

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of Expedited Letter of Notification** )  
**Application of Tidd-Gable 138 kV Transmission Line** ) **16-1526-EL-BLN**  
**Rebuild Project** )

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 Ohio Power Siting Board (Board) 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 recommended for automatic approval on September 30, 2016 unless suspended by the Board's chairperson or an administrative law judge. If suspended, the Board must render a decision on the application within 90 days from the date of suspension.

Please present any concerns you or your designee may have with this case to my office at least four business days prior to September 30, 2016, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Patrick Donlon  
Director, Rates and Analysis  
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio  
180 East Broad Street  
Columbus, Ohio 43215  
(614) 644-8932

## OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**Case Number:** 16-1526-EL-BLN  
**Project Name:** Tidd-Gable 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild  
**Project Location:** Jefferson County  
**Applicant:** AEP Ohio Transmission Company  
**Application Filing Date:** September 1, 2016  
**Filing Type:** Expedited Letter of Notification  
**Inspection Date:** September 21, 2016  
**Report Date:** September 23, 2016  
**Recommended Automatic Approval Date:** September 30, 2016  
**Applicant's Waiver Requests:** None  
**Staff Assigned:** D. Collins, G. Zeto, J. Cross

### Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

### Project Description

AEP Ohio Transmission Company (Applicant) proposes to rebuild an existing 138 kilovolt (kV) single circuit transmission line approximately 5.8 miles in length in Jefferson County. The Tidd-Gable 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project involves connecting the Ohio Power Company's Tidd Station to the AEP Ohio Transco Gable 138 kV Station. Utilizing the existing right-of-way, the Applicant will rebuild the entire segment of the Tidd-South Cadiz 138 kV transmission line, which has been in service for 60 to 100 years. The transmission line rebuild would improve service reliability in the area.

The Applicant is currently constructing the Gable Substation with anticipation of service starting on July 1, 2017. The Applicant would like to begin construction of the transmission line rebuild in October 2016 and to place the line in service by May 2017. The Applicant estimates the total cost of the project at \$15.9 million.

### Site Description

The project area begins at the Gable Substation in Wells Township on the east side of Jefferson County Road 15, approximately 400 feet south of Jefferson County Road 17. The transmission line rebuild will be constructed within the existing right-of-way, trending east in direction towards the Tidd Substation on Jefferson County Road 7E in the unincorporated community of Brilliant.

## **Basis of Need**

The Applicant submitted the proposed project to the PJM Sub-Regional Regional Transmission Expansion Plan Committee on November 20, 2015. The supplemental project involves rebuilding the Tidd-Gable 138 kV circuit. PJM assigned the supplemental project identification number s1067. The construction status of transmission projects can be tracked on PJM's website.<sup>1, 2</sup> As previously stated, the transmission line has been in service for 60 to 100 years and is in need of replacement.

## **Nature of Impacts**

### *Socioeconomic Impacts*

The Applicant sent notifications regarding the project to area public officials and affected property owners through several different mediums. The Applicant has complied with all requirements with respect to notifications under Ohio Adm.Code Section 4906-6-08(A)(1-6). The Applicant retains right-of-way land agents that will discuss project timelines, proposed construction activities, and restoration practices to affected land owners and tenants.

The Applicant does not anticipate any permanent impacts to local roads or residences. The project should not negatively impact growth in the region and would support economic development by improving the supply and reliability of the regional electrical system.

### *Agricultural Land*

According to the Jefferson County Auditor's Office, the project lies within 1,000 feet of 15 agricultural district parcels. The project along the existing right-of-way crosses over agricultural district land at three locations. However, the Applicant stated that impacts to all agricultural land would be minimal. The Applicant does indicate that as a conversion project along the existing right-of-way, no permanent impacts to agricultural land or agricultural district land parcels are anticipated. Most of the agricultural land is used for pasture land. The Applicant indicates that agricultural operations during construction of access roads will be limited temporarily. The Applicant intends to compensate property owners for any temporary impacts to agricultural land and farming operations.

### *Cultural Resources*

Weller and Associates conducted a Phase I cultural resource management investigation of the entire length of the Tidd-Gable 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild. The investigation included a literature review and field reconnaissance.

The literature review did not identify any previously identified archaeological resources. The Phase I field survey work did not reveal any cultural resources at the project. No further cultural resources work was deemed necessary for the project.

No previously recorded archaeological sites or National Register of Historic Places structures or districts were identified within the project. No architectural survey was necessary based on the fact

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<sup>1</sup> "11.20.2015 - Sub Regional RTEP Committee – Western Meeting," PJM Interconnection, accessed September 15, 2016, <http://pjm.com/committees-and-groups/committees/srrtep-w.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> "Transmission Construction Status," PJM Interconnection, accessed September 15, 2016, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

that no structures or buildings are involved with the project. No further archeological work is deemed necessary.

#### *Surface Waters*

The Applicant evaluated 11 streams as part of this project and identified 3 additional streams that were not fully evaluated because of safety concerns associated with difficult access. The evaluated streams included three perennial, seven intermittent, and one ephemeral stream.

The Applicant delineated two wetlands within the survey corridor. Both wetlands are low quality category 1 wetlands.

No structures would be placed within streams or wetlands. Preliminary construction access mapping does not show any wetland or stream crossings. If unforeseen stream or wetland crossings become necessary, the Applicant has committed to using timber matting to avoid permanent impacts.

The Applicant anticipates submitting a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit, which would include a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). Appropriate best management practices would be outlined in the SWPPP and a copy will be provided to Staff. In order to further minimize surface water impacts, Staff recommends that the Applicant not conduct mechanized clearing within 25 feet of any stream channel and that stumps be left in place to help maintain bank stability. No other permits would be required for the project.

#### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

The project lies within the range of the federal and state endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). To avoid impacts to these species, the Applicant has committed to seasonal tree clearing dates of October 1 through March 31.

The Applicant submitted a coordination letters to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources on July 27, 2016. The Applicant had not received a response regarding the project at the time of filing the application and staff has not been provided response letters at the time of this report. Staff recommends that the Applicant provide response letters to Staff prior to construction.

#### **Conclusion**

Staff's review of the 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 a certificate. Staff recommends automatic approval of this case on September 30, 2016, provided that the following conditions are satisfied.

#### **Conditions**

- (1) Prior to commencement of construction, the Applicant shall develop a public information program that informs affected property owners of the nature of the project, specific contact information of Applicant personnel who are familiar with the project, the proposed timeframe for project construction, and a schedule for restoration activities. Notification to property owners shall be given at least 30 days prior to work on the affected property.

- (2) The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of October 1 through March 31 for removal of suitable Indiana bat habitat trees, unless coordination efforts with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) allow a different course of action.
- (3) Prior to the commencement of construction activities that require permits or authorizations by federal or state laws and regulations, the Applicant shall obtain and comply with such permits or authorizations.
- (4) The Applicant shall not conduct mechanized clearing within 25 feet of any stream channel and shall leave stumps in place to help maintain bank stability.
- (5) Prior to construction, the Applicant shall provide the ODNR and the USFWS response letters to Staff.

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities**

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

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**in**

**Case No(s). 16-1526-EL-BLN**

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Mr. Matt Butler on behalf of Staff of OPSB