

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)
Haviland-North Delphos 138kV Transmission Line) **Case No. 17-1953-EL-BLN**
Rebuild 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 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval on December 27, 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 December 27, 2017, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Tamara S. Turkenton
Director, Rates and Analysis,
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
614) 466-1825
ContactOPSB@puc.state.oh.us

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case No.: 17-1953-EL-BLN
Project Name: Haviland-North Delphos Rebuild Project
Project Location: Paulding, Putnam, and Van Wert counties
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: September 27, 2017
Filing Type: Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: October 31, 2017
Report Date: December 20, 2017
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: December 27, 2017
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: A. Holderbaum, J. Cross

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description

AEP Ohio Transmission Company (Applicant) proposes to rebuild approximately 17.1 miles of existing 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line between the Haviland Station in Paulding County and the North Delphos Station in Putnam County. There will be a total of 91 structure replacements. The new structures will be double-circuit galvanized steel monopoles. The existing conductors would be upgraded to 1033.5 kcmil ACSR 54/7 conductors. With the exception of approximately 0.8 miles of slight deviations, the project would be constructed within existing right-of-way. The Applicant proposes to begin construction in the first quarter of 2018 and place the line in service by December 2018. The Applicant estimates the total cost of the project at \$21 million.

Basis of Need

The Applicant states the Project is needed due to the age of the transmission line. The Haviland-North Delphos transmission line was placed in-service in 1926 and no longer complies with AEP standards. The proposed transmission line would help stabilize and provide reliable energy to the Applicant's northwest Ohio 138 kV transmission system. In addition, the proposed transmission line would support the electrical load required in future economic development in that area.

The Applicant plans to include the proposed project in the 2018 Long-Term Forecast Report filing to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio and be included as a future supplemental project

submission to PJM Interconnection, LLC (PJM). The Project would be issued a supplemental PJM upgrade ID. The construction status of transmission project can be tracked on PJM's website.¹

Nature of Impacts

Socioeconomic Impacts

The surrounding land use is a mix of agricultural fields and scattered residences. Construction would occur within the existing 100-foot right-of-way for 16.3 miles with 0.8 mile of the rebuild occurring in new right-of-way due to obstructions and engineering requirements. No new property owners would be impacted as a result of constructing outside of the existing right-of-way.

Portions of the project cross six agricultural district parcels within Putnam and Paulding Counties. The Applicant was not able to obtain information on agricultural district lands for Van Wert County. Because of the nature of the project, changes to agricultural district designation would be unlikely. However, Staff recommends that the Applicant continue coordination with Staff to provide further information on agricultural districts within Van Wert County to assure that impacts to agricultural districts are minimized. No residences would be removed as a result of the project.

The Applicant sent notification about the project to area public officials and affected property owners. The Applicant is currently working with property owners on acquiring both temporary and supplemental easements for access roads.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant performed a Phase I cultural resource management investigation for the project in July 2017, concluding that the project would not affect any historic properties or landmarks and that no further cultural resources work is considered to be necessary for this project.

Surface Waters

The Applicant identified 37 streams within the project survey corridor, including eight ephemeral streams, 20 intermittent streams, and nine perennial streams. No poles would be located in streams. No in-water work is planned in any streams, and no permanent impacts to streams are anticipated.

No wetlands were identified within the survey corridor. Two ponds were identified within the survey corridor, totaling approximately 0.28 acre. No impacts to these resources are anticipated.

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

Threatened and Endangered Species

The state and federal 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*). The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (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.

1. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," accessed December 20, 2017, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

The project lies within the range of the state endangered and federal candidate eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*), the state endangered and federal species of concern eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*), the state endangered black bear (*Ursus americanus*), the state threatened greater redhorse (*Moxostoma valenciennesi*), and several state listed mussel species. Due to the 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 the state endangered upland sandpiper (*Bartramia longicauda*). Nesting upland sandpipers utilize dry grasslands including native grasslands, seeded grasslands, grazed and ungrazed pasture, hayfields, and grasslands established through the Conservation Reserve Program. If this type of habitat would be impacted, the ODNR recommends construction be avoided in this habitat during the species' nesting period of April 15 to July 31.

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 application on December 27, 2017.

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 continue coordination with Staff to provide further information on agricultural districts within Van Wert County to assure that impacts to agricultural districts are minimized.
- (3) The Applicant shall not conduct construction activities within potential upland sandpiper nesting habitat from April 15 through July 31, unless coordination with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) allows a different course of action.
- (4) The Applicant shall provide to Staff the PJM Interconnection supplemental upgrade ID and the presentation presented at the applicable PJM committee.
- (5) The Applicant shall include this project in its 2018 Long-Term Forecast Report.
- (6) 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 ODNR 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

12/20/2017 3:27:15 PM

in

Case No(s). 17-1953-EL-BLN

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