

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 Lamping        ) Case No. 17-0810-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 Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) 4906.03 and Ohio Administrative Code (Ohio Adm.Code) 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval on October 6, 2017, unless suspended by the Board, an administrative law judge, or the chairperson or executive director of the board for good cause shown. 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 October 6, 2017, 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:** 17-0810-EL-BLN  
**Project Name:** Lamping Station Project  
**Project Location:** Monroe County  
**Applicant:** AEP Ohio Transmission Company  
**Application Filing Date:** July 7, 2017  
**Filing Type:** Letter of Notification  
**Inspection Date:** September 8, 2017  
**Report Date:** September 29, 2017  
**Recommended Automatic Approval Date:** October 6, 2017  
**Applicant's Waiver Requests:** none  
**Staff Assigned:** J. Pawley, J. Cross, A. Holderbaum, E. Morrison

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

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions

Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

### Project Description

AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. (AEP Ohio Transco or Applicant) proposes to install one 138/69 kilovolt (kV) transmission station and one 345/138 kV transmission station on adjoining parcels located in Washington Township, Monroe County. The project would be constructed on properties currently owned by AEP Ohio Transco. The Applicant would also obtain an easement for the station access road and laydown yard. The Applicant states that no other property acquisition or easements are required to construct and operate the two stations.

The project is situated between Floyd Hall Road and AEP Ohio Transco's existing 345 kV transmission line. The proposed project is part of an infrastructure replacement plan aimed at improving reliability of the electric transmission and distribution system in southeast Ohio. The transmission line tie-in for the Lamping Station project was part of the Lamping-Rouse 5-mile 138 kV transmission line project, Case No. 16-0701-EL-BTX, which was approved by Opinion, Order and Certificate on August 17, 2017.

The stations would be built on two parcels totaling 142.5 acres. The 345 kV station footprint would be 3.5 acres and would include a 345/138 transformer and four breakers. The 138 kV station footprint would be 2.8 acres and would include two breaker strings containing two 138 kV circuit terminations. There would also be two control buildings per station site. The Applicant states that the limit of disturbance (LOD) would be approximately 25 acres, including a laydown yard (which will be the site of a future non-jurisdictional 69 kV station yard) and the 6.3 acres of permanent disturbance for the fenced in station footprints.

The Applicant anticipates that construction of this project would begin in October 2017, and the facilities would be placed in service by June 2019. The estimated total cost of this project is \$25.5 million.

### **Basis of Need**

The proposed project is part of a broader program to modernize the southeast Ohio transmission and distribution network. The program is intended to enhance the reliability of the region's aging 23 kV distribution system by adding new transmission elements to create a new 138 kV network. The proposed project would provide a new power source to serve new 138 kV lines between AEP's Lamping and the Devola stations. The Applicant states the proposed project is needed to improve system reliability and allow for future load growth.

#### *Long-Term Forecast*

Ohio Adm.Code requires electric utilities and transmission owners to annually file a forecast report with the PUCO.<sup>1</sup> The report, for an electric transmission owner, requires a 10-year plan of committed or tentatively projected projects on the bulk power transmission network.<sup>2</sup> AEP Ohio Transco identified the proposed substation project in the *2017 AEP Ohio Transmission Company Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio*.<sup>3</sup>

#### *PJM Interconnection*

PJM Interconnection, LLC (PJM) assigned upgrade ID Number s1160 to the Applicant's project. The status of the proposed project can be tracked on PJM's website.<sup>4</sup> The proposed project would allow the transmission system to provide safe, reliable electric service, while meeting all the applicable planning criteria.

### **Socioeconomic Impacts**

The surrounding land use is a mix of old field and scrub-shrub habitat. No cemeteries, churches, schools, or other community facilities are located within 1,000 feet of the project site. The nearest residence is located approximately 240 feet north of the proposed 138/69 kV station and is 515 feet west of the proposed 345 kV station. The two parcels to be utilized for construction and operation of the station project are listed as part of a registered agricultural district in Monroe County, but are not currently used for agricultural purposes. Of the 142.5 total acres the Applicant owns for this project, 6.3 acres would be permanently removed from any future potential agricultural production for this project.

#### *Cultural Resources*

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review and Phase I cultural resource management investigation for the project in May 2017. The investigation was performed on the parcels which include the area of potential effect (APE), and include the station sites, access road and laydown yard. One new archaeological site (33MO0194) was found, but ultimately

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1. Ohio Adm.Code 4901:5-5.

2. Ohio Adm.Code 4901:5-5-04(F).

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

4. "Transmission Construction Status," *PJM Interconnection*, accessed September 19, 2017, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

deemed insignificant by the Applicant's consultant, and Site 33MO0194 is also located outside of the station footprints.

The consultant determined that the project would not involve or impact any significant cultural resources or landmarks, and that no further cultural resource management work is considered to be necessary. The findings were submitted to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO) on June 14, 2017. The OHPO responded in concurrence on July 6, 2017. The Phase I report and concurrence letter are included in the filing for this application.

## **Ecological Impacts**

### *Surface Waters*

The 142.5 acres of property owned by the Applicant contain 11 streams totaling 1,758 linear feet, including two intermittent streams and nine ephemeral streams. However, no streams are located within the 25-acre limit of disturbance. The Applicant has committed to implementing best management practices as written in the project's storm water pollution prevention plan, in order to minimize impacts associated with runoff and erosion. Additionally, the station project is not located in a 100-year floodplain.

The 142.5 acres of property also contain one Category 2 wetland totaling 0.01 acre. This wetland is not located within the limit of disturbance for either station site, and no wetland fill is proposed for the project. Therefore, no impacts to the wetland are anticipated.

One pond totaling 0.09 acre falls within the vicinity of the project but would not be impacted.

The Applicant intends to submit a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

State and federal listed species and/or suitable habitat that may be found in the vicinity of the project include the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). The Ohio Department of Natural Resources Division of Wildlife and the U.S. Fish and wildlife Service recommend tree cutting occur between October 1 and March 31. The Applicant states they will implement winter tree clearing to avoid impacts to these species.

The 142.5 acres of property owned by the Applicant are within the range of several state and federal listed mussel species and fish species. Due to the fact that no in-water work is planned for this project, no impacts to these species are anticipated.

The project also lies within the range of the state endangered and federal species of concern eastern hellbender (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis alleganiensis*) and the state endangered black bear (*Ursus americanus*). Due to the location of the project, mobility of the species, and the fact that no in-water work is proposed for this project, no impacts to these species are anticipated.

## **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 October 6, 2017, provided that the following conditions are satisfied.

**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) The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of October 1 through March 31 for removal of any trees three inches or greater in diameter, unless coordination efforts with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows a different course of action.

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

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

**9/29/2017 11:11:58 AM**

**in**

**Case No(s). 17-0810-EL-BLN**

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