

**BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO**

**In the Matter of the Expedited Construction Notice )  
Application by Duke Energy Ohio, Inc. for a Certificate ) Case No. 18-1571-EL-BNR  
of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for )  
the F5484 – 138kV Columbia Substation 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 6, 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 December 6, 2018, which is the 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:** 18-1571-EL-BNR  
**Project Name:** F5484 - 138kV Columbia Substation  
**Project Location:** Warren County  
**Applicant:** Duke Energy Ohio, Inc.  
**Application Filing Date:** November 14, 2018  
**Filing Type:** Expedited Construction Notice  
**Inspection Date:** November 26, 2018  
**Report Date:** November 29, 2018  
**Recommended Automatic Approval Date:** December 6, 2018  
**Applicant's Waiver Requests:** none  
**Staff Assigned:** J. Whitis, J. Cross, G. Zeto

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

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

### Project Description

Duke Energy Ohio, Inc. (Applicant) proposes to re-conductor approximately 1,820 feet of existing 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, remove approximately 220 feet of existing 138 kV transmission line, and install approximately 550 feet of new 138 kV transmission line in order to provide service to future new east and west bays of Columbia Substation. The construction would include removing three wooden poles and installing three new wooden poles at the north end of the substation. Also, two existing wooden poles would be replaced with two steel poles. Additionally, two wooden H-frame structures would be replaced with steel 3-pole structures and two new steel structures at the south-end of the substation. The new steel poles would range in height from 90 to 95 feet. The re-conductor and installation of new structures would occur within the 100 foot right-of-way owned by Duke Energy Ohio. The Applicant anticipates that construction of this project would begin mid December 2018, and the facility would be placed in service by May 2019. The estimated total cost of the project is \$4.8 million.

### Basis of Need

The Applicant states the proposed project is needed to provide service for the new bays that are planned for the Columbia Substation. The new bays would provide distribution service to the Applicant's customers. The proposed project would be constructed with an updated conductor to support future load growth and maintain reliability. The Applicant states that without the proposed facility, a contingency could cause the bulk power system to become less reliable and could cause customer outages.

This project was included in the Applicant's most recent Long-Term Forecast Report filing, Case No. 18-0484-EL-FOR, and was submitted to PJM Interconnection (PJM) as a supplemental project. PJM assigned the project upgrade ID No. S0451. The construction status of the transmission project can be tracked on PJM's website.<sup>1, 2</sup>

## **Nature of Impacts**

### *Land Use*

The project is located approximately 150 feet west of State Route 48, where it crosses the Little Miami River in Warren County. There are no parks or schools within a mile of the project site. Land use in the project area consists of predominately commercial and industrial property.

### *Cultural Resources*

The Applicant's consultant performed a literature review and found that 40 archaeological sites, 37 historic structures, and one cemetery have been recorded within a mile of the project area. None of these resources are located within or adjacent to the project area. The consultant recommended that no further work is necessary.

### *Surface Waters*

The project area contains one ephemeral stream and one perennial stream, the Little Miami River. No in-water work is proposed. However, re-conductor of the existing line would require crossing the Little Miami River. This would require authorization from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, because the Little Miami River is a Section 10 Navigable Water. The Applicant submitted an application for a Section 10 permit in October 2018. The Little Miami River is also a designated State and National Scenic River. The Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Ohio Scenic Rivers Program recommends the Applicant develop and implement a riparian management plan for the proposed work around the Little Miami River. The details of this plan are outlined in the recommended conditions of this report. No structures would be located in streams, and no in-water work is proposed. The proposed transmission line would cross a 100-year floodplain. However, no structures would be located within the 100-year floodplain, and a floodplain permit would not be required.

The project area contains one category 1 wetland. No wetland fill is proposed for this project. Further details about how the wetland 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*

Some tree clearing would 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

---

1. Duke Energy Ohio, "Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 18-0484-EL-FOR, July 29, 2018.

2. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," November 28, 2018, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

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. The proposed project is expected not to impact any bat hibernacula

Due to no proposed in-water work and a lack of suitable habitats, 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. Staff recommends automatic approval of this case on December 6, 2018.

### **Conditions:**

- (1) 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.
- (2) The Applicant shall develop and implement a riparian management plan for the crossing of the Little Miami River. The plan shall include the following:
  - (a) A sediment and erosion control plan, which would be implemented before construction activity commences. Once the site is cleared, temporary sediment and erosion controls should be implemented and maintained until final site stabilization is achieved. Particular attention should be given to any drainage ways, ditches and streams that could convey sediment laden water directly to the Little Miami River. Properly installed (framed and entrenched) sediment fence shall be utilized around the work site perimeter and storm water inlets. Appropriately designed rock-check dams and other erosion controls should be utilized in ditches and drainage ways. All temporary sediment and erosion controls should be removed upon completion of site stabilization. The Applicant shall provide the plan to Staff for review and confirmation that it complies with this condition.
  - (b) Disturbed areas located within the wooded riparian corridor should be re-vegetated with native tree species or low growing native shrubs/trees where possible. All other disturbed areas or exposed soil should be seeded with a native grass/forb mix and mulched.
  - (c) Prevention and/or removal of invasive species such as honeysuckle, autumn olive, tree-of-heaven, etc.
  - (d) Trees on the banks of the river should be left undisturbed to the extent possible.

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

**11/29/2018 12:46:31 PM**

**in**

**Case No(s). 18-1571-EL-BNR**

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