

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application by)
AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. for a Certificate) Case No. 20-0946-EL-BLN
of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the)
Amlin-Dublin 138 kV Transmission Line 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.

On March 17, 2020, an administrative law judge tolled the time period for automatic approval of this project and other accelerated projects during the state of emergency declared in Executive Order 2020-01D. (See case number 20-601-GE-UNC, the "Tolling Directive.") On May 20, 2020, the administrative law judge modified the Tolling Directive, finding that the tolling provisions should be terminated effective June 1, 2020, thereby again subjecting this matter to an automatic approval, unless suspended.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval on August 31, 2020, 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 August 31, 2020, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Theresa White
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 20-0946-EL-BLN
Project Name: Amlin-Dublin 138 kV Transmission Line Project
Project Location: Franklin County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc.
Application Filing Date: May 26, 2020
Filing Type: Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: June 9, 2020
Report Date: August 24, 2020
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: August 31, 2020
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. O'Dell, F. Butt and G. Zeto

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description and Need

AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. (AEP Ohio Transco or Applicant) proposes to construct approximately 3.4 miles of single-circuit 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line between the existing Amlin and Dublin substations. The new line would be installed within a new 80-foot wide permanent right-of-way.

The basis of need for this project is to support a large data center in the Dublin, Ohio area and to provide greater reliability to commercial customers. In addition, this project provides a third 138kV source into both the Dublin and Amlin substations.

Presently, the Dublin-Sawmill 138 kV circuit would overload to 107 percent of its emergency rating according to PJM Interconnection, LLC (PJM) under the Regional Transmission Expansion Project (RTEP). The overload occurs under PJM's 2024 Summer RTEP case for loss of both Bethel-Davidson and Roberts-Davidson 138 kV circuits. This would cause a thermal overload on the Dublin-Sawmill 138 kV circuit and it has been identified as a baseline project by PJM. Specifically, the Applicant states that this project was presented and reviewed with the PJM stakeholders as PJM project b3112 and reviewed with stakeholders at the February 20, 2019 and

the March 25, 2019 PJM Sub-Regional Regional Transmission Expansion Plan Western meetings.¹

Upgrades to the transmission system are part of PJM's Regional Transmission Expansion Planning process.² Staff verified the need for this project through consultation of PJM's baseline projects. Baseline projects include projects planned for (1) reliability, (2) operational performance, (3) Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Form No. 715 criteria, (4) economic planning, and (5) public policy planning (State Agreement Approach).³

Based upon the load schedules provided by a large data center customer, reliability contingencies are expected to potentially become an issue in the summer of 2020. Along with the aforementioned thermal overload, this project will resolve a double contingency analysis as required by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation under their TPL-001 transmission planning standard. This project is also needed to avoid any potential load shedding in the local area. With a greater load coming from the data center, the lines may face an unacceptable overload. Overall, this project provides improved reliability and continued service following the addition of the load from the proposed data center.

The project was included in the Applicant's Long-Term Forecast, Specifications of Planned Transmission Lines, Table FE-T9.⁴

The capital cost of this transmission line project is estimated at \$27,000,000 and that cost would be recovered through the Applicant's Federal Energy Regulatory Commission approved transmission formula rate.⁵

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

The project would be located partially in the City of Dublin and partially within an unincorporated area of Washington Township in Franklin County, Ohio. Land use consists of commercial development, industrial park and agricultural uses.

1. PJM Interconnection, "Sub Regional RTEP Committee – PJM West," Feb. 20, 2019, First Review Baseline Reliability Projects, available at: <https://www.pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/srrtep-w/20190220/20190220-reliability-analysis-update.ashx> (Accessed August 24, 2020).

2. PJM is the regional transmission organization charged with planning for upgrades to the regional transmission system in Ohio. Significant alterations to the transmission system located in the PJM control area are required to submit planned projects for review of system impacts.

3. PJM Manual 14B: PJM Region Transmission Planning Process, Revision 46, effective August 28, 2019, available at: <https://www.pjm.com/-/media/documents/manuals/m14b.ashx>

4. AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc., "Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 20-1501-EL-FOR, April 15, 2020.

5. The Applicant indicates that all of the cost of this project will be included in the Applicant's formula rate (i.e. the annual transmission revenue applicable under PJM Interconnection, LLC's Open Access Transmission Tariff, Attachment H-20) and would be assessed on all transmission customers within AEP East Transmission Companies.

Cultural Resources

AEP Ohio Transco conducted a cultural resource survey to ascertain potential impacts to historic properties and archaeological sites. The survey determined that adverse impacts to historic properties and archaeological sites are not expected. Staff concurs with the survey results.

Surface Waters

The right-of-way contains two perennial and three ephemeral streams. No poles would be located in streams and no in-water work is planned. Three category 1 wetlands are present within the right-of-way. Proposed structure 3 would be located along the edge of a wetland. Other surface water impacts would be temporary and limited to construction access. Impacts associated with construction access would be minimized through the use of timber matting. Surface water impacts would be covered under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Nationwide 12 permit, which is the federal permit regarding wetland impacts. Erosion control measures including silt fencing would be used where appropriate to minimize runoff impacts to streams and wetlands.

The Applicant stated that the Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan and Notice of Intent for the transmission line would be submitted to the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency in support of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit. Staff does not anticipate issues with the Applicant's procurement of this permit.

The route would cross a 100-year floodplain area. Proposed structure 17 would be located along the edge of the floodplain. The Applicant stated that it would coordinate with the local floodplain administrator to obtain any applicable floodplain permit.

Threatened and Endangered Species

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 federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*). As tree roosting species in the summer months, the habitat of these species would 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 and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service allows a different course of action. The proposed project would not impact any bat hibernacula.

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

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 application on August 31, 2020. 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.

Conditions:

- (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.

- (2) 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, on the case docket prior to commencement of construction.
- (3) 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.
- (4) Prior to construction, the Applicant shall provide a copy of any floodplain permit required for construction of this project, or a copy of correspondence with the floodplain administrator showing that no permit is required

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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Case No(s). 20-0946-EL-BLN

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