

FILE

Ohio Power Siting Board

Staff Investigation Report and Recommendation

Case No.: 11-4387-EL-BNR

Project: Ottawa – Lakeview 138 kV Transmission Line Reconductoring

Applicant: American Transmission Systems, Inc.

Report Date: 23 August 2011

Automatic Approval Date: 1 September 2011 (Construction Notice process)

Waiver Request: None

Inspection Date(s): 12 August 2011

Staff Assigned: J. O'Dell & D. Rostofer

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

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

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

- 1) 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;
- 2) That the Applicant shall conduct a pre-construction conference prior to the start of any project work, to discuss how environmental and social concerns will be satisfactorily addressed;
- 3) That the Applicant shall avoid impacts to Blanding's Turtle habitat by restricting machinery use to upland areas in the vicinity of the habitat;
- 4) If machinery is utilized in any sensitive areas of the project, the Applicant shall have an environmental specialist on site to ensure that Blanding's Turtles are not harmed during project construction. The areas subject to this condition are illustrated in Fig. 11, site 9 and Fig. 12, site 10 of the document titled "*Blanding's Turtle Habitat Assessment for the Bayshore-GM Powertrain and Lakeview-Ottawa projects in Lucas and Ottawa Counties, Ohio,*" prepared by Gregory Lipps, LLC, dated 17 June 2011 (rev. 5 July 2011). These sensitive areas are located between transmission structures 1405 to 1414 and 1447 to 1448A;

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- 5) That the Applicant shall utilize Best Management Practices when working in the vicinity of environmentally sensitive areas.

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

### **Investigation Report**

**Project Description:** This project involves reconditioning approximately 6.7 miles of 138 kV transmission line. Three existing copper conductors would be replaced with new, larger aluminum conductors.

**Site Description:** Land use in proximity to the project is primarily agricultural. However, several structures are located in recreational areas and a few poles are adjacent to a residential community. This project is located in Bay and Portage Townships, Ottawa County.

**Discussion/Comments/Concerns:** There are two 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 state threatened species. Second, several of the existing structures are located in marsh areas; therefore, access will have to be addressed prior to construction. The Applicant has informed Staff that access to these structures will be restricted to walking in and utilizing hand-climbing methods to avoid impacts to sensitive areas. No significant vegetative clearing is required. The construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and ecological impacts.