

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Application of AEP Ohio)
Transmission Company for an Amendment to the Bell) **Case No. 19-1473-EL-BTA**
Ridge-Devola 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild)
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 rules. The application in this case is subject to an approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Respectfully submitted,



Tamara S. Turkenton
Director, Rates and Analysis
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Project Name: Amendment to the Bell Ridge-Devola 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project
Case Number: 19-1473-EL-BTA
Project Location: Washington County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: August 2, 2019
Inspection Date: December 6, 2019
Report Date: December 19, 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

Application Description and Need

AEP Ohio Transmission Company (Applicant or AEP Ohio Transco) is proposing an amendment to the Bell Ridge-Devola 138 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Rebuild Project, which was approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board on August 16, 2018, in Case No. 17-1907-EL-BTX. Proposed adjustments are proffered following final detailed engineering and property owner discussions during right-of-way negotiations for the approved route. The type of transmission equipment would not change. The Applicant states that the economic impact would not change as a result of these adjustments. The need for the facility and grid impacts associated with the facility remain the same as was approved in Case No. 17-1907-EL-BTX.

Revisions requested in this amendment were placed by the Applicant into two categories: engineering adjustments and rerouting outside of the existing right-of-way. Construction has not yet begun on this project.

Engineering Adjustments

There are four proposed engineering adjustments. The Applicant states that all of these adjustments were the result of the need to shift the approved route further away from an existing 23 kV distribution line in these locations along the 10.1-mile long preferred route. The purpose of these adjustments is to allow a proper distance to keep the distribution line active during construction of the preferred route. The adjustments do not add distance or new structures to the approved project.

The proposed engineering adjustments occur between structures 6-13, 15-17, 29-54, and 58-60. The structure location shifts range from 5 to a maximum 39 feet away from the previously

approved preferred centerline and all adjustments would occur within the existing right-of-way. No new property owners are affected by these adjustments.

Rerouting outside the existing right-of-way

There are three instances of rerouting the approved preferred route outside of the existing right-of-way.

- Reroute 1 involves moving structure locations 1 through 4 to properly align the entry of structure 1 with entrance to the appropriate station bay at the Devola Substation (approved in Case No. 18-0034-EL-BLN), which is presently under construction. The reroute shifts the centerline between 5 and 118 feet from the approved route. The Applicant states that there are no new significant environmental impacts, such as tree clearing or wetland impacts. No new properties are affected by this reroute.
- Reroute 2 involves moving structure locations 19 through 24 to avoid a distribution gas line that was not known at the time of the original application. Structure 22 is proposed to shift approximately 88 feet south of the approved route to avoid the pipeline. As a result of this shift, structures 19-21 and 23-24 also need to shift between 5-30 feet away from the approved route centerline in order to continue the routing in tangent with structure 22 to the southeast and southwest. The Applicant states that there are no new significant environmental impacts, such as tree clearing or wetland impacts. Two new properties are impacted by this reroute, and the Applicant states that all necessary easements have been secured for these new properties.
- Reroute 3 involves moving structure locations 25 through 29 between 5 and 68 feet from the approved centerline in order to provide appropriate clearance during construction between this line and an existing 23 kV line. The Applicant states that there are no new significant environmental impacts to wetlands or streams, but that the reroute would result in an additional 0.3 acres of tree clearing. No new properties are affected by this reroute.

Application Review

Social Impacts

Staff finds that the proposed adjustments are not expected to significantly alter existing land uses, including agricultural land, or to increase the estimated capital costs for the project. The adjustments are proposed in order to provide appropriate clear distance between the existing 23 kV line and this proposed line, and as a result of property owner preference and engineering adjustments to the approved preferred route. The Applicant has secured all new right-of-way needed for these adjustments. With the proposed adjustments, the number of residential structures identified within 200 feet of the right-of-way would drop from 26 to 23.

These revised alignment sections have been studied for the presence of archaeological resources and historic impacts and no significant adverse impacts on cultural resources are expected. The State Historic Preservation Office concurs that the amended alignments would not be expected to impact cultural resources.

Staff finds that the purposes of the adjustments and reroutes to avoid features not known at the time of the original approval, landowner preferences, and to provide better separation and clearance from the existing 23 kV line during construction are reasonable. The amended

alignments would not significantly alter the percentage of agricultural or residential land being crossed.

Surface Waters

The approved route right-of-way contains 102 streams, including 33 perennial streams, 29 intermittent streams, and 40 ephemeral streams, totaling 13,413 linear feet of streams. The proposed adjustments would eliminate two intermittent and one ephemeral stream crossings. The proposed adjusted route would also add one new ephemeral stream crossing. The proposed adjusted route right-of-way contains 13,621 linear feet of streams.

The approved route right-of-way contains 14 wetlands, with 0.58 total acres of wetland within the right-of-way. The proposed adjusted route right-of-way contains 12 wetlands, totaling 0.4 acres. This does not include any new wetlands and would eliminate crossings of two previously crossed wetlands. The total acreage of wetlands within the right-of-way would remain approximately the same. All delineated wetlands are category 1 and category 2 wetlands.

Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate including implementation of the storm water pollution prevention plan would minimize impacts to surface water resources that could occur as a result of the proposed adjustments.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The proposed adjustments would not result in increased impacts to listed wildlife species. Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate would minimize impacts to listed species.

Recommended Findings

Staff recommends approval of this amendment provided that the following condition is satisfied. Staff notes that its recommendation for approval of this amendment should not be construed as a recommendation for approval of cost recovery in any ratemaking proceeding.

Condition:

- (1) The Applicant shall continue to adhere to all conditions of the Opinion, Order, and Certificate for the Bell Ridge-Devola 138 kilovolt rebuild project in Case No. 17-1907-EL-BTX, following the route as amended through this application.

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Case No(s). 19-1473-EL-BTA

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