

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Construction Notice Application by)
AEP Ohio Transmission Company for a Certificate of)
Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the) Case No. 18-0253-EL-BNR
Poston-Lick 138 kV Transmission Line Extension)
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 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval on May 30, 2018, 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 May 30, 2018, which is the automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Raymond W. Strom
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OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 18-0253-EL-BNR
Project Name: Poston-Lick 138 kV Transmission Line Extension Project
Project Location: Jackson County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: February 28, 2018
Filing Type: Construction Notice
Inspection Dates: April 24, 2018
Report Date: May 23, 2018
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: May 30, 2018
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

AEP Ohio Transmission Company (Applicant) proposes to extend approximately 160 feet of 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line from the existing Poston-Lick 138 kV transmission line to the new Rhodes Station (see Case No. 17-0805-EL-BLN, approved March 5, 2018). The project would involve the installation of two steel monopole structures (structures 151A and 151B) to be located within the right-of-way for the 138 kV Poston-Lick line. The project is estimated to cost approximately \$750,000. The Applicant proposes to begin construction in the summer of 2018, with an in-service date of October 2018.

The Applicant provided supplemental information to the case record on May 7, 2018, increasing the height of proposed structure 151B by 30 feet, and moving the same structure north along the Poston-Lick 138 kV transmission line by 15 feet. This change was necessitated by engineering design parameters for an adjacent transmission line (Rhodes-Heppner Switch 17-0817-EL-BLN) and the need for appropriate clearances of that project.

The project is located in Coal Township, Jackson County. The Applicant states that no easements, and/or land use agreements would be necessary to construct and operate the extension. The project would be located entirely on property owned by the Applicant and Ohio Power Company right-of-way, and is directly adjacent to the Rhodes Station, being constructed by the Applicant.

Basis of Need

The project is needed to provide electricity to the new Rhodes Station. Rhodes Station will supply electricity to the City of Jackson's new delivery point, Ironman Station. The Applicant states that without the proposed project, and during a single-contingency event, the voltage level at Ironman Switching Station would drop to 65 percent of normal, where PJM Interconnection, LLC's (PJM) minimum normal is 92 percent. In addition, the Lick-Ross 69 kV circuit would overload to 130 percent of its rating, where PJM's maximum rating is 100 percent. The proposed line would supply energy to the Rhodes Station and relieve the single-contingency criterion violation.^{1, 2}

This project was included in the Applicant's most recent Long-Term Forecast Report filing, Case No. 18-1501-EL-FOR, and was submitted to PJM as a baseline project. PJM assigned the project upgrade ID No. b2885.2. The construction status of transmission project can be tracked on PJM's website.^{3, 4}

Nature of Impacts

Socioeconomic

The project site is adjacent to the proposed Rhodes Station and would be located in existing right-of-way. 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 row crop 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.

Land use in the vicinity of the project consists of warehouses and businesses associated with the Wellston Industrial Park, and nearby electrical substations (existing and under construction). The City of Wellston is located approximately 4,000 feet to the north of the extension site.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review and Phase I cultural resource management investigation (archaeology and history/architecture) for the projects directly adjacent to the extension in August 2017. These adjacent locations encompassed the entirety of this project. The consultant determined that this project would not involve or impact any significant cultural resources or landmarks, and that no further cultural resource management work was considered to be necessary.

Surface Waters

The project site does not contain any streams. One drainage ditch jurisdictional to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is present along the eastern edge of the site. No in-water work is planned in any streams, and no impacts are anticipated. The proposed extension area does not contain any

1. *In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application of AEP Ohio Transmission Company for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Rhodes 138 kV Substation Project*, Case No. 17-0805-EL-BLN, (Staff Report of Investigation)(Approved, March 5, 2018)

2. *In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application of AEP Ohio Transmission Company for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Ironman Station Project*, Case No. 17-0804-EL-BLN, (Staff Report of Investigation)(Approved, July 25, 2017)

3. AEP Ohio Transmission Company, "Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 18-1501-EL-FOR, April 16, 2017.

4. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," accessed May 9, 2018, <http://pjm.com/planning/rtep-upgrades-status/construct-status.aspx>.

wetlands. The Applicant would submit a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency General National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit. The Applicant would utilize best management practices, as outlined in the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan, to minimize erosion and control sediment in order to minimize impacts to the drainage ditch. The project does not cross a 100-year floodplain and no floodplain permit would be required.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The project area is within the range of state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). As tree roosting species in the summer months, the habitat of these species may be impacted by the project. In order to avoid impacts to the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat, Staff recommends the Applicant adhere to seasonal tree cutting dates of October 1 through March 31 for all trees over 3 inches 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. The project would not disturb any hibernacula including caves or abandoned mines.

Due to the project's location, the type of habitat at the project site, the mobility of the species, and the fact that no in-water work is proposed, no impacts to other state and federal listed species are anticipated.

Conclusion

Staff's review of the application included consideration of the requirements listed in R.C. 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 May 30, 2018, provided that the following condition is satisfied.

Conditions:

- (1) The Applicant shall adhere to seasonal cutting dates of October 1 through March 31 for removal of any trees greater than or equal to three inches 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

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Case No(s). 18-0253-EL-BNR

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