

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Application of Duke Energy Ohio     )  
for the Cumminsville 5B Rebuild Project                    )   Case No. 20-0134-EL-BLN**

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 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,



Theresa White  
Executive Director  
Ohio Power Siting Board

## OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**Case Number:** 20-0134-EL-BLN  
**Project Name:** Cumminsville 5B Rebuild Project  
**Project Location:** Hamilton County  
**Applicant:** Duke Energy Ohio  
**Application Filing Date:** February 11, 2020  
**Filing Type:** Letter of Notification  
**Inspection Date:** March 4, 2020  
**Report Date:** May 5, 2020  
**Applicant's Waiver Requests:** None  
**Staff Assigned:** A. Holderbaum, S. Halter

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

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

### Project and Site Description

The Applicant, Duke Energy Ohio, proposes to replace three aging lattice tower structures that support an existing 69 kilovolt (kV) and an existing 138 kV line. The structures will be replaced with seven steel monopole structures. Of the seven structures, five will be associated with the 138 kV line and the remaining two will be associated with the 69 kV line. The project would also install 0.42 miles of new 138 kV transmission line in order to separate the existing 69 kV and 138 kV lines. The project is at the request of the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) as part of larger improvement plans for Interstate 75.

Construction would occur within the existing 100-foot wide transmission line right of way owned by the Applicant. The proposed project begins just east of the existing Cumminsville Substation in Cincinnati. The line and replacement poles then head southeast, spanning Mill Creek and a railroad before turning northeast. From there the line spans Interstate 75 and Central Park Avenue where the proposed project ends slightly north of Central Park Avenue. The Applicant proposes to begin construction in June of 2020 and to place the line in service by December 31, 2020. The Applicant estimates the total cost of the project to be approximately \$9,000,000.

### Basis of Need

The proposed project is needed to make clearance for ODOT improvements to Interstate 75 near Cincinnati and to improve reliability for customers served by this line. This project is not driven by any reliability criteria violations, but by the ODOT improvements. The current conductor that will be replaced is 50 years old, and the new conductor will increase both the capacity and reliability of the transmission line. This project does not have a PJM number, since it does not

affect the PJM model. The project was not included in Duke's 2019 Long-Term Forecast Report but will be included in the 2020 Long-Term Forecast Report.

## **Nature of Impacts**

### *Socioeconomic Impacts*

The Applicant sent notification about the project to area public officials and affected property owners. The location for the construction of the proposed project is entirely on property owned by the Applicant, and no significant impacts to roadways or traffic flow are anticipated. The Applicant will obtain a District 8 permit from the ODOT for a construction access road entrance needed to access one of the proposed structures off Interstate 75. The surrounding land use is predominantly developed land consisting of the Cumminsville Substation, residential and commercial properties, a railroad, and Interstate 75. The remaining land making up the project area consists of Mill Creek, scrub shrub, and forested land. No residences or structures would need to be removed as a result of this project.

### *Agricultural Land*

The proposed project area is not located within any agricultural land. Therefore, construction and operation of the electric transmission line extension is not expected to impact agricultural district land or agricultural production.

### *Cultural Resources*

The Applicant completed a cultural resources literature review for the area of potential effects for the project. Several cultural resources were identified within one mile of the project area. The Applicant did not note any expected impacts to these resources as the project area has been heavily graded and disturbed from human development and the proposed project would occur entirely within the existing transmission line right of way. Staff concurs with the Applicant's findings.

### *Surface Waters*

No wetlands, ponds, or lakes occur within or adjacent to the project area. One stream, Mill Creek, would be aerially spanned by the project. No structures would be placed within the stream or within the vegetative buffer of the stream. The existing transmission line currently spans the stream. No impacts to Mill Creek or surface waters would occur. The project would not require 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.

### *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*). No tree clearing is necessary for this project, and therefore no impacts to these species are anticipated.

Impacts to other state and federally listed species are not anticipated, due to no proposed in-water work and a lack of suitable habitats.

**Recommended Findings**

Staff recommends approval of this application provided that the following condition is satisfied. Staff notes that its recommendation for approval of this application should not be construed as a recommendation for approval of cost recovery in any ratemaking proceeding.

**Condition:**

- (1) The certificate authority provided in this case shall not exempt the facility from any other applicable and lawful local, state, or federal rules or regulations nor be used to affect the exercise of discretion of any other local, state, or federal permitting or licensing authority with regard to areas subject to their supervision or control.

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

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

**5/5/2020 4:56:10 PM**

**in**

**Case No(s). 20-0134-EL-BLN**

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