

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. 18-0602-EL-BLN
Dilles Bottom Station and George Washington-Dilles)
Bottom 138 kV Transmission Line 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 August 22, 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 August 22, 2018, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



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OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 18-0602-EL-BLN
Project Name: Dilles Bottom Station and George Washington-Dilles Bottom 138 kV Transmission Line Project
Project Location: Belmont County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: May 23, 2018
Filing Type: Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: July 3, 2018
Report Date: August 15, 2018
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: August 22, 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

AEP Ohio Transmission Company (AEP Ohio Transco or Applicant) proposes to replace the existing Dilles Bottom Station and to replace approximately 0.1 mile of existing 69 kilovolt (kV) transmission line with 138 kV transmission line between the Dilles Bottom Station and the Ohio River. From there, the transmission line replacement would continue to American Electric Power's George Washington Station in West Virginia. The replacement of the Dilles Bottom Station would increase the footprint of the substation from approximately 0.1 acre to 2.4 acres. The additional area is necessary to accommodate the increase in voltage. The estimated capital cost of this project totals approximately \$7,000,000.

Basis of Need

AEP Ohio Transco identified transmission system criteria violations due to future generation retirements. In addition, a new industrial customer is proposing to build a facility near the project area. The addition of this new load would add to the currently anticipated reliability concerns. The proposed station rebuild and transmission line upgrades would alleviate the anticipated criteria violations. The proposed project would allow the transmission system to provide safe, reliable electric service, while meeting applicable planning criteria.

This project was included in the Applicant's most recent Long Term Forecast Report filing, Case No. 18-1501-EL-FOR, and is a PJM Baseline Regional Transmission Expansion Plan project. PJM assigned the project upgrade ID No. b2753. The construction status of the transmission project can be tracked on PJM's website.^{1, 2}

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

The project area is located in Mead Township, Belmont County. An option on the parcel on which the proposed Dilles Bottom Station would be located was released to the Applicant in order to construct the proposed station. The proposed transmission line would be rebuilt adjacent to the existing 69 kV line that it would replace. The Applicant states that the existing line and station must stay energized until the new infrastructure is constructed.

Adequate access is available for construction. In addition to the existing substation and 69 kV line, the dominant land use in proximity to the project area is residential, agricultural, open field, woodlot, and open water. A residence is currently within the proposed project area. However, this home has been purchased by the Applicant and would be demolished for construction of the station. The proposed project would be visible from several nearby residences. The nearest residence is approximately 85 feet from the fence line of the proposed substation. Staff recommends that prior to construction the Applicant develop a landscape and lighting plan to minimize aesthetic impacts to nearby residences.

An active railroad is situated approximately 40 feet south of the expansion area. No institutional or other sensitive land uses are present in the vicinity. The project would not impact any agricultural district lands.

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

Surface Waters

The survey area contains the Ohio River and one other perennial stream. This stream is located outside the proposed substation area and no in water work is proposed. The aerial crossing of the Ohio River would require coordination with the US Army Corps of Engineers to obtain a section 10 permit. The project would be located in a 100-year floodplain area and would require coordination with the local floodplain administrator.

The survey area contains two category 1 wetlands, totaling 0.2 acre. No fill is proposed within these wetlands. 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.

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, May 31, 2018.

2. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," accessed July 13, 2018, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

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 project 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 Ohio Department of Natural Resources 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 August 22, 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) The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of October 1 through 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.
- (3) The Applicant shall prepare a landscape and lighting plan to minimize aesthetic impacts to nearby residences. Prior to construction the Applicant shall provide the plan to Staff for review to confirm that it complies with this condition.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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8/15/2018 3:01:15 PM

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Case No(s). 18-0602-EL-BLN

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