

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application)
of American Electric Power Ohio Transmission)
Company for a Certificate of Environmental) **Case No. 18-1678-EL-BLN**
Compatibility and Public Need for the)
Crooksville-North Newark 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 (Ohio Adm.Code) 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval February 26, 2019, 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 February 26, 2019, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Raymond W. Strom
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Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
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OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 18-1678-EL-BLN
Project Name: Crooksville-North Newark 138 kV Transmission Line Extension Project
Project Location: Perry County
Applicant: American Electric Power Ohio Transmission Company
Application Filing Date: November 27, 2018
Filing Type: Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: February 11, 2019
Report Date: February 19, 2019
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: February 26, 2019
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. Pawley, J. Cross

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 provide 138 kilovolt (kV) service to a new distribution station located near the village of Roseville, Perry County. The project consists of two replacement H-frame steel structures and two new single pole steel structures within the right-of-way of the existing Crooksville-North Newark 138 kV transmission line. There would also be an approximate 0.3-mile line extension to the proposed distribution station, which would consist of two circuits with three new single pole steel structures per circuit.

The Applicant anticipates that construction of this project would begin in May 2019, and that the facility would be placed in service by December 2019. The cost of the project is estimated at \$1.2 million.

Basis of Need

This project would provide a new 138 kV transmission source in order to provide service to a new distribution station. The Applicant states that the new distribution station is proposed to replace aging distribution stations in the Crooksville area. The Applicant has determined that the existing nearby stations need replacing as they are in need of rehabilitation due to aging and are distant from the current distribution load center. The new distribution station is proposed to be centrally located near the current load center and would provide a desirable backup to the local 12 kV circuit.

This project was not included in the Applicant's most recent Long-Term Forecast Report (LTFR) filing. The project was not presented to the Applicant until after the 2018 LTFR had been submitted to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. The Applicant plans to include the project in the 2019 LTFR. The Applicant presented the project at the November 2018 PJM Subregional RTEP Committee - Western Meeting. The project has not yet received its supplemental upgrade ID. Once PJM issues the supplemental ID, construction status of the transmission project can be tracked on PJM's website.^{1, 2}

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

The transmission line extension is located on agricultural and old field habitat south and west of the 138 kV Crooksville-North Newark transmission line. The distribution station is located on a parcel that is now owned by Ohio Power Company, west of State Route 345. All construction would occur on Ohio Power Company land and within AEP Ohio Transmission Company easement. The Applicant indicates that no other property owners would be directly effected by this project nor would other property easements, options or agreements be necessary in order to construct and operate the extension. The project is not located within any agricultural district lands.

Two residences are located within 1,000 feet of the extension, neither of which are located within 100 feet. The Applicant intends to remove structures, including a farmhouse, from the parcel recently purchased by Ohio Power Company, in order to construct the distribution station and extension. No parks, schools, churches, cemeteries, or nature preserves are located within 1,000 feet of the project. The Avondale State Wildlife Area is located east of State Route 345, and Perry State Forest is located approximately 2 miles southwest of the project. No impacts to these resources are expected.

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 project. The consultant determined that the farmhouse and related structures that the Applicant intends to remove are considered significant cultural resources, referred to as PER0054205, the Guy Farm property. The findings were submitted to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO). The OHPO responded to the consultant in concurrence, and recommended that the main farm house and contributing resources should be avoided if possible. If avoidance is not possible, the OHPO recommended working with their agency to outline possible mitigation for the demolition of resources associated with PER0054205. The Applicant has indicated to Staff that demolition of the structures is planned for the construction of the distribution station and transmission line extension. Because avoidance will not be achieved, Staff recommends that the Applicant coordinate appropriate mitigation measures with the OHPO and provide a copy of the results to Staff. The Applicant is presently working on terms of mitigation with the OHPO.

1. 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, 2018.

2. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," accessed February 7, 2019, <https://pjm.com/planning.aspx>.

Surface Waters

The project site does not contain any streams and no impacts to streams would occur as a result of the project. The proposed project would not be located within any mapped 100-year floodplain.

The Applicant delineated one palustrine emergent Category 2 wetland within the project area. A portion of this wetland is located within the existing 138 kV Crooksville-North Newark transmission line right-of-way, and is also located adjacent to the proposed extension. No fill of this wetland is anticipated. To ensure no impacts would occur to this wetland, Staff recommends the Applicant install highly visible fencing between construction limits of the project and the adjacent wetland in order to provide a demarcation to prevent construction vehicles from inadvertently entering the wetland area.

Further details about how the surface water resources would be protected from indirect construction stormwater impacts using erosion and sedimentation controls would be outlined in the Applicant's Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan to be submitted as part of the required National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit.

Threatened and Endangered Species

A small amount of tree clearing would be required for this project. The project area is within the range of state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and the state and federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). As tree roosting species in the summer months, the habitat of these species might be impacted by the project. In order to avoid impacts to the Indiana bat and northern long-eared bat, Staff recommends that the Applicant adhere to seasonal tree cutting dates of October 1 through March 31 for all trees three inches or greater in diameter, unless coordination efforts with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows a different course of action. The proposed project is expected not to impact any bat hibernacula.

Due to the project's location, the type of habitat at the project site, and the mobility of the species, no impacts to other state and federal listed species are anticipated, including the federal species of concern bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), federal and state endangered American burying beetle (*Nicrophorus americanus*), and state endangered black bear (*Ursus americanus*). Some potentially suitable wetland habitat was observed within the project area for the federal threatened eastern massasauga (*Sistrurus catenatus*), however this species is not known by the ODNR to occur within one mile of the project area, so impacts are not likely.

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. Subject to the following conditions, Staff recommends automatic approval of this application on February 26, 2019.

Conditions:

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

- (2) Staff recommends the Applicant install highly visible fencing between the project and adjacent wetland prior to construction in order to prevent construction vehicles from inadvertently entering the wetland area.
- (3) Staff recommends that the Applicant continue to coordinate appropriate mitigation of the demolition of structures on site PER0054205 (Guy Farm property) with the Ohio Historic Preservation Office and provide a copy of the results to Staff.
- (4) The Applicant shall include this transmission line project in its 2019 Long-Term Forecast Report.
- (5) The Applicant shall provide to Staff, and file on the docket of this case, the PJM Interconnection supplemental upgrade ID.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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Case No(s). 18-1678-EL-BLN

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