

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application by)
American Transmissions Systems, Incorporated for a)
Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public) Case Number:
Need for the Highland – Shenango 345 kV Transmission) 13-0191-EL-BLN
Line Extension to, and Installation of, Niles Substation)**

Members of the Board:

Todd Snitchler, Chairman, PUCO
David Goodman, Director, ODSA
Dr. Ted Wymyslo, Director, ODH
David Daniels, Director, ODA
Scott Nally, Director, Ohio EPA
Jim Zehringer, Director, ODNR
Jeffery J. Lechak, PE, Public Member

Peter Stautberg, State Representative
Sandra Williams, State Representative
Michael Skindell, State Senator
Bill Seitz, State Senator

To the Honorable Power Siting Board:

Please review the attached Staff Report of Investigation, which has been filed in accordance with the Board's rules.

The applicant's accelerated certificate application in this case is subject to an automatic approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

The staff report includes recommended conditions of the certificate. Prior to the automatic approval date, the applicant must file a supplement to its application that adopts these conditions. Absent such supplement, Staff will recommend that the case be suspended.

The application will be automatically approved on December 16, 2013, unless suspended by the Board's chairperson, the Executive Director, or an administrative law judge. If suspended, the Board must render a decision on the application within 90 days from the date of suspension.

Any concerns you or your designee may have with this case must be presented to the Executive Director of the Power Siting Board at least four business days prior to December 16, 2013, which is the automatic approval date. To contact the Executive Director with concerns, reply to the email to which this document was attached, or use the ContactOPSB email address listed below.

Sincerely,



Kim Wissman
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board
(614) 466-6692
ContactOPSB@puc.state.oh.us

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 13-0191-EL-BLN
Project Name: Highland – Shenango 345 kV Transmission Line Extension to, and Installation of, Niles Substation
Project Location: Weathersfield Township, Trumbull County, Ohio
Applicant: American Transmission Systems, Incorporated
Application Filing Date: 16 September 2013
Filing Type: Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: 8 October 2013
Report Date: 22 November 2013
Automatic Approval Date: 16 December 2013
Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. O'Dell, D. Rostofer & J. Cross

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Project Description

This project involves the installation of a new 345 to 138 kV substation and associated interconnections. Approximately 150 feet of new 345 kV transmission line and 775 feet of 138 kV transmission line would be required for the interconnections. Upon completion, this project would resolve capability limitations, thermal overloads and voltage violations in the area. The project is needed to correct lost capacity in the area that will result from shutdown of generating facilities in Ohio. The project will reinforce ATSI's Bulk Electric System and enhance overall system reliability.

Site Description

The proposed substation and new interconnection lines would be located entirely upon the Applicant's property. Currently, the parcel is vacant, dominated by woody vegetation with five wetlands and four streams within the boundaries of the site. Land use in proximity to the project is consists of industrial, railroad and rural residential uses. The project is adjacent to the Applicant's existing Niles Substation and Niles Generating Station.

Need

Facility Need

The proposed Niles substation and associated line extensions are one of several baseline reliability upgrades ATSI was directed to complete by the PJM Interconnection (PJM) Board of Directors due to generation deactivations. This project is required in order to maintain

compliance with ATSI, North American Electric Reliability Corporation, and PJM reliability criteria.

The proposed projects will improve and maintain the quality of electric service and reliability on the bulk electric system in The Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company, Ohio Edison Company and Penn Power service territories (Project Study Area). The proposed projects will provide the following benefits:

- 1) Add a new 345 kV to 138 kV transformation source and path for energy flows into the Project Study Area. Adding voltage support from a stronger 345 kV system;
- 2) Decrease power flows on thermally overloaded 138 kV existing infrastructure;
- 3) Reduce reactive power losses on transmission lines moving power into the Project Study Area, and in turn, improving system voltages;
- 4) Increase short circuit strength to maintain voltage stability, reducing the impact of large motor starts at a local industrial area.

Long Term Forecast Report

The Ohio Administrative Code requires electric utilities and transmission owners to annually file a forecast report with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). The report requires a 10-year plan of committed or tentatively projected projects on the bulk power transmission network. The proposed transmission line project was identified in ATSI's 2013 Electric Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. The PUCO assigned this document case number 13-0925-EL-FOR.

PJM Regional Transmission Expansion Plan

PJM is the Regional Transmission Organization charged with planning for upgrades to the regional transmission system in Ohio. PJM annually issues the Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (RTEP) report. The RTEP analyzes reliability criteria, operational performance of the transmission system, and economic and environmental factors. The RTEP provides for the construction of expansions and upgrades of the PJM transmission system, as needed to maintain compliance with reliability criteria and, when appropriate, to enhance the economic and operational efficiency of wholesale electricity markets in the PJM Region.

The proposed project was identified as a baseline upgrade in the 2012 PJM RTEP¹. The Applicant's project was assigned upgrade ID b1934. Status of the project can be tracked on PJM's website².

Nature of Impacts

Socioeconomic

The Applicant has selected a site that is in immediate proximity to their existing infrastructure. The parcel is large enough to allow for a significant amount of the existing natural screening to remain. This screening should effectively mitigate many impacts from the scattered rural residences in the vicinity.

¹ PJM 2012 Regional Transmission Expansion Plan. February 28, 2013. p.328. Retrieved November 30, 2013, from <http://pjm.com/planning.aspx>

² PJM Transmission Construction Status. <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>

Surface Waters

Based on preliminary grading plans, the Applicant intends to permanently fill approximately 120 linear feet of an ephemeral stream and 0.02 acres of a wetland to construct this site. Staff would require the Applicant to develop a construction access plan, which would be incorporated into a final Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). This plan should consider location of streams, wetlands, wooded areas, and sensitive plant species, as identified by the ODNR, Division of Wildlife, and explains how impacts to all sensitive resources would be avoided or minimized during construction, operation, and maintenance.

The Applicant would utilize best management practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts to surface waters. Appropriate BMPs would be outlined in the SWPPP and a copy would be provided to Staff.

The Applicant anticipates submitting a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio EPA General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit and will seek coverage under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 12 for wetland and stream impacts.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The site is within the range of state and federally list plant and animal species including the state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), clubshell (*Pleurobema clava*) and snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*) mussels, and the state endangered Eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*), mountain brook lamprey (*Ichthyomyzon greeleyi*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinators*), yellow-bellied sapsucker (*Sphyrapicus varius*), and the northern crayfish (*Orconectes virilis*). Due to the lack of habitat and the location of this project, impacts to these species are not likely, except for the Indiana bat and yellow-bellied sapsucker. In order to reduce or avoid impacts to the Indiana bat, Staff would require that the Applicant adhere to seasonal tree cutting dates of September 30th through April 1st for the clearing of trees that exhibit suitable Indiana bat summer habitat and May 1st to July 1st for trees that exhibit suitable yellow-bellied sapsucker habitat. If it is not practical to for the Applicant to adhere to the seasonal cutting restrictions, then the Applicant shall coordinate with USFWS and ODNR for clearance

Vegetation and Ecologically-Sensitive Areas

Minimal vegetation clearing would occur at this site. There are no other areas of ecological concern within the proposed site or right of ways. The project will not impact or cross any national or state wild and scenic rivers and will not be constructed with a floodplain. No national parks and forests, wilderness areas, wildlife management areas, wildlife refuges, or wildlife sanctuaries are located in the project area.

Staff Recommended Conditions:

1. 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. Copies of such permits and authorizations, including all supporting documentation shall be provided to Staff;

2. The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of September 30 through April 1 for removal of suitable Indiana bat habitat trees. If it is not practical to for the Applicant to adhere to the seasonal cutting restrictions, then the Applicant shall coordinate with USFWS and ODNR for clearance;
3. The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of May 1 through July 1 for removal of suitable yellow-bellied sapsucker habitat. If it is not practical to for the Applicant to adhere to the seasonal cutting restrictions, then the Applicant shall coordinate with USFWS and ODNR for clearance;
4. The Applicant shall utilize BMPs 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;
5. Prior to construction, the Applicant shall submit to the Staff, for review and approval, a project construction access plan. This plan shall include all laydown areas, environmentally sensitive area access points, and any locations where vegetation clearing is required. The plan shall consider the location of streams, wetlands and wooded areas.

Conclusion

Access is readily available for construction. Impacts to sensitive resources would primarily be avoided by strict adherence to an access plan and BMP measures. During its investigation, Staff reviewed the Applicant's preliminary construction drawings. The construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and ecological impacts.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on

11/22/2013 2:54:01 PM

in

Case No(s). 13-0191-EL-BLN

Summary: Report of investigation electronically filed by Mr. Adam S Bargar on behalf of Staff of OPSB