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Staff Investigation Report and Recommendation

Case No.: 09-2013-EL-BLN
Project: Kyger Creek-Pierce 345 kV Line/Bypass of DOE Station X533
Applicant: American Electric Power (AEP) and Ohio Valley Electric Corporation (OVEC)

Report Date: February 25, 2010

Automatic Approval Date: March 5, 2010 (Letter of Notification process)

Waiver Requests: None

Inspection Date(s): February 4, 2010

Staff Assigned: J. Pawley

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

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

Projected Docket Closure Date (if approved by the Board): May 30, 2012

Investigation Report

Project Description: This project consists of removing three existing steel towers that help provide 345 kV service to the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) station X533, and adding five self supporting steel pole structures so that the 345 kV service may bypass the X533 station. As stated in the application, the USDOE is requesting this bypass because the USDOE does not want or need 345 kV service to the X533 substation anymore. Two new segments of the rerouted 345 transmission line will be installed at the bypass (approximately 625-650 feet for each segment). All new pole structures will be located within existing transmission line right-of-way.

Site Description: This project is located on the site of the Piketon Uranium Enrichment facility in Pike County, Ohio. The project is located on land owned by the U.S. Department of Energy.

Discussion/Comments/Concerns: The bypass of the USDOE station X533 is to be located immediately north of the station. The area consists of mowed/maintained open field, with easements and right-of-way in place for three 345 kV lines running directly into the station. The 345 kV service is provided by both AEP and OVEC. There is a jurisdictional wetland within 20 feet of proposed structure 2A, along an access road and within existing transmission right-of-way. Staff recommends that the Applicant clearly mark and avoid any wetland area on site. Since the area is predominately mowed field, there should be minimal clearing involved. The Applicant will need to work with the USDOE regarding any spoil pile removal, in accordance with Ohio EPA regulations. Additionally, the Applicant states that the potential for existence of any archeological or cultural resource in this area is extremely low. Staff would like to confirm whether this

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area was the subject of prior cultural resources analysis as part of previous work performed on the USDOE site (as all structures are to be located within existing 345 kV easements). The Applicant will need to clarify this point prior to construction. With the Staff recommended conditions, the construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and environmental impacts.

Summary of Staff Recommended Conditions:

1. That the Applicant shall employ the following construction methods in proximity to any watercourses:
 - a. All watercourses, including wetlands, shall be delineated by fencing, flagging, or other prominent means.
 - b. All construction equipment shall avoid watercourses, including wetlands.
 - c. Storage, stockpiling, and/or disposal of equipment and materials in these sensitive areas shall be prohibited.
 - d. Structures, including foundation work, shall be located outside of identified watercourses, including wetlands.
 - e. All storm water runoff is to be diverted away from fill slopes and other exposed surfaces to the greatest extent possible, and directed instead to appropriate catchment structures, sediment ponds, etc., using diversion berms, temporary ditches, check dams, or similar measures.
2. That the Applicant shall employ best management practices when working near environmentally sensitive areas. This includes, but is not limited to, the installation of silt fencing or a similarly effective tool prior to initiating construction near streams and wetlands. The installation shall be done in accordance with generally accepted construction methods and shall be inspected regularly.
3. That prior to the commencement of construction, the Applicant shall obtain and comply with all applicable permits and authorizations as required by federal and state laws and regulations for any activities where such permit or authorization is required.
4. That the Applicant shall have an environmental specialist on site at all times that construction (including any vegetation clearing) is being performed in or near a sensitive area such as a designated wetland, stream, or in the vicinity of identified threatened/endangered species or their identified habitat.
5. That the Applicant shall dispose of any contaminated soil and construction debris in approved landfills in accordance with Ohio EPA regulations.
6. That the Applicant shall determine if this site was the subject of prior cultural resources analysis as part of previous work performed on USDOE property. Staff will be notified of this determination prior to construction, to assess whether additional archeological studies are warranted for this project.