

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application)
of AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. for the Cole) 16-1558-EL-BLN
345/138 kV Substation Project)

Members of the Board:

Chairman, Public Utilities Commission	Ohio House of Representatives
Director, Development Services Agency	Ohio Senate
Director, Department of Health	
Director, Department of Agriculture	
Director, Environmental Protection Agency	
Director, Department of Natural Resources	
Public Member	

To the Honorable Power Siting Board:

Please review the attached Staff Report of Investigation, which has been filed in accordance with Ohio Power Siting Board (Board) rules. The accelerated certificate application in this case is subject to an automatic approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The application will be automatically approved on September 8, 2016, unless suspended by the Board's chairperson or an administrative law judge. If suspended, the Board must render a decision on the application within 90 days from the date of suspension.

Please present any concerns you or your designee may have with this case to my office at least four business days prior to September 8, 2016, which is the automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Patrick Donlon
Director, Rates and Analysis
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-6692

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 16-1558--EL-BLN
Project Name: Cole 345/138 kV Substation Project
Project Location: Franklin County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: August 10, 2016
Filing Type: Expedited Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: August 23, 2016
Report Date: September 1, 2016
Automatic Approval Date: September 8, 2016
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. Whitis, A. Holderbaum, J. Pawley

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Project Description

The Applicant, AEP Ohio Transmission Company, proposes to construct the Cole 345/138 kilovolt (kV) Substation. The proposed substation site would encompass approximately 11.5 acres and is located on 136 acre parcel owned by AEP Ohio Transmission Company. The parcel is located off of Cole Road in Franklin County.

The substation will include 345/138 kV breakers, switches, steel support structures, transformers and other miscellaneous equipment. Also, a control building will be constructed and contain all switch control and relay panels. The Applicant estimates the cost of the substation project to be \$15,636,000. The substation construction is expected to begin in September 2016. The anticipated in-service date provided by the Applicant is June 2017.

Site Description

The project is located in Prairie Township, Franklin County. The entire substation site is located on property owned by AEP Ohio Transmission Company. No additional access easements, options, or other land use agreements are necessary to construct the facility.

Nature of Impacts

Surface Waters

There are two streams, one perennial and one ephemeral, totaling 1,393 linear feet, within the vicinity of the project area. However, neither of the streams are within the footprint of the proposed substation. No in-water work is proposed for this project.

No wetlands were identified within the proposed project area.

The project is located within the Big Darby Watershed. The Applicant intends to file a Notice of Intent with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for authorization of construction stormwater discharges under General Permit OHCD00002 for the Big Darby Watershed.

Due to the project's location within the Big Darby Watershed, the Applicant has developed a stormwater management plan to ensure proper stormwater detention, water quality treatment, and groundwater recharge. The Applicant has designed the project so that overall site post-development groundwater recharge quantity equals or exceeds the pre-development groundwater recharge. This design would eliminate the need for the Applicant to conduct off-site mitigation. The Applicant would coordinate stormwater permitting with Prairie Township and Franklin County.

Threatened and Endangered Species

State and federally-listed species and/or suitable habitat that may be found in the project area include the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the Northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). There is a tree line to the west of the project area. The Applicant asserts that no tree clearing would be necessary for this project. Therefore, no impacts to these species are anticipated.

The project lies within the range of numerous listed mussels species. Due to the project location, and that there is no in-water work proposed for this project, no impacts to these species are anticipated.

The project lies within the range of many listed fish species. Due to the fact that there is no in-water work planned for this project, no impacts to these species are anticipated.

The project lies within the range of the state endangered upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*). No suitable habitat for this species lies within the project area, no impacts to this species are anticipated.

Social

Cultural and Archaeological Resources

The Applicant conducted a literature/desktop review and phase I archaeological and architectural surveys for the project area. The phase I field archaeology survey work resulted in identifying a number of previously unrecorded archaeological sites, which were determined to be predominately isolated finds and not historic properties. No further work is recommended by the Applicant's cultural resources consultant in this regard.

Three properties were identified in the project area as being over 50 years of age or older, that may be in direct sight of the project. While two properties were determined not eligible for listing in

the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), a third resource (Phillippi house) exhibited potential NRHP significance and was identified by the Applicant's consultant for advanced study. The advanced study concluded that this house was ineligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

The Applicant has included the Phase I study results and recommendations with the Letter of Notification filing. Staff has requested that the Applicant coordinate the findings and recommendations of the cultural resources report with the State Historic Preservation Office.

Public Interaction

Staff notes that on August 23, 2016, a nearby landowner filed a petition on this docket "[a]s allowed by Rule 4906-2-12, Ohio Administrative Code." While Staff's review of the requirements listed in R.C. 4906.10 leads Staff to the conclusion that the application meets the necessary criteria for granting a certificate, Staff also recognizes that this request may impact whether the automatic approval of this matter will occur on September 8, 2016.

Conclusion

Staff's review of the application included consideration of the requirements listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 4906.10. Based on Staff's review, the application meets the necessary criteria for granting a certificate. Subject to any impact the Board may find as a result of the public interaction in this case, Staff recommends automatic approval of this case on September 8, 2016, provided that the following conditions are satisfied.

Conditions

1. Prior to the commencement of construction activities that require permits or authorizations by federal or state laws and regulations, the Applicant shall obtain and comply with such permits or authorizations. The Applicant shall provide copies of permits and authorizations, including all supporting documentation, to Staff within seven days of issuance or receipt by the Applicant.
2. Prior to construction, the Applicant shall finalize coordination of the assessment of potential effects of the proposed substation on cultural resources, if any, with Staff and the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. If the resulting coordination discloses a find of cultural significance, or inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places, then the Applicant shall submit a mitigation plan to Staff to ensure compliance with this condition. Any such mitigation effort shall be developed in coordination with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and submitted to Staff for review.
3. Prior to commencement of any construction, the Applicant shall prepare a landscape and lighting plan that addresses the aesthetic and lighting impacts of the facility on neighboring residences. The Applicant shall consult with adjacent property owners in the development of this plan and provide the plan to Staff for review and confirmation that it complies with this condition.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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Case No(s). 16-1558-EL-BLN

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Yvonne W Cooper on behalf of Staff of OPSB