

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application)
of AEP Ohio Transmission Company for the)
Tidd-Wagenhals 138 kV Transmission Line Extension) **17-0811-EL-BLN**
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 Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) 4906.03 and Ohio Administrative Code (Ohio Adm.Code) 4906-6-04.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval on September 13, 2017, unless suspended by the Board, an administrative law judge, or the chairperson or executive director of the board for good cause shown. 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 13, 2017, 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) 644-8932

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 17-0811-EL-BLN
Project Name: Tidd-Wagenhals 138 kV Extension Project
Project Location: Carroll County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: August 15, 2017
Filing Type: Expedited Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: August 29, 2017
Report Date: September 6, 2017
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: September 13, 2017
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, J. Cross, G. Zeto

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to construct a new 0.11-mile long transmission line extension. AEP Ohio Transmission Company (AEP Ohio Transco or Applicant) would construct a new 138kV/69kV/12kV distribution station immediately west of the existing Tidd-Wagenhals 138 kV transmission line. This distribution substation would be a replacement of an existing distribution substation located approximately 0.25 mile to the north. AEP provides distribution service to the immediate vicinity.

The Applicant states that the transmission line work associated with this project would occur on existing AEP Ohio Transco property.

The transmission line extension would involve installing four 138 kV double circuit steel structures along the existing Tidd-Wagenhals transmission line at a height of between 120 and 150 feet, and removing three existing transmission towers. The extension into the distribution substation would involve four 138 kV single circuit steel poles at a height of between 86 and 95 feet at a distance of 0.11 mile.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$1.5 million. The Applicant would like to commence construction of this project in September 2017 and place the facility in service by December 2017.

Basis of Need

Long Term Forecast

The Ohio Adm.Code requires electric utilities and transmission owners to file a forecast report with the PUCO annually. The report requires a 10-year plan of committed or tentatively projected projects on the bulk power transmission network. AEP Ohio Transco identified the need for the proposed transmission line project in the *2017 AEP Ohio Transmission Company Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio*.¹

Socioeconomic Impacts

No occupied residences are located within 100 feet of the project site. The Lake Mohawk reservoir and recreation community is located 0.5 mile south of the project area. This project would not cross Lake Mohawk. Land use in the vicinity of the project consists of agricultural properties and woodlots. The existing Tidd-Wagenhals 138 kV transmission line is located adjacent to the distribution substation.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review and Phase I archaeological investigations for the project in August 2017. Additionally, a history/architectural investigation was also conducted in August 2017.

The literature review identified no previously recorded archaeological sites at the project location. Likewise, shovel testing at the project site did not identify any cultural materials.

The Applicant also had a history/architectural survey done for the area around the project. This survey identified four individual properties within the study area that are more than 50 years old. These four properties were determined by the consultant to be not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places due to alterations, additions, and a loss of historic integrity.

Further, the consultant determined that the project would not involve or impact any significant cultural resources or historic properties, and that no further cultural resource management work is necessary. On August 25, 2017, the Ohio History Connection issued a concurrence letter agreeing with these findings.

Surface Waters

The project area does not contain any streams. No in-water work is planned in any streams, and no impacts are anticipated.

The project area contains two Category 2 wetlands totaling 0.88 acre. None of the proposed structures would be located within wetlands, and no wetland fill is proposed for the project. Any equipment crossing required during construction would be accomplished using timber mats.

The Applicant would be required to submit a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

1. "Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," *AEP Ohio Transmission Company*, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 17-1501-EL-FOR, April 17, 2017.

The project does not cross a 100-year floodplain and no floodplain permit would be required.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The federal and state-listed species and/or their suitable habitat that may be found in the project area include the state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). Limited tree clearing would be necessary for the proposed route alignment. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) stated that Indiana bat presence has been confirmed in the project vicinity. The USFWS and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) recommend that removal of any trees greater than three inches in diameter only occur from October 1 through March 31, unless coordination with the ODNR and the USFWS allows a different course of action.

Due to no in-water work, and a lack of suitable habitat, impacts to state and federal listed species are not anticipated.

Conclusion

Staff's review of the application included consideration of the requirements listed in R.C. 4906.10. Based on Staff's review, the application meets the necessary criteria for granting a certificate. Staff recommends automatic approval of this case on September 13, 2017, provided that the following conditions are satisfied:

Recommended Conditions:

- (1) Prior to the commencement of construction activities in areas 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) The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of October 1 through March 31 for removal of any trees greater than three inches in diameter, unless coordination with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows a different course of action.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on

9/6/2017 10:56:47 AM

in

Case No(s). 17-0811-EL-BLN

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Mr. Matt Butler on behalf of Staff of OPSB