

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Construction Notice Application by)
American Transmission Systems, Incorporated for a)
Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public) Case No. 20-1555-EL-BNR
Need for the Babb-Evans 138 kV Transmission Line)
Loop to Aetna Substation 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 January 7, 2021, 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 January 7, 2021, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Theresa White
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 20-1555-EL-BNR
Project Name: Babb-Evans 138 kV Transmission
Line Loop to Aetna Substation Project
Project Location: Summit County
Applicant: American Transmission Systems, Incorporated
Application Filing Date: October 16, 2020
Filing Type: Construction Notice
Inspection Date: November 16, 2020
Report Date: December 31, 2020
**Recommended Automatic
Approval Date:** January 7, 2021
Applicant's Waiver Requests: none
Staff Assigned: J. O'Dell and J. Cross

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description and Need

American Transmission Systems, Incorporated (ATSI or Applicant) proposes to loop the Babb-Evans 138 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line into the Aetna Substation. To complete installation of this loop, ATSI would also need to relocate the last span of the Aetna-West Akron 138 kV Transmission Line. This project would support an ongoing Aetna Substation upgrade project, which involves converting the Aetna Substation into a five (future six) breaker ring bus. This project entails installation of 393 feet of double-circuit 138 kV transmission line and 637 feet of single-circuit 138 kV line. Five new steel structures would also be installed.

ATSI's Aetna Substation is currently configured as a single bus and serviced radially by the Aetna-West Akron 138 kV transmission line. Currently, an outage on this transmission line could completely cut off service to commercial and industrial customers in the city of Akron, including the University of Akron. The project would remove this radial connection. ATSI would then convert the Aetna Substation into a five-breaker ring bus and loop in the Babb-Evans 138 kV transmission line. This would provide a second 138 kV source into Aetna Substation. This new source would improve reliability by preventing the complete loss of service during an outage. The project would also provide additional load and voltage support in downtown Akron, as well as improving operational flexibility during maintenance. This project was included in the Applicant's

2020 Long Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, filed in Case No. 20-0657-EL-FOR.¹

Upgrades to the transmission system are part of PJM Interconnection, LLC's (PJM) Regional Transmission Expansion Planning (RTEP) process.² This project was reviewed with PJM stakeholders by the Subregional RTEP Committee–Western on August 31, 2018 and September 28, 2018.³ Transmission owners plan supplemental projects in accordance with PJM's Open Access Transmission Tariff. The project was issued supplemental PJM upgrade ID number s1709 and the project status can be tracked on PJM's website.⁴ The capital cost of this proposed transmission line loop project is estimated to be \$2,461,438.⁵

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

The project would be in the City of Akron, Summit County, Ohio. Land use in the project vicinity is comprised of urban commercial, industrial and park uses.

Cultural Resources

ATSI 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 has examined and concurs with the survey results.

Ecological Impacts

The Applicant identified two nearby streams that would be avoided. Minor tree clearing would be conducted in accordance with seasonal restrictions, occurring before April 1, 2021. Additionally,

¹. American Transmission Systems, Inc., "Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case 20-0657-EL-FOR, April 15, 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.

PJM's RTEP identifies transmission system additions and improvements needed to keep electricity flowing to the millions of people throughout PJM's region. See PJM RTEP, <https://www.pjm.com/library/reports-notice/rtep-documents.aspx> (accessed December 29, 2020).

³. PJM Interconnection, "Subregional RTEP Committee - Western," August 31, 2018, <https://pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/srrtep-w/20180831/20180831-reliability-analysis-update.ashx> (accessed December 29, 2020).

PJM Interconnection, "Subregional RTEP Committee - Western," September 28, 2018, available at: <https://pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/srrtep-w/20180928/20180928-reliability-analysis-update.ashx> (accessed December 29, 2020).

⁴. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," <https://pjm.com/planning/project-construction.aspx>. (Accessed December 29, 2020).

A Supplemental Project is defined in the PJM Operating Agreement as a transmission expansion or enhancement that is not required for compliance with the following PJM criteria: system reliability, operational performance or economic criteria, pursuant to a determination by the Office of the Interconnection and is not a state public policy project pursuant to Operating Agreement, Schedule 6, section 1.5.9(a)(ii). See also, PJM Manual 14B: PJM Region Transmission Planning Process, Revision 48, effective October 1, 2020, available at: <https://www.pjm.com/-/media/documents/manuals/m14b.ashx>

⁵. The Applicant indicates that all the costs of this transmission line loop project would be included in the Applicant's formula rate and would be assessed on all transmission customers within the ATSI Transmission Zone.

ATSI's ecological survey determined that no wetlands are present. The Applicant reviewed online FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Mapping and determined that the project work limits do not encroach on any regulated flood plains. The Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Towpath Trail are within one mile of the project. ATSI intends to coordinate access activities with both entities prior to construction. Considering the Applicant's avoidance measures and planned access management, Staff opines that ecological impacts would be minimal.

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 January 7, 2021. 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.

This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities

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in

Case No(s). 20-1555-EL-BNR

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Mr. Jason Cross on behalf of
Siting Staff