

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 a Certificate)
of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for) Case No. 19-1487-EL-BLN
the Adjustment to the Heppner Switch-Lick 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 (Ohio Adm.Code) 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval September 11, 2019, 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 September 11, 2019, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



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OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 19-1487-EL-BLN
Project Name: Adjustment to the Heppner Switch-Lick 138 kV Transmission Line Project
Project Location: Jackson County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: August 13, 2019
Filing Type: Expedited Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: August 16, 2019
Report Date: September 4, 2019
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: September 11, 2019
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, G. Zeto

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description and Need

This application is a request to adjust four pole locations along the routing of the previously approved Heppner Switch-Lick 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line project (Case No. 17-0808-EL-BLN, approved August 23, 2018). The primary reason for this adjustment to the previously approved structure locations is to remove the four proposed structures from within Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) right-of-way at the interchange of State Route 32 and U.S. Route 35. The new structure locations would be relocated outside ODOT right-of-way.

The purpose of the project as approved in Case No. 17-0808-EL-BLN remains unchanged, which is to rebuild a portion of the existing Berlin-Ross and Coalton-Lick 69 kV transmission lines to 138 kV standards with a new single-circuit transmission line.

Construction of the Heppner Switch-Lick project began in January 2019. However, construction has not yet begun on the four structures that are the subject of this adjustment. The Applicant, AEP Ohio Transmission Company, anticipates that construction of this adjustment would begin in September 2019, and that the entire facility would be placed in service by December 2019. The overall cost of the project would not substantially change due to this adjustment.

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

The general land use in the vicinity of the transmission line adjustment remains unchanged, which is at the perimeter of an existing highway interchange. The project involves approximately 0.7 miles of reroute. The Applicant indicates that two additional property owners would be affected by this project, and that the applicant is in the process of obtaining and/or supplementing easements to reflect this adjustment. The project is not located within any agricultural district lands. No residences nor commercial structures are located within 100 feet of the reroute.

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 the fall of 2017 and supplemented its investigation in the spring of 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

No new streams or wetlands were delineated, and no additional impacts are proposed for this adjustment. Further details about how 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 submitted as part of the required National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit. The project would not cross a 100-year floodplain.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The proposed adjustment would not result in increased impacts to listed wildlife species. Adherence to the conditions of the original Letter of Notification in Case No. 17-0808-EL-BLN would minimize impacts to listed species.

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 condition, Staff recommends automatic approval of this application on September 11, 2019. Staff notes that its recommendation for approval of this application should not be construed as a recommendation for approval of cost recovery in any ratemaking proceeding.

Condition:

- (1) The Applicant shall adhere to all conditions of the Letter of Notification for the Heppner Switch-Lick 138 kV transmission line project (Case No. 17-0808-EL-BLN), as modified by this application.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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in

Case No(s). 19-1487-EL-BLN

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