

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. 20-1600-EL-BNR  
Need for the Defiance SW (Richland) 138 kV )  
Transmission Line Switch Replacement 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 21, 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 21, 2021, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Theresa White  
Executive Director  
Ohio Power Siting Board

## OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**Case Number:** 20-1600-EL-BNR  
**Project Name:** Defiance SW (Richland) 138 kV Transmission Line Switch Replacement Project  
**Project Location:** Defiance County  
**Applicant:** American Transmission Systems, Incorporated  
**Application Filing Date:** October 22, 2020  
**Filing Type:** Construction Notice  
**Inspection Date:** December 2, 2020  
**Report Date:** January 14, 2021  
**Recommended Automatic Approval Date:** January 21, 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 (Applicant or ATSI) proposes to replace a malfunctioning, obsolete transmission line switch. To minimize transmission system outage time, the Applicant plans to install the new switch concurrently with a proposed project on the same transmission line. The associated project is the Defiance SW (Richland) 138 kilovolt (kV) Transmission Line Relocation Project.<sup>1</sup> The relocation project is needed to facilitate the construction of a new Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) roundabout at the intersection of Cleveland and Ottawa avenues in Defiance, Ohio.<sup>2</sup> In order to maintain the proper conductor elevation, two taller wood pole structures would also be installed next to the modified switch supporting structure.

The new motor-operated switch would improve overall system isolation and transmission line switching time. The existing switch is stuck in the closed position, which requires a crew to be

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1. In the Matter of the Application of American Transmission Systems, Incorporated for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Construction for the Defiance SW (Richland) 138 kV Transmission Line Relocation Project, Case No. 20-1436-EL-BNR, Application, October 22, 2020.

2. ODOT Project Identification Number 103689.

mobilized to manually open the switch. This manual opening operation is very difficult and time consuming.

ATSI indicated that it did not include this project in its most recent Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio because the project was not known at the time of filing. The Applicant also states that this project does not change the topology or ratings of the transmission system; therefore, it was not included in the PJM Interconnection, LLC's (PJM) Regional Transmission Expansion Planning (RTEP) process.<sup>3</sup> The Applicant has updated the project cost since the initial application filing. The total project cost is now estimated to be \$229,910.<sup>4</sup>

## **Nature of Impacts**

### *Land Use*

The project is located immediately west of the Ayersville Substation, along the north side of Cleveland Avenue in Defiance, Ohio. The project area is surrounded by low-density residential uses. The new structures would be installed within existing road right-of-way and no new easements are required.

### *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*

No streams, wetlands or other water bodies are present. Tree clearing is not required, and structures would be installed in maintained lawn areas. The Applicant reviewed online Federal Emergency Management Agency Flood Insurance Rate Mapping to determine that the project does not encroach on any regulated flood plains. In Staff's opinion, 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 21, 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.

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3. 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 Regional Transmission Expansion Plan, <https://www.pjm.com/library/reports-notice/rtep-documents.aspx> (accessed December 21, 2020).

4. The Applicant indicates that all the cost of this transmission relocation project would be included in the Applicant's formula rate and would be assessed on all transmission customers within the ATSI Transmission Zone.

**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**

**Commission of Ohio Docketing Information System on**

**1/14/2021 12:13:17 PM**

**in**

**Case No(s). 20-1600-EL-BNR**

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