

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Application of American Electric)
Power Transmission Company, Inc. for a Second) 15-2038-EL-BTA
Amendment to its Certificate to Install an Electric)
Transmission Line in Ross County, Ohio.)**

Members of the Board:

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

To the Honorable Power Siting Board:

Please review the attached Staff Report of Investigation, which has been filed in accordance with the Ohio Power Siting Board (Board) rules. The Certificate Amendment in this case is subject to an approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Sincerely,



Patrick Donlon
Director, Rates and Analysis
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
180 East Broad Street
Columbus, Ohio 43215
(614) 466-6692

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 15-2038-EL-BTA (amends 13-0429-EL-BTX)
Project Name: Biers Run-Hopetown-Delano Transmission Line Second Amendment
Project Location: Ross County
Applicant: American Electric Power Transmission Company, Inc.
Application Filing Date: December 11, 2015
Inspection Dates: December 21, 2015
Report Date: January 8, 2016
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, G. Zeto

Application Description

In case number 13-0429-EL-BTX, the Ohio Power Siting Board (Board) authorized American Electric Power Transmission Company, Inc. (Applicant) to construct a 138 kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line located between the existing Biers Run and Delano transmission substations, and the Hopetown distribution substation.

In this application, the Applicant proposes to adjust approximately 4,300 feet (0.8 miles) of transmission line located on and adjacent to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) Pleasant Valley Wildlife Area (PVWA). The PVWA is a hunting and wildlife area that would be crossed by the approved route in case number 13-0429-EL-BTX. The proposed amendment would decrease the overall Biers Run-Hopetown-Delano transmission line route by 0.3 miles. The operating characteristics of the transmission line would remain unchanged with this adjustment, as would the location of the project's associated facilities, including access roads and laydown yard.

Basis of Application

The Applicant states that the proposed adjustment to the transmission line is the result of a request made by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) subsequent to the Opinion, Order, and Certificate issued for case number 13-0429-EL-BTX. As part of the negotiations to allow the certified route to cross the PVWA, the Applicant agreed to purchase adjacent property as mitigation for the project, and then transfer that purchased property to the ODNR. The Applicant, the USFWS and the ODNR have executed a Memorandum of Understanding as part of this mitigation land purchase.

The PVWA was originally deeded to the ODNR from the federal government. A requirement of this transaction is that the U.S. General Service Administration must approve any changes of use to the property. As part of this federal review, the adjustment being considered in this amendment application (across the land purchased as mitigation) was suggested by the USFWS to minimize potential impacts to the present PVWA property.

Nature of Impacts

Staff notes that the location of the facility adjustment is within the vicinity of the study areas that were addressed and considered in the application for case number 13-0429-EL-BTX and the subsequent certificate for that case.

Follow-up cultural resources and field ecological reviews were performed in this amended area prior to the submission of the second amendment.

Social and Cultural Resources

The proposed adjustment is located across predominately agricultural fields and woodlots adjacent to the north boundary of the present PVWA. The new route would be located on land purchased by the Applicant as mitigation for project impacts. Easements and/or land use agreements are pending on all properties.

No residences are located within 1,000 feet of the proposed route adjustment. Five residences are located just beyond 1,000 feet away. Staff is aware that the Applicant has contacted these property owners as part of its public outreach efforts. No cultural resources were identified, and no impacts to cultural resources are anticipated as a result of this adjustment. Staff notes that the proposed adjustment would shift the transmission line approximately 1,200 feet further east from Union Cemetery, which the route presently borders.

Surface Waters

The proposed adjustment would result in the avoidance of two previously crossed category 2 wetlands, for a reduction of approximately 0.1 acres of wetland impacts. The adjustment would also result in the avoidance of four previously crossed ephemeral streams and one perennial stream, while resulting in the crossing of two previously uncrossed ephemeral streams. Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate as well as implementation of the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan would minimize impacts to surface water resources that would occur as a result of the proposed adjustment.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The proposed adjustment would not result in increased impacts to listed wildlife species. Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate would minimize impacts to listed species.

Conclusion

Staff's review of the amendment application included consideration of the requirements listed in Ohio Revised Code Section 4906.10. Based on Staff's review, the application meets the necessary criteria for granting an amended certificate.

Recommended Findings

Staff recommends that the Board approve the amendment, provided that the certificate continues to include the 33 conditions specified in the Opinion, Order, and Certificate for case number 13-0429-EL-BTX.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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Case No(s). 15-2038-EL-BTA

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Mrs. Yvonne W Cooper on behalf of Staff of OPSB