BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application by American Electric Power Ohio Transmission Company for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Muskingum River-Tidd 345 kV Relocation and Installation of the Holloway Station Project in Belmont County, Ohio.	)))))	**Case Number 14-0141-EL-BLN**

Members of the Board:

Chairman, Public Utilities Commission
Director, Development Services Agency
Director, Department of Health
Director, Department of Agriculture
Director, Environmental Protection Agency
Director, Department of Natural Resources
Public Member
Ohio House of Representatives
Ohio Senate

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 application will be automatically approved on March 4, 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.

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 representative may have with this case must be presented to the Executive Director of the Power Siting Board at least four business days prior to March 4, 2014, which is the automatic approval date. To contact the Executive Director with concerns, you can 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:	14-0141-EL-BLN
Project Name:	Muskingum River-Tidd 345 kV Relocation and Installation of the Holloway Station Project
Project Location:	Belmont County, Ohio
Applicant:	American Electric Power Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date:	February 3, 2014
Filing Type:	**Expedited** Letter of Notification
Inspection Date:	February 19, 2014
Report Date:	February 24, 2014
Automatic Approval Date:	March 4, 2014
Waiver Requests:	None
Staff Assigned:	J. Whitis, C. Burri

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Project Description: The project would consist of relocating a portion of the existing Muskingum River-Tidd 345 kilovolt (kV) transmission line and constructing a 345/138 kV substation. As part of this project, a 138 kV tie line would connect the proposed 345 kV and 138 kV substation yards. The project is estimated to cost approximately $54 million. Construction is anticipated to begin in March 2014, with station clearing and construction work beginning in May 2014. The anticipated in-service date of the lines and station is December 2015.

Site Description: The project would be located on a 62 acre parcel of property owned by AEP Ohio Transmission Company in Belmont County, Ohio. Land use around the site consists of predominately rural, residential, wooded, and agricultural uses along or adjacent to the existing transmission line rights-of-way. The site is adjacent to the intersection of the Muskingum River-Tidd 345 kV transmission line and four First Energy 138 kV transmission lines.

Nature of Impacts: The area in proximity of the project location is mostly light residential. AEP Ohio Transmission Company has purchased the two residential properties where the project would be located.

Need:

Facility Need: The proposed project is a baseline reliability upgrade approved by the PJM Interconnection (PJM) Board of Directors as a part of the Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (RTEP) to meet system reliability requirements resulting from generation retirements in Ohio. A PJM baseline reliability upgrade resolves a system reliability criteria violation, which was found by AEP, North American Electric Reliability Corporation, or PJM planning criteria. The proposed project would provide an alternate route for current to flow and much needed voltage support.

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 the 2013 AEP Ohio Transmission Company's Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. The PUCO assigned this document case number 13-1501-EL-FOR.[1]

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 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 RTEP and approved by the PJM Board of Directors.[2] The Applicant's project was assigned upgrade ID b2019. Status of the project can be tracked on PJM's website.[3]

Surface Waters: The project area contains one stream, with approximately 275 linear feet of stream impacts proposed. There are no expected wetland impacts for this project.

The Applicant would utilize best management practices (BMPs) to minimize impacts to surface waters. The proposed BMPs would be outlined in the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan, and a copy would be provided to the Board's Staff. The plan would consider the location of streams, wetlands, and wooded areas, and explain how impacts to all sensitive resources would be avoided or minimized during construction, operation, and maintenance.

The Applicant anticipates coverage under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 404 Nationwide Permit 12 for the proposed water resource impacts. The Applicant would submit a Notice of

[1] AEP Ohio Transco 2013 LTFR. http://dis.puc.state.oh.us/CaseRecord.aspx?CaseNo=13-1501-EL-FOR
[2] PJM 2012 Regional Transmission Expansion Plan. February 28, 2013. p.329. Retrieved January 3, 2014, from http://pjm.com/planning.aspx
[3] PJM Transmission Construction Status. http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx

Intent for coverage under the Ohio EPA General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

Threatened and Endangered Species: The federal and state listed species and/or suitable habitat that may be found in the project area include the Indiana bat.

In order to reduce potential impacts to the Indiana bat, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Staff recommend that the Applicant be required to adhere to seasonal clearing dates of October 1 through March 31 for the clearing of trees that exhibit suitable Indiana bat habitat, unless coordination efforts with ODNR and USFWS reflects a different course of action (e.g.; an authorized deviation from seasonal tree cutting dates for a period of time).

The Applicant had a literature review and Phase I archaeological field work performed for the site in August and December 2013. No further cultural resource management work was deemed necessary as a result of the Phase I report. The Ohio Historic Preservation Office has concurred with this recommendation.

Conclusion: With the following conditions, the construction of this project should pose only minimal negative social and ecological impacts. Staff recommends automatic approval of this case on March 4, 2014.

Staff Recommended Conditions:

(1) 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, including any permits necessary for aviation clearance. Copies of such permits and authorizations, including all supporting documentation, shall be provided to Staff;

(2) 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 adhere to seasonal cutting dates of October 1 and March 31 for removal of suitable Indiana bat habitat trees, if avoidance measures can not be achieved;

(4) The Applicant shall not conduct mechanized clearing within 25 feet of any stream channel;

5) The Applicant shall conduct a pre-construction conference(s) prior to the start of any project work (including any vegetation clearing), which the Staff shall attend, to discuss how environmental concerns will be satisfactorily addressed.

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