

FILE

Ohio Power Siting Board

Staff Investigation Report and Recommendation

Case No.: 11-3247-EL-BLN

Project: Bayshore-GM Powertrain 138 kV Reconductoring

Applicants: American Transmission Systems, Inc.

Report Date: 26 July 2011

Automatic Approval Date: 4 August 2011 (Letter of Notification process)

Waiver Request: None

Inspection Date(s): 15 & 20 July 2011

Staff Assigned: J. O'Dell & 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):

- 1) That a public information program be instituted that informs affected property owners of the nature of the project, specific contact information for Applicant personnel who are familiar with the project, the proposed timeframe for project construction, and a schedule for restoration activities. Notification to property owners shall be given at least thirty (30) days prior to work on the affected property;
- 2) That prior to construction, the Applicant shall obtain and comply with all applicable permits and authorizations as required by Federal and State entities for any activities where such permit or authorization is required. Copies of such permits shall be provided to Staff;
- 3) That the Applicant shall conduct a pre-construction conference prior to the start of any project work (including any vegetation clearing), which the Staff shall attend, to discuss how environmental and social concerns will be satisfactorily addressed;
- 4) That the Applicant shall utilize Best Management Practices when working in the vicinity of environmentally sensitive areas. This includes, but is not limited to, the installation of silt fencing (or 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;

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- 5) That at least thirty (30) days before the pre-construction conference, the Applicant shall submit to the Staff, for review and approval, a project access plan. This plan shall include all laydown areas, residential and environmental sensitive area access points (walk-in-only locations) and any locations where vegetation clearing is required. The plan shall consider the location of residential fencing, private structures, streams, wetlands, and wooded areas;
- 6) That, if the Applicant proposes to remove potential Indiana bat roost trees between April 1 and September 30, the Applicant must conduct appropriate surveys to establish whether the Indiana bat is present within the survey area and provide the results to Staff for review and approval;
- 7) At least 30 days prior to construction, the Applicant shall provide Staff with correspondence from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources concerning the recommended avoidance measures suggested by Gregory Lipps, LLC, for the Blanding's Turtle, for review and approval;
- 8) That the Applicant shall have an environmental specialist on site at all times that construction is being performed in or near any environmentally sensitive areas such as streams, wetland, and wildlife habitat (Blanding's Turtle).
- 9) If the Applicant elects to utilize a helicopter stringing methodology for the project, then the Applicant shall consult with Staff regarding the applicability of the preceding conditions.

Projected Docket Closure Date (if automatically approved): 31 May 2014

Investigation Report

Project Description: This reconductoring project would replace approximately 11 miles of existing 138 kV conductors with upgraded conductors. The project is needed to reduce potential circuit overloads and to improve overall system reliability. As dictated by the National Electric Safety Code, eight new intermediate structures would be installed to maintain proper ground clearances.

Site Description: No new r-o-w would be required for this project, as all work would be confined to the existing easements. Land use in proximity to the project consists of industrial, agricultural, limited commercial and urban residential uses. This project is located in the Village of Harbor View, cities of Toledo and Oregon, Lucas County.

Discussion/Comments/Concerns: There are three concerns regarding this project. First, adherence to the above conditions will enable the Applicant to avoid any potential impacts to the Blanding's Turtle, a species of concern. Second, a few of the existing structures are located in marsh areas; therefore access will have to be addressed prior to construction. Third, some structures have been encroached by tight urban development. Access to these structures will have to be accomplished utilizing hand-climbing methods to avoid impacts to residential yards and fencing. If the Applicant is able to employ helicopter stringing methods, then the need for many of the above conditions would be negated. No significant vegetative clearing is required. The construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and ecological impacts.