a general route adjustment was identified to avoid the quarry, ATSI retained URS
16 Corporation to conduct a wetland delineation, stream assessment and cultural resource
17 survey of the relocation area. The results of these field studies confirmed that that the
18 proposed route adjustment will have no or minimal additional impacts. The results of the
19 field work confirmed that the proposed route adjustment is the best solution for this location
20 of the Project that minimizes all impacts, including those associated with the quarry.

1 **Q. DOES THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT REPRESENT THE MINIMUM ADVERSE**
2 **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT, CONSIDERING THE STATE OF AVAILABLE**
3 **TECHNOLOGY AND THE NATURE AND ECONOMICS OF THE VARIOUS**
4 **ALTERNATIVES, AND OTHER PERTINENT CONSIDERATIONS?**

5 **A.** For the reasons explained in the Application, yes I believe it does.
6
7

8 **Q. DOES THIS CONCLUDE YOUR INITIAL DIRECT TESTIMONY?**

9 **A.** Yes it does. However, I would like to reserve the right to supplement my initial testimony if
10 anything changes with respect to the status of the Application.

ATTACHMENT A

SUMMARY OF EDUCATION AND WORK EXPERIENCE OF
JESSICA L. THACKER

1 **Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN EMPLOYED BY FIRSTENERGY SERVICE**
2 **COMPANY, FIRSTENERGY CORP., ITS OTHER SUBSIDIARIES OR**
3 **PREDECESSOR COMPANIES?**

4 A. I have been employed with FirstEnergy Service Company continuously since August 4th,
5 2008 for a total of 6years.

6
7 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT JOB TITLE?**

8 A. I am an Engineer in the Transmission Engineering Group of the Energy Delivery
9 organizational unit.

10
11 **Q. HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN YOUR CURRENT POSITION?**

12 A. In January, 2014 I was promoted to my current position as Engineer IV.

13
14 **Q. PLEASE DESCRIBE YOUR CURRENT POSITION.**

15 A. In this position I provide support for FirstEnergy's and its subsidiaries, including ATSI,
16 efforts to site new transmission facilities, by assisting with efforts in developing transmission
17 line route siting studies, transmission substation siting studies, and associated regulatory
18 filings. This also involves working with internal and external resources that include
19 FirstEnergy's Legal-Regulatory, Real Estate, Transmission Engineering, Customer Support,
20 External Affairs Managers, Environmental Permitting & Compliance, Vegetation
21 Management, Operations Support, Transmission Lines Services Department, Public
22 Communications, Regional Organizations, Area Managers, and Asset Management
23 Departments.

1
2 **Q. PLEASE BRIEFLY GENERALLY DESCRIBE IN THE POSITIONS YOU HAVE**
3 **HELD IN YOUR CAREER WITH FIRSTENERGY.**

4 A. I was hired by FirstEnergy Service Company in August 2008. The general sequence and
5 time frame of my positions with FirstEnergy are as follows. From August 2008 to June 2010
6 I was part of the rotational program for entry-level engineers as an Assistant Engineer. The
7 program included working in four different departments: the Emergency Operations Center,
8 Transmission Maintenance, The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company's (a FirstEnergy
9 subsidiary) Engineering Department, and Transmission Siting. My assignments included
10 understanding the function and operation of each group and assisting in the current work
11 activities. In June 2010, I completed the program and was placed in the Transmission Siting
12 Group as an Associate Engineer, Engineer, and then as an Engineer IV. My current
13 assignments include leading and assisting in the coordination of environmental studies and
14 regulatory permitting for FirstEnergy's transmission projects.

15
16 **Q. STARTING WITH AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION, PLEASE TELL US**
17 **YOUR EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND.**

18 A. I earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from The University of Akron in
19 May 2008. In May 2013 I earned Master of Business Administration in Management from
20 The University of Akron.

21
22 **Q. DO YOU HAVE ANY PROFESSIONAL LICENSES OR CERTIFICATIONS?**

23 A. Yes, I am an Engineer-in-Training in the State of Ohio.

1
2 **Q. HAVE YOU EVER HAD TO TESTIFY PREVIOUSLY IN OHIO POWER SITING**
3 **BOARD OR OTHER ELECTRIC-UTILITY PROCEEDINGS?**

4 A. Yes. I testified for the Black River Substation Project (Case No. 11-5855-EL-BSB) and
5 Black River Transmission Project (Case No. 11-5856-EL-BTX). I have also testified for the
6 Clinic Hospital Substation Project (Case No. 11-2754-EL-BSB).

7
8 **Q. HAVE YOU BEEN INVOLVED ON OTHER PROJECTS REQUIRING SUBMITTAL**
9 **OF OTHER TYPES OF SITING FILINGS FOR APPROVAL OF THE**
10 **CONSTRUCTION OF OTHER ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION PROJECTS?**

11 A. Yes, I have either prepared or participated in the preparation of 4 Application filings,
12 approximately 11 Construction Notice filings with the Ohio Power Siting Board,
13 approximately 12 Letter of Notification filings with the Ohio Power Siting Board and
14 approximately 2 Letter of Notification in lieu of Application filings with the Pennsylvania
15 Public Utility Commission.

16
17 **Q. WHAT IS YOUR ROLE ON THE PROJECT?**

18 A. I am the person with responsibility for coordinating the Applicants' efforts to obtain the
19 OPSB's authorization to construct the proposed Project. As such, I am responsible for the
20 overall Project, including the Route Selection Study, the preparation of the Application,
21 filing the Application with the OPSB and acting as the Applicants' lead representative to the
22 OPSB Staff throughout the Board's regulatory process.

1 **Q. GO ON.**

2 A. In this role, I worked with the subject matter experts with expertise on the various topics that
3 are described in Chapter 4906-15 of the Board's regulations. The subject matter experts
4 were drawn from qualified employees of the Applicants or the Applicants' affiliates or, in
5 some cases, from qualified external consulting firms.

6
7 **Q. DO YOU HOLD FINAL DECISION-MAKING AUTHORITY FOR THE PROJECT?**

8 A. No. The Applicants' executives hold final decision-making authority for the Project. My
9 role is to formulate issues and recommendations for executive review and approval, and to
10 implement the executives' decisions and guidance. As such, I hold responsibility for
11 identifying issues that require executive authorization, presentation of such issues to the
12 executives – including answering questions from the executives, and then executing on
13 executive decisions and direction. In this role, I was the project lead for preparation of the
14 Application draft and the subsequent Amendments that were presented for executive
15 authorization. Once the executives approved filing of the Application, I was responsible for
16 acting as the Applicant's lead representative to the OPSB Staff throughout the OPSB's
17 regulatory process.

18
19 **Q. PLEASE IDENTIFY THE RESOURCES THAT WERE AND ARE AVAILABLE TO**
20 **YOU AS YOU PERFORM YOUR DUTIES IN THIS MATTER.**

21 A. I received and continue to receive assistance from the subject matter experts. In addition, I
22 obtained and continue to obtain assistance on an "as needed" basis from other internal
23 FirstEnergy (and affiliated company) personnel in engineering, real estate, regulatory, asset

1 management, legal, construction, forestry, procurement, customer relations, area and
2 community relations, and communications resources. Finally, acting pursuant to executive
3 direction, I have access to and on an “as needed” basis receive assistance from external
4 resources, such as URS.

5 COLUMBUS/1731392v.1

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that a copy of the foregoing *Testimony of Jessica Thacker* was served upon the following persons by electronic filing and by subsequently mailing a copy, postage prepaid, on August 1, 2014 addressed to:

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Summary: Testimony of Jessica Thacker on behalf of Applicant American Transmission Systems Incorporated electronically filed by Mr. Robert J Schmidt on behalf of American Transmission Systems Inc.