

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Construction Notice Application of )**  
**American Electric Power Ohio Transmission Company )**  
**for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and ) Case No. 18-1465-EL-BNR**  
**Public Need for the Morse Road 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 (Ohio Adm.Code) 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval October 25, 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 October 25, 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  
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## OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**Case Number:** 18-1465-EL-BNR  
**Project Name:** Morse Road Station Expansion Project  
**Project Location:** Franklin County  
**Applicant:** American Electric Power Ohio Transmission Company  
**Application Filing Date:** October 3, 2018  
**Filing Type:** Expedited Construction Notice  
**Inspection Date:** October 12 and 16, 2018  
**Report Date:** October 18, 2018  
**Recommended Automatic Approval Date:** October 25, 2018  
**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 expand the Morse Road substation by 0.4 acre (12 percent) in order to accommodate the upgrade of 138 kilovolt (kV) circuit breakers and add control equipment into a new control building at the existing Morse Road substation site, located in the city of Columbus.

The Morse Road substation upgrades require that the existing fence line expand to the south. Nine existing circuit breakers would be replaced and relocated within the substation. Other upgrades include the replacement of disconnect switches and the upgrade of a drop-in control module. The project also involves constructing a new stormwater pond south of the substation, due to existing site drainage issues. All work to be performed for this project including the expanded fence line and stormwater pond is located on AEP Ohio property. No additional property easements or approvals from land owners are needed for the proposed project.

The Applicant anticipates that construction of this project would begin in late October 2018, and that the facility would be placed in service by July 2021. The total cost of the substation upgrade inclusive of circuit replacement, control building, site work and the fence expansion is estimated at \$15 million.

### Basis of Need

The Applicant states that the existing 138 kV circuit breakers need replacing due to being over-dutied, and/or due to age, condition and high failure rate. The Applicant did not include the

proposed project in the most recent Long-Term Forecast Report filing. The project was submitted to PJM Interconnection LLC (PJM) as a baseline project. PJM assigned the project upgrade ID No. b2821. The construction status of transmission project can be tracked on PJM's website.<sup>1</sup>

## **Nature of Impacts**

### *Land Use*

The expanded Morse Road substation would remain on property where the existing station is located. The project is located in a predominately commercial area west of I-270 and north of Morse Road and the Easton Towne Center. Adjacent land use includes hotel and storage space, a transit center, multi family housing, and an auto dealership. The project is not located within any agricultural district lands. No residential structures would need to be removed to construct this project.

### *Cultural Resources*

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review and Phase I cultural resource management investigation (archaeology and history/architecture) for the project in May and June 2018. The consultant determined that the project would not involve or impact any significant cultural resources or landmarks, and that no further cultural resource management work was considered to be necessary. The findings were submitted to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO). The OHPO responded to the consultant in concurrence that this project would not affect historic properties.

### *Surface Waters*

The project area does not contain any streams and no impacts to streams would occur as a result of the project. The proposed project would not be located within a 100-year floodplain.

The Applicant delineated seven category 2 wetlands in the study area. However, these wetlands are located on the opposite site of the proposed substation expansion. No wetlands disturbance is proposed for this project. Further details about how the surface water resources 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*

A small amount of tree clearing may be required for this project. The project area is within the range of state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). As tree roosting species in the summer months, the habitat of these species would be impacted by the project. In order to avoid impacts to the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat, Staff recommends that 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. The proposed project is expected not to impact any bat hibernacula.

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1. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," accessed October 9, 2018, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

Since no in-water work in a perennial stream is proposed, and there is a lack of suitable habitat, impacts to other 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. Subject to the following conditions, Staff recommends automatic approval of this application on October 25, 2018.

### **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 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**

**10/18/2018 12:25:32 PM**

**in**

**Case No(s). 18-1465-EL-BNR**

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