

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Construction Notice Application by )  
AEP Ohio Transmission Company a Certificate of )  
Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the ) Case No. 18-0906-EL-BLN  
East Lima Station Expansion 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 July 2, 2018, 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 July 2, 2018, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Raymond W. Strom  
Chief of Siting, Efficiency and Renewables Division  
Rates and Analysis Department  
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 466-7707  
[ContactOPSB@puc.state.oh.us](mailto:ContactOPSB@puc.state.oh.us)

## OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**Case Number:** 18-0906-EL-BLN  
**Project Name:** East Lima Station Expansion Project  
**Project Location:** Allen County  
**Applicant:** AEP Ohio Transmission Company  
**Application Filing Date:** June 1, 2018  
**Filing Type:** Expedited Letter of Notification  
**Inspection Date:** June 8, 2018  
**Report Date:** June 25, 2018  
**Recommended Automatic Approval Date:** July 2, 2018  
**Applicant's Waiver Requests:** none  
**Staff Assigned:** G. Zeto and J. Cross

### Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

### Project Description and Need

AEP Ohio Transmission Company (AEP Ohio Transco or Applicant) proposes to expand the East Lima Station's fenced area by an additional 2.4 acres. This represents an approximately 4.5 percent increase to the existing 53-acre fenced substation area. The estimated capital costs of this project total approximately \$4,000,000.

The fence expansion includes the installation of new control house modules at the station that would replace the existing control house due to age, maintenance, and flooding issues. The project also includes 345kV switch replacements to increase the capacity of the station.

This project was included in the Applicant's most recent Long-Term Forecast Report filing, Case No. 18-1501-EL-FOR. This project was not submitted to PJM. AEP Ohio Transco does not submit a project to PJM if it does not have any effect on system modeling or operational ratings changes.<sup>1</sup>

### Nature of Impacts

#### *Land Use*

The project area is located in Delaware Township, Delaware County. The project area is located within the same parcel occupied by the existing substation and no new easements are required.

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1. AEP Ohio Transmission Company, "Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," *Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 18-1501-EL-FOR*, April 24, 2018.

Adequate access is available for construction. In addition to the existing substation, the dominant land use in proximity to the project area is agricultural, woodlot, and shrub land. The expansion area would be visible from several nearby residences. The nearest residence is approximately 600 feet from the nearest point of the expansion. An active railroad is situated approximately 50 feet southeast east of the expansion area. No institutional or sensitive land uses are present in the vicinity.

The Applicant conducted a cultural resource survey to ascertain potential impacts to historical properties and archaeological sites. The survey determined that adverse impacts to historical properties and archaeological sites are not expected.

#### *Surface Waters*

The survey area contains one intermittent stream. This stream is located outside the proposed expansion area and no in water work is proposed.

The survey area contains seven category 1 wetlands, totaling 2.1 acres. Portions of three wetlands overlap the proposed expansion area and total wetland fill would be approximately 0.38 acre. A Pre-Construction Notification has been submitted to the United States Army Corps of Engineers for approval under Nationwide Permit 12. Compensation for wetland impacts would include the purchase of wetland mitigation credits through The Nature Conservancy's Ohio Stream and Wetland In-Lieu Fee Mitigation Program. Staff recommends that the Applicant mark off wetland areas outside the proposed expansion area using orange snow fence to avoid accidental construction vehicle impacts. Further details about how wetlands would be protected from indirect construction stormwater impacts using erosion and sedimentation controls would be outlined in the Applicant's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, to be submitted as part of the required National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

#### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

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

Some tree clearing would be necessary within the proposed expansion area. The project area is within the range of state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the state and federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). As tree roosting species in the summer months, the habitat of these species may be impacted by the project. In order to avoid impacts to the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat, Staff recommends the Applicant adhere to seasonal tree cutting dates of October 1 through March 31 for all trees three inches or greater in diameter, unless coordination efforts with the ODNR and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows a different course of action.

#### **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 July 2, 2018, provided that the following conditions are satisfied.

#### **Conditions:**

1. Prior to construction in areas that require permits, the Applicant shall obtain and comply with all applicable permits and authorizations as required by federal and state entities. Copies of such permits and authorizations, including all supporting documentation, shall be provided to Staff to ensure compliance with this condition.
2. Prior to construction the Applicant shall install orange snow fence around wetlands outside the proposed expansion area in order to avoid accidental impacts from construction vehicles.
3. The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of October 1 to March 31 for the removal of trees three inches and greater in diameter to avoid impacts to Indiana bats and Northern long-eared bats, 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**

**6/25/2018 11:38:28 AM**

**in**

**Case No(s). 18-0906-EL-BLN**

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Adam Bargar on behalf of Staff of OPSB