

FILE

Staff Investigation Report and Recommendation

Case No.: 09-552-EL-BLN
Project: 138 kV Hamilton Electric Transmission Line Project
Applicant: The City of Hamilton, Ohio/AMP Public Power Partners

Report Date: August 25, 2009

Automatic Approval Date: September 2, 2009 (Letter of Notification process)

Waiver Requests: None

Inspection Date(s): July 28, 2009
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, C. Cunningham, T. Walton (OEPA)

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see report text for discussion):

Application: [] Approval [] Disapproval [X] Approval with Conditions
Waiver: [] Approval [] Disapproval [X] Not Applicable

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Projected Docket Closure Date (if approved by the Board): June 1, 2012

Investigation Report

Summary of Staff Recommended Conditions:

- The Applicant shall restrict tree clearing for this project to October 1 through March 30 and shall conserve Indiana bat roost trees where possible.
- The Applicant will coordinate all traffic related issues with the appropriate entities to ensure that traffic will be maintained along public roadways and private drives during construction.
- The Applicant will also coordinate with the appropriate railroad officials regarding issues associated with crossing, flagging and access along railroad lines.
- That prior to construction, the Applicant shall obtain all applicable permits and authorizations as required by Federal and State entities for any activities where such permit or authorization is required.

Project Description: This project consists of constructing a 1.5 mile single circuit 138 kV transmission line to be owned and operated by the City of Hamilton. The new line will be constructed utilizing wood and steel monopole structures, the majority of which already exist within the City of Hamilton's right-of-way for an existing distribution line and along an existing Duke Energy 69 kV line. In most instances, the existing pole structures are tall enough to accommodate both the existing and proposed lines. Otherwise, poles will be predominately replaced on a one-for one basis.

Site Description: This project is located within the City of Hamilton in Butler County, Ohio. The project starts at the City of Hamilton's proposed Substation No. 4 in a residential and commercial area, and runs westerly approximately 400 feet along Minor Avenue alley within City of Hamilton r-o-w. On August 24, 2009, the Applicant filed a modification to this portion of the route, crossing Wulzen Avenue to match the present

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alignment of an existing distribution line. After the alleyway, the line crosses a CSX railroad track, and runs approximately 6,200 feet (76% of the overall route) parallel to the railroad tracks on the west side (utilizing existing wood pole structures) and then crosses U.S. 127 into an area that has a mixture of residential and commercial uses. The line terminates in a wooded area at the proposed Substation No. 13, also to be owned and operated by the City of Hamilton. All rights-of-way for the line have been secured by the City of Hamilton. The route does not cross any streams or wetlands; however some clearing and/or tree trimming will be necessary. This Staff Report does not include analysis of either substation proposed by the City of Hamilton, and pertains to the Applicant's proposed Preferred Route only.

Discussion/Comments/Concerns: There is roughly 0.4 acres of tree clearing for this project, most of which is near Substation No. 13. Four individual trees within the Applicant's r-o-w near Substation No. 4 (off of Minor Avenue alley) will also need to be cleared. The proposed line is located in a predominately urban setting with several existing electric lines in the area. The Applicant had an independent reptile and amphibian habitat survey performed for the Eastern Box Turtle, Eastern Cricket Frog, Kirtland's Snake, and Cave Salamander. Based on the habitat survey, a follow-up presence/absence survey for the Kirtland's Snake (State Endangered Species) and the Eastern Box Turtle (Species of Special Concern in Ohio) was performed along the route (the habitat survey was negative for the Eastern Cricket Frog and Cave Salamander). The presence/absence survey report concluded that the Kirtland's Snake does not occur within the project boundaries, and that the Eastern Box Turtle was not found. With the Staff recommended conditions and incorporation of the modified route along an existing distribution line adjacent to Substation No. 4, the construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and environmental impacts.