

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) **Case No. 19-2024-EL-BTA**
Vigo-Pine Ridge Switch 138 kV Transmission Line)
Rebuild Project)

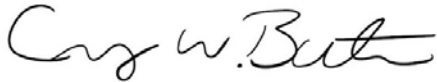
Members of the Board:

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,



Craig Butler
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Project Name: Amendment to the Vigo-Pine Ridge Switch 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project
Case Number: 19-2024-EL-BTA
Project Location: Jackson and Ross counties
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: November 26, 2019
Inspection Date: January 24, 2020
Report Date: March 17, 2020
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, G. Zeto

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Application Description and Need

AEP Ohio Transmission Company (Applicant or AEP Ohio Transco) is proposing an amendment to the Vigo-Pine Ridge Switch 138 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Rebuild Project, which was approved by the Ohio Power Siting Board on February 21, 2019, in Case No. 18-0030-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. 18-0030-EL-BTX.

Revisions requested in this amendment were placed by the Applicant into the category of engineering adjustments within the existing right-of-way. There is one instance of an alignment reroute. Construction has not yet begun on this project.

Engineering Adjustments

There are six segments of proposed engineering adjustments to the approved route. The proposed engineering adjustments occur between structure locations 89-103, 112-119, 122-128, 132-135, 143-154 and at structure 107. The structure location shifts range from 5 to a maximum 48 feet away from the previously approved preferred centerline. The Applicant states that all engineering adjustments would occur within the 100-foot right-of-way of the approved alignment. The Applicant indicates that not all necessary easements for these adjustments have been acquired.

Structures 89-103: Due to the future expansion of the existing Vigo distribution substation, the Applicant is proposing to shift structure location 89 approximately 35 feet southeast of the

centerline in order to provide appropriate clearance with the expanded fence line of the Vigo station and an existing wetland. Structure location 90 is proposed to move approximately 15 feet from the centerline to avoid a culvert to the east. With the realignment of these structures, it becomes necessary to adjust structure locations 91 through 103 between 5 and 13 feet from the approved centerline in order to keep the structures in tangent and avoid having to construct larger angle structures.

Structure 107: The Applicant is proposing a shift of structure location 107 approximately 15 feet to the west of the originally approved centerline. This shift would allow the placement of the structure in a location that would avoid sloped terrain which would make the installation of the structure more difficult.

Structures 112-119: The Applicant is proposing a shift of structure location 119 of approximately 20 feet to the west of the originally approved centerline and to a position 600 feet south but along the approved centerline. This would provide a longer open span at this location, for improved accessibility along a drive for the property owner and construction crews. Additionally, these shifts would allow the placement of the structure to avoid sloped terrain which would make the installation of the structure more difficult. As a result of these adjustments, structure locations 112-118 are shifting between 7 and 30 feet from the approved centerline in order to retain tangent structure alignment.

While the 600-foot shift is a substantial adjustment, Staff recognizes that this shift would occur along the approved centerline, so no additional land rights are necessary for this adjustment. This would also place structure location 119 further away from driveways and access points.

Structures 122-128: The Applicant is proposing a shift of structure location 122 approximately 25 feet to the west of the originally approved centerline in order to avoid a corner line angle and to a position in tangent with the approved centerline. Additionally, structure location 128 was originally on an isolated area surrounded by a wetland and a stream, which would have made access difficult and more likely to incur environmental impacts. As such, the Applicant is proposing to shift the structure location 280 feet north along the centerline, and 25 feet west, to avoid the need to cross the wetland and stream. As a result of these adjustments, structure locations 123-126 are shifting between 5 and 20 feet from the approved centerline in order to retain tangent structure alignment within the right-of-way.

Structures 132-135: The Applicant is proposing a shift of structure locations 132-135 between 5 and 10 feet east of the originally approved centerline. These shifts are the proposed in order to place the structures on more favorable terrain for access and constructability.

Structures 143-154: The Applicant is proposing a shift of structure location 143 of approximately 5 feet to the east of the originally approved centerline to a position outside of the road right-of-way, north of Savageville Road. Additionally, the Applicant is proposing to shift structure location 145 by six feet to the west of the originally approved centerline and 150 feet south along the centerline, to provide additional clearance and stream bank protection of the Salt Lick Creek. These shifts required minor adjustments of roughly 5 feet on average to structure locations 146-154 to maintain a tangent alignment along this section of the project within the right-of-way.

Rerouting outside the existing right-of-way

There is one instance of rerouting the approved preferred route outside of the existing right-of-way.

The shift of the Pine Ridge Switch to a position 100-feet to the south was necessary to keep the current switch active during construction of the Vigo-Pine Switch transmission line. This shift necessitated that structure location 162 be added to the project along the centerline to keep the centerline in tangent and to reduce the load on the Pine Ridge switch pole, which is an angle structure. Additionally, in order to meet clearance requirements at the Pine Ridge station, the Applicant is proposing to add another structure, between the Pine Ridge Switch structure and the fence line of the station. The Applicant states that there are no new significant environmental impacts, such as tree clearing or wetland impacts.

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 primarily proposed as a result of the Applicant's final engineering of the approved preferred route. With the proposed adjustments, the number of residential structures identified within 1,000 feet of the centerline would drop from 121 to 119, with none of the residences located inside the right-of-way. The nearest residences are located within 50 feet of the right-of-way and would drop from six to five residential structures. No residential structures would need to be removed from the right-of-way, as was the case in the original application. Some agricultural barns and sheds that are located within the right-of-way would still need to be moved.

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 wetlands, slope and soil features and to provide better accessibility with final design and engineering 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 50 streams, including 21 perennial streams, 11 intermittent streams, and 7 ephemeral streams, totaling 9,353 linear feet of streams. The proposed adjustments would eliminate one ephemeral stream crossing and add two new ephemeral stream crossings. The proposed adjusted route right-of-way would contain 9,799 linear feet of streams.

The proposed adjusted route right-of-way would cross the same wetlands as the original route right-of-way. The acreage of wetlands would reduce slightly from 4.58 acres to 4.55 acres. No structures would be placed within 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 conditions are 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.

Conditions:

- (1) The Applicant shall continue to adhere to all conditions of the Opinion, Order, and Certificate for the Vigo-Pine Ridge Switch 138 kilovolt rebuild project in Case No. 18-0030-EL-BTX, following the route as amended through this application.
- (2) The certificate authority provided in this case shall not exempt the facility from any other applicable and lawful local, state, or federal rules or regulations nor be used to affect the exercise of discretion of any other local, state, or federal permitting or licensing authority with regard to areas subject to their supervision or control.

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Case No(s). 19-2024-EL-BTA

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