

OPSB Staff Investigation Report and Recommendation**Case No.:** 12-2446-EL-BNR**Project:** Poston-Ross 138 kV Section V Reconductor-Rebuild**Applicant:** American Electric Power Ohio Transmission Company**Report Date:** October 10, 2012**Automatic Approval Date:** October 18, 2012

(Construction Notice)

Waiver Requests: None**Inspection Date(s):** October 5, 2012**Staff Assigned:** J. Pawley, D. Rostofer, J. Whitis**Summary of Staff Recommendations (see report text for discussion):**

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

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Projected Docket Closure Date (if automatically approved): May 20, 2015**Investigation Report**

Project Description: This project is for the reconductoring of an existing 138 kV single circuit transmission line. The reconductoring will occur from Clark Hollow Road to Narrows Road in Vinton and Ross counties, Ohio, or approximately 11.4 miles to the west of Sections I-IV (previously approved). No additional right-of-way or easements are required for the reconductoring project, as all work will occur along an existing AEP 138 kV alignment. The Applicant estimates the total capital cost of this project phase to be approximately \$4.9 million. The project is being proposed due to increased electrical load growth in the Southern Ohio area. The line will remain at 138 kV, but this project will provide for newer, sturdier 138 kV conductor line. Due to the increased structure loading with the heavier conductor, existing wood H-frame structures will be replaced with similar steel H-frame structures at the same locations. The project is expected to begin with foundation work in October, 2012 and be completed in May, 2013.

Site Description: Land use along the existing corridor is scattered residential, with heavy woods and some agricultural uses. The existing line crosses through Tar Hollow State Forest and the Ross Lake Wildlife Area. Several roads will be crossed by the replacement line, and crossing permits will need to be secured prior to construction.

Discussion/Comments/Concerns: The Applicant has appropriate existing maintenance access for each structure. Staff recommends ensuring minimal environmental impacts in the valley areas between structures when cabling, or reconductoring occurs. The Applicant has stated to Staff that an installation process where new cable will be tied to the existing cable then pulled will be used for installation. This process will allow the Applicant's crew to station itself at each pole structure

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without the need to drive between structures, minimizing impact to vegetation and slopes between structures. The Applicant's existing easements for this phase extend into the Tar Hollow State Forest and Ross Lake Wildlife Area, which, like all impacted land owners, the Applicant will need to coordinate with (ODNR) regarding scheduling and construction efforts before starting foundation work and pole installation. The Applicant will need to take care that wildlife, in particular timber rattlesnakes, are not negatively impacted in this section of the project. With the following conditions the construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and environmental impacts.

Summary of Staff Recommended Conditions:

1. 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.
2. Under the direction of ODNR approved herpetologist Doug Wynn, in areas where timber rattlesnakes or their dens are known or likely to exist, clearing and construction activities (mowing, cutting, burning, heavy equipment use, drilling, etc.) should be avoided at least 100 feet from ridges and areas of exposed rock and should be conducted from November 1 to March 1, when timber rattlesnakes are hibernating. If construction activities occur between March 2 and October 31, then an ODNR approved herpetologist must be on site in areas where dens and known location of individuals are likely to occur. In all other areas of the project, where timber rattlesnakes are sighted, all construction must immediately stop and be reported to Brian Mitch, ODNR-DOW at (614) 265-6715 within 24hrs. At that time the Division of Wildlife will determine what avoidance activities/safeguards may need to be implemented before construction resumes.