

OPSB Staff Report of Investigation

Case No.: 11-3953-GA-BLN

Project: Ney Interconnecting Pipeline Expansion Project

Applicant: Ohio Gas Company

Report Date: July 14, 2011

Automatic Approval Date: July 23, 2011

Waiver Requests: None

Inspection Date(s): July 11, 2011

Staff Assigned: E. Steele, D. Rostofer

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

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

Summary of Staff Recommended Conditions (see report text for discussion):

- 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.
- That the Applicant shall utilize Best Management Practices (BMPs) for erosion control to minimize impacts to adjacent stream resources.
- Staff recommends that the Applicant vertically prune trees rather than removing trees where practicable using proper pruning techniques. If the Applicant must remove trees that exhibit suitable Indiana bat roosting/rearing habitat during the months of April 1 to September 30, then the Applicant must first conduct appropriate surveys (emergent/mist net) during May or June to establish whether Indiana bat are present within an appropriate survey area and provide the results to Staff and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources in coordination with the USFWS for review and approval prior to removal the tree(s).
- That prior to directional drilling, the Applicant shall provide OPSB Staff with a detailed frac-out plan for stream and ditch crossings that are expected to be completed via HDD for review and approval. This plan shall address procedures that will be taken in the event that an in-stream frac-out occurs during directional drilling.
- That the applicant will conduct a pre-construction conference prior to the start of any project work. Staff shall be afforded the opportunity to attend this meeting.

Projected Docket Closure Date (if automatically approved): December 31, 2013

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Investigation Report

Project Description: The proposed project involves the installation of approximately 4.5 miles of 12" steel pipe to provide an interconnect pipeline between an existing Ohio Gas connection to the interstate transmission pipeline system and two Ohio Gas distribution mains. Ohio Gas has experienced growth throughout various parts of their system in recent years and as part of their plant system design, they seek to maintain multiple supply sources into the system to ensure they could meet peak day demands and have flexibility to support growth along other portions of the system. The estimated cost of the project is \$2,975,000. The maximum allowable operating pressure (MAOP) will be 400 psi and will be pressure tested to 1.5 times the MAOP in accordance with the gas pipeline safety regulations.

Site Description: This project is located in northern Defiance County and southern Williams County in northwest Ohio. This area is rural and has relatively few affected landowners. The majority of the right of way will be located in agricultural fields adjacent to a county road.

Discussion/Comments/Concerns: The construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and environmental impacts. It will be limited to minor noise and construction inconvenience for approximately 24 property owners along the corridor. Construction has been designed to minimize the impact to the residential areas by utilizing horizontal directional drilling in sensitive locations. Aboveground structures will be limited to the existing station lot on the southern end and a new valve setting in parcel adjacent to the County Road C and County Road 16 intersections.

This project lies within the known range of the state and federally endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*). There are no positive capture records within 5 miles of the boundaries of the project, and no known or suspected hibernacula are located within 10 miles of the project. The Applicant has indicated that some trees will be trimmed in order to construct this project and no suitable Indiana bat roosting/rearing habitat would be removed. Should project changes require tree clearing, the USFWS has recommended that any trees exhibiting any of suitable Indiana bat summer roosting or rearing habitat, as well as surrounding trees, be saved wherever possible. However, if these trees cannot be avoided, these trees should only be cut between September 30 and April 1.

The project is also within the range of the clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*), a state and federally endangered mussel, the Northern riffleshell (*Epioblasma torulosa rangiana*), a state and federally endangered mussel, the rayed bean (*Villosa fabalis*), a state endangered and federal proposed endangered mussel species, the white catpaw (*Epioblasma obliquata perobliqua*), a state and federally endangered mussel, the long-solid (*Fusconaia maculata maculata*), a state endangered mussel, and the rabbitsfoot (*Quadrula cylindrica* 2 *cylindrica*), a state endangered and federal candidate mussel. Since no in-water work is proposed, the project is not likely to impact these species.