BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application by American Transmission Systems, Incorporated for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Toronto and Sammis Area 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild and Reconnection Project	)))	**Case Number 14-0037-EL-BLN**

Members of the Board:

Todd Snitchler, Chairman, PUCO
David Goodman, Director, ODSA
Dr. Ted Wymyslo, Director, ODH
David Daniels, Director, ODA
Craig Butler, 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 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 application will be automatically approved on February 8, 2014, 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.

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.

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 February 8, 2014, 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:	14-0037-EL-BLN
Project Name:	Toronto and Sammis Area 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild and Reconnection Project
Project Location:	Jefferson County, Ohio
Applicant:	American Transmission Systems, Incorporated (ATSI)
Application Filing Date:	January 10, 2014
Filing Type:	**(Expedited)** Letter of Notification
Inspection Date:	January 23, 2014
Report Date:	January 30, 2014
Automatic Approval Date:	February 8, 2014
Applicant's Waiver Requests:	none
Staff Assigned:	D. Rostofer & J. O'Dell

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Project Description

ATSI is proposing to reconstruct and reconfigure approximately 4.5 miles of the existing Sammis – Lowellville 138 kV Transmission Line between the Toronto Substation and the Sammis Junction. Sammis Junction is the location of the junction of several transmission lines approximately 1.5 miles west of the Sammis Substation and Sammis Generating Station. Existing structures will be replaced with wood H-frames or steel poles. The existing 300 kcmil[1] copper conductors will be replaced with a higher capacity 795 kcmil aluminum conductor steel supported (ACSS) conductor. The cost of the overall project is estimated at $10.8 million. Construction is expected to commence on February 10, 2014, and be placed in-service by June 1, 2015.

Site Description

The Applicant will utilize existing transmission line right-of-way and easements to reconstruct and reconfigure the facility. The existing structures are situated on hilltops and the surrounding terrain is steep. Land use in proximity to the project consists of agricultural, rural residential and forested lands. This project is located in Saline Township and Knox Township, Jefferson County, Ohio.

[1] Kcmil – is equal to one thousand circular mils. A circular mil is a unit of area of cross section of wire, equal to the area of a circle whose diameter is one thousandth of an inch. 1 circular mil is equal to 0.785×10^{-6} square inch or 0.2×10^{-9} square meter.

Need

Installation of the proposed project is needed to prevent overload of the resulting Sammis – Toronto 138 kV and Lowellville – Toronto 138 kV transmission line circuits when the Toronto 345-138 kV Substation is put into service. The existing 300 kcmil copper conductors of the existing transmission line needs to be replaced by the proposed 795 kcmil ACSS conductors to accommodate higher power flows on the 138 kV transmission systems. The single 300 kcmil copper conductor has a summer emergency loadability of 189 MVA, which would become overloaded for various system contingencies. For example, with generators 1 & 2 at Sammis Generating Station not operating, the 220 MVA power flow on the Sammis – Toronto 138 kV Transmission Line with single 300 kcmil copper conductor would be approximately 116 percent of the summer emergency rating during summer peak conditions, whereas with 795 kcmil ACSS conductor the circuit flow would be approximately 43 percent of the emergency rating during summer peak conditions, eliminating the overload condition.

Nature of Impacts

Social

The Applicant has proposed to construct the structures and line replacement within existing right-of-way. Therefore, potential impacts are expected to be largely confined to line stringing, tree trimming, and construction access, and should be temporary in nature. The Applicant does not expect that any permanent structures or residences will need to be removed or moved as a result of this project. Vegetation will need to be trimmed and/or cleared in order to remove the existing poles and install new replacement pole structures.

The Applicant had a cultural resources survey performed for the route. No archaeological sites or historic architectural resources are traversed by the existing right-of-way. There are also no recorded archaeological sites or historic architectural resources within 100 feet or 1,000 feet of the existing right-of-way. ATSI submitted a letter to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) on April 30, 2013 describing the project and their findings. The OHPO requested archaeological investigations of the areas where new ground-disturbing activities will occur. OHPO also requested documentation of any previously recorded architectural resources and unrecorded architectural resources 50 years of age or older that will have visibility to the project. Staff would recommend that the Applicant be required to coordinate with OHPO and Staff concerning these requests.

Surface Waters

The electric transmission line right of way contains 14 primary headwater streams, totaling 5,038 linear feet. No pole structures are located within the 100-year flood zones of these streams. The right of way also contains 17 wetlands, totaling 1.17 acres. None of these wetlands were scored as high quality wetlands (Category 2/3 or Category 3). All wetlands would be clearly staked prior to the commencement of any clearing in order to minimize incidental vehicle impacts. Stream and wetland impacts would be avoided by accessing pole locations from either side of the streams and/or wetlands, where practicable. No ponds are located within the right of way and the project will not traverse any conservation, scenic rivers, or recreation lands.

Staff has reviewed the Applicant's construction access plan, which will be incorporated into a final Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). This plan considered 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 of this facility.

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 (NOI) for coverage under the Ohio EPA General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit. Coverage under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide Permit 12 is not required, as the Applicant does not anticipate stream and wetland impacts.

Threatened and Endangered Species
The federal and state listed species and/or their suitable habitat that may be found in the project area include the following species: the state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*); the state and federal sheepnose (*Plethobasus cyphyus*) and snuffbox (*Epioblasma triquetra*) mussels; the federal candidate and state endangered Eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*); the state endangered black bear (*Ursus americanus*); the state threatened channel darter (*Percin copelandi*) fish species; and the state endangered Eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*). Based on the type of construction activities proposed, these species and/or their suitable habitat would not be impacted by this project except for the Indiana bat.

In order to reduce or avoid impacts to the Indiana bat, the Applicant has committed to adherence to seasonal tree cutting dates of October 1 to March 31 for the clearing of trees that exhibit suitable Indiana bat summer habitat.

Conclusion
Access along the existing right-of-way is readily available for construction. Impacts to sensitive resources would primarily be avoided by strict adherence to an access plan. During its investigation, Staff has reviewed the Applicant's preliminary access plan. Large amounts of vegetative clearing are not required. The construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and ecological impacts.

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. 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;
3. The Applicant shall coordinate all traffic related issues with the appropriate entities to ensure that traffic will be maintained along public roadways and private drives during construction;
4. The Applicant shall continue to coordinate with OHPO and Staff regarding study parameters for impacts to cultural resources from this project.

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