

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Application of American Electric)
Power Ohio Transmission Company for an Amendment)
to the Rouse-Bell Ridge 138 kV Transmission Line)
Project)** **Case No. 19-1307-EL-BTA**

Members of the Board:

Chair, 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 rules. The application in this case is subject to an approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Respectfully submitted,



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OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case No.: 19-1307-EL-BTA
Project Name: Amendment to the Rouse-Bell Ridge 138 kV Transmission Project
Project Location: Washington and Monroe Counties
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc.
Application Filing Date: June 21, 2019
Inspection Date: July 19, 2019
Report Date: August 22, 2019
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: G. Zeto

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

Application: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Approval with Conditions
Waiver: ☐ Approval ☐ Disapproval ☒ Not Applicable

Application Description and Need

AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. (Applicant or AEP Transco) is proposing an amendment to the Rouse-Bell Ridge 138 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line, which the Ohio Power Siting Board (OPSB) approved on September 20, 2018, in Case No. 17-1908-EL-BTX. The Applicant proposes 14 changes along the approved route. The type of transmission equipment (related to transmission voltage, structure and conductor types) would not change. The Applicant states that the economic impact would not change as a result of these adjustments. The need for the facility and grid impacts associated with the facility remain the same as was approved in Case No. 17-1908-EL-BTX.

The Applicant has proposed two route adjustments that it characterized as engineering adjustments along the approved route, which are changes within the 100 foot right-of-way. The Applicant has also proposed 12 additional route adjustments that it characterized as reroutes, which are changes outside the approved 100 foot right-of-way. The Applicant has not yet commenced construction on the transmission line.

The right-of-way area would decrease by 0.5 acres. The length of the transmission line with the adjustments would decrease from 12.7 to 12.6 miles. The proposed adjustments would not result in a change in structure design, or estimated costs as defined in the certificated application.

Engineering Adjustments Within the Existing Right-of-Way

Engineering adjustment 1 consists of shifting the line 5 to 35 feet north from structure 34 to structure 39 to provide additional clearance distance from the existing distribution line so that extended distribution outages would not be necessary during construction. This shift would result in an additional 0.9 acres of tree clearing. No new property owners would be impacted by this shift.

Engineering adjustment 2 consists of shifting the line 15 to 30 feet from structure 70 to structure 71 to avoid impacts to the property owner's driveway. No new property owners would be impacted by this shift.

Re-routing Outside the Existing Right-of-Way

Reroute 1 consists of shifting structures 2 through 7 by distances ranging from 23 to 80 feet. This reroute is proposed to provide additional clearance distance from the existing distribution line so that extended distribution outages would not be necessary during construction. Structure 7 was also shifted to reduce impacts to the property owner's land use. An additional 0.1 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 2 consists of shifting structures 7 through 10 by distances ranging from 5 to 105 feet. This proposed reroute is the result of the property owner's request and would result in a reduction of 0.6 acres of tree clearing. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 3 consists of shifting structures 10 through 14 by distances ranging from 5 to 310 feet. This reroute is proposed to provide additional clearance distance from the existing distribution line so that extended distribution outages would not be necessary during construction. Additionally, this reroute would result in a reduction of 0.6 acres of tree clearing. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 4 consists of shifting structures 14 through 28 by distances ranging from 5 to 85 feet. This reroute is proposed to provide additional clearance distance from the existing distribution line so that extended distribution outages would not be necessary during construction. An additional 3.8 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 5 consists of shifting structures 29 through 34 by distances ranging from 5 to 95 feet. This reroute is proposed due to a landowner request and access issues associated with environmental and safety concerns. An additional 0.2 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 6 consists of shifting structures 41 through 45 by distances ranging from 5 to 175 feet. This reroute is proposed to provide additional clearance distance from the existing distribution line so that extended distribution outages would not be necessary during construction. An additional 0.1 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 7 consists of shifting structures 49 through 56 by distances ranging from 5 to 385 feet. This proposed reroute is the result of the property owner's request. An additional 0.5 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 8 consists of shifting structures 56 through 63 by distances ranging from 5 to 385 feet. This proposed reroute is the result of the property owner's request and to avoid a gas wellhead located within the alignment. An additional 0.7 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 9 consists of shifting structures 63 through 70 by distances ranging from 5 to 92 feet. This reroute is proposed to provide additional clearance distance from the existing distribution line so that extended distribution outages would not be necessary during construction. An additional 0.6 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 10 consists of shifting structures 71 through 73 by distances ranging from 5 to 72 feet. This reroute is proposed to eliminate a transmission structure which would have been required in the original design. An additional 0.2 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 11 consists of shifting structures 73 through 76 by distances ranging from 5 to 56 feet. This reroute is proposed to provide additional clearance distance from the existing distribution line so that extended distribution outages would not be necessary during construction. An additional 0.2 acres of tree clearing would be required for this reroute. No new property owners would be impacted by this reroute.

Reroute 12 consists of shifting the route to Washington Electric Cooperative's relocated Rouse Substation. The Applicant states that one previously unaffected landowner would be impacted by this reroute. No structures would be located on the new parcel. However, the Applicant has obtained an overhang easement for a portion of that property that overlaps with a portion of the 100-foot right-of-way. Additionally, this reroute would result in a reduction of 0.2 acres of tree clearing.

Application Review

Social Impacts

Staff does not expect the proposed adjustments to significantly alter the existing land use. Additionally, the adjustments would not impact any agricultural district lands. With these adjustments, the total number of residences located within 100 feet of the route would decrease from two to one. The proposed adjustments would decrease the number of properties crossed from 76 to 73 properties. The alignment sections have been studied for the presence of archaeological and historical impacts and the Applicant is in the process of coordinating the project with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office. Staff finds that the adjustments, reroutes, and extensions proposed to avoid features not known at the time of the original OPSB application, as well as those made at the request of affected property owners, are reasonable.

Surface Waters

The approved route right-of-way contains 102 streams, including 19 perennial streams, 22 intermittent streams, and 34 ephemeral streams. The approved route right-of-way contains 9,593 linear feet of streams. The proposed adjustments would eliminate 20 previously approved stream crossings, all of which are ephemeral streams. The proposed adjusted route would add 10 new stream crossings, including nine ephemeral streams and one perennial stream. The proposed adjusted route right-of-way contains 9,752 linear feet of streams.

The approved route right-of-way contains 10 wetlands, with 0.82 total acres of wetland within the right-of-way. The proposed adjusted route right-of-way contains 16 wetlands. This includes small portions of 10 previously uncrossed wetlands, while eliminating crossings of four previously

crossed wetlands. The total acreage of wetlands within the right-of-way would remain approximately the same. All delineated wetlands are category 1 and category 2 wetlands.

Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate as well as implementation of the storm water pollution prevention plan would minimize impacts to surface water resources that could occur as a result of the proposed adjustments.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The proposed adjustments would not result in increased impacts to listed wildlife species. Adherence to the conditions of the original certificate would minimize impacts to listed species.

Recommended Findings

Staff's review of the application included consideration of the requirements listed in the Ohio Revised Code Section 4906.10. Based on Staff's review, the application meets the necessary criteria for granting a certificate. Staff would require the Applicant to conform to conditions of the original certificate in order to best protect social and ecological resources associated with this project. Staff recommends approval of this amendment application, provided that the following condition is satisfied.

Recommended Conditions:

- (1) The Applicant shall continue to adhere to all conditions of the Opinion, Order, and Certificate in Case No. 17-1908-EL-BTX, as amended through this application.

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Case No(s). 19-1307-EL-BTA

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