

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application)
of AEP Ohio Transmission Company for the Ironman) **Case No. 17-0804-EL-BLN**
Station 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.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval on July 28, 2017, 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 July 25, 2017, which is the 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: 17-0804-EL-BLN
Project Name: Ironman Station Project
Project Location: Jackson County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: June 26, 2017
Filing Type: Expedited Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: July 17, 2017
Report Date: July 18, 2017
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: July 25, 2017
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, J. Cross, G. Zeto

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Project Description

The purpose of this project is to construct a new switching station (Ironman Station) in the City of Jackson, along with a new 0.25-mile long relocated transmission line (reroute). AEP Ohio Transmission Company (AEP Ohio Transco or Applicant) would construct a new 69 kilovolt (kV) switching station, capable of operating at 138 kV, on a parcel presently owned by the City of Jackson.

The Applicant states that the City of Jackson would donate approximately 1.7 acres of the parcel for the Ironman Station, the permanent reroute of the existing Coalton SW-Lick 69 kV transmission line around the proposed station, and access roads to AEP Ohio Transco. After transfer of the City of Jackson's property, the Applicant states that no other property acquisition or easements would be required to construct and operate the Ironman Station. The City of Jackson operates its own electric distribution system.

The transmission line reroute would consist of a 69 kV double-circuit transmission line on steel two-pole structures, capable of operating at 138 kV. AEP Ohio Transco intends to upgrade the entire Coalton SW-Lick transmission line from 69 kV to 138 kV at a later date. Such upgrade would be subject to future filing(s) with and approval by the OPSB.

The cost of the project is estimated at \$4.5 million. The Applicant would like to commence construction of this project in August 2017 and place the facility in service by April 2018.

Basis of Need

AEP Ohio Transco states the City of Jackson has requested a new 69 kV delivery point to supply the city's entire 37 megawatt electric load, and the Applicant has identified the need to upgrade the region's 69 kV system at-large to 138 kV standards.

Long Term Forecast

The Ohio Administrative Code requires electric utilities and transmission owners annually to file a forecast report with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio.¹ The report requires a 10-year plan of committed or tentatively projected projects on the bulk power transmission network. AEP Ohio Transco identified the need for the proposed substation project in the *2017 AEP Ohio Transmission Company Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio*.²

PJM Interconnection

The Applicant submitted the proposed project to the PJM Interconnection (PJM) Subregional Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (RTEP) Committee on May 31, 2017.³ The project was submitted as a baseline project. The proposed substation was assigned ID No. b2885.1. The status of the project can be tracked on PJM's website.⁴

Socioeconomic Impacts

The project site is part of an undeveloped property owned by the City of Jackson, and is presently grass/open space. The Applicant indicates that the site is not registered as agricultural district land with Jackson County, and the project site does not contain any active agricultural land. No occupied residences are located within 100 feet of the site, and no wildlife management areas or nature preserve lands are located within 1,000 feet of the project. The nearest residence is located approximately 160 feet to the southeast of the project. Land use in the vicinity of the project consists of businesses and residences to the south, and open space and recreational soccer fields are located to the north. The existing Coalton SW-Lick 69 kV transmission line bisects the proposed site.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review and Phase I cultural resource management investigation for the project in March 2017, and updated the Phase I field study in June 2017. Additionally, a history/architectural investigation was conducted in June 2017.

The literature review identified no previously recorded archaeological sites at the project location. Phase I field work identified two previously unrecorded sites (Sites 33JA393-394), neither of which were identified as significant sites or historic by the Applicant's cultural resources consultant. There are mounds and a cemetery located in the vicinity of the project, but the planned station would not impact these resources.

1. Ohio Administrative Code 4901:5-5.

2. AEP Ohio Transmission Company, "2017 AEP Ohio Transmission Company Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 17-1501-EL-FOR, July 11, 2017.

3. PJM Interconnection, LLC, "5.31.2017 - Sub Regional RTEP Committee – Western Meeting," accessed July 11, 2017, <http://pjm.com/committees-and-groups/committees/srrtep-w.aspx>.

4. PJM Interconnection, LLC, "Transmission Construction Status," accessed July 11, 2017, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

The Applicant also had a history/architectural survey done for the area around the project. This survey identified three individual properties within the study area that may have potential significance. Two of the properties were determined not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The third property was determined to be eligible for the NRHP, however it was determined that the project would have no impact on the property. The consultant determined that the project would not involve or impact any significant cultural resources or historic properties, and that no further cultural resource management work is necessary. On May 26, 2017, the Ohio History Connection issued a concurrence letter agreeing with these findings.

Surface Waters

The project site does not contain any streams or wetlands. No in-water work is planned in any streams, and no impacts are anticipated.

The Applicant would submit a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit. The project does not cross a 100-year floodplain and no floodplain permit would be required.

Staff notes that there is an upland drainage feature at the site of the future distribution station that would need to be rerouted prior to construction of the station.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The project lies within the range of the federal and state endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). Indiana bat presence in the vicinity of the project has been confirmed. As tree roosting species, these species may be impacted by tree clearing during the summer months. The Applicant asserts that tree clearing would not be necessary for this project.

The Applicant submitted a coordination letter to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) on May 8, 2017. 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 docket the ODNR response letter and continue further coordination with Staff and ODNR prior to construction, in order to assure impacts to state listed species are minimized.

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 July 25, 2017, provided that the following conditions are satisfied:

Recommended Conditions:

- (1) Prior to the commencement of construction activities in areas that require permits or authorizations by federal or state laws and regulations, the Applicant shall obtain and comply with such permits or authorizations. The Applicant shall provide copies of permits and authorizations, including all supporting documentation, to Staff within seven days of issuance or receipt by the Applicant.

- (2) Prior to construction, the Applicant shall complete coordination with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Staff to determine if any further action is necessary to avoid impacts to state listed species.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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Case No(s). 17-0804-EL-BLN

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