

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application)
of AEP Ohio Transmission Company for the LaRue) **Case No. 21-0033-EL-BLN**
Extension 138-kV Transmission Line Project)

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 (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 (Ohio Adm.Code) 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval April 29, 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 April 29, 2021, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Please present any concerns you or your designee may have with this case to my office.

Sincerely,



Theresa White
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 21-0033-EL-BLN
Project Name: LaRue Extension 138-kV Transmission Line Project
Project Location: Marion County
Applicant: AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc.
Application Filing Date: January 28, 2021
Filing Type: Letter of Notification
Inspection Date: April 7, 2021
Report Date: April 22, 2021
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: April 29, 2021
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: T. Crawford, J. Pawley, 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 a 0.2-mile section, double circuit in-and-out line or loop from the existing West Mount Vernon- South Kenton 138 kilovolt (-kV) Transmission Line to the proposed LaRue Substation.¹ The project is located in Bowling Green Township, Marion County, Ohio.

Upgrades to the transmission system are part of PJM Interconnection, LLC's (PJM) Regional Transmission Expansion Planning (RTEP) process.² This project is part of the larger DeCliff-LaRue project which was originally presented and reviewed with stakeholders at the April 21, 2017 and May 31, 2017 PJM Subregional Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (SRRTEP)

¹ This new substation will be OPSB non-jurisdictional pursuant to Ohio Adm.Code 4906-1-01(F)(2)(b), as it is designed to reduce the higher transmission voltage to the lower distribution voltage, or 138/34.5 kV.

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 Regional Transmission Expansion Plan, <https://www.pjm.com/library/reports-notice/rtep-documents.aspx> (accessed January 29, 2020).

Western Meeting.³ It was revised and then reviewed at the August 21, 2019 PJM SRRTEP Western Meeting, and was assigned the PJM baseline ID number b2794.⁴ Baseline upgrades include projects planned for reliability, operational performance, FERC Form No. 715 criteria, economic planning, and public policy planning (State Agreement Approach).⁵ The Applicant has included the overall DeCliff-LaRue project in its Long Term Forecast Report.⁶

The overall DeCliff-LaRue project is needed to address and alleviate the voltage violations identified by PJM at select 34.5/69 kV buses and transformers in some substations in Marion County and in Wyandot County when contingency scenarios occur in the system. Implementation of this project will mitigate voltage issues in operations due to certain transient conditions and would reduce the need for load shedding at adjacent DeCliff, Meeker, or Brownstone stations.

Construction is expected to begin in the October 2021, and the anticipated in-service date is June 2022. The Applicant estimates the total cost of the proposed project to be approximately \$1,180,000.⁷

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

Existing land use in the area of the project consists of agricultural land use, open field/undeveloped land, scattered residential and agricultural structures, commercial structures, and woodlots. No residential structures are located within 100 feet of the extension, and no residential structures would need to be removed to construct this project. The project is located entirely on property owned by AEP Ohio Transco, and therefore, no additional land rights are needed to construct and operate the proposed extension. There is active agricultural row crop on the subject parcel, however, the project is not located on registered agricultural district land.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review and Phase I cultural resource management investigation (archaeology and history/architecture) for the project. The consultant determined that the project would neither involve nor impact any significant cultural

³ The Subregional RTEP Committees (SRRTEP) review and provide input on subregional RTEP projects and provide recommendations to the Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee (TEAC) concerning subregional RTEP projects. See PJM Subregional RTEP Committee–Western; <https://www.pjm.com/-/media/library/reports-notices/state-specific-reports/2019/2019-ohio-state-infrastructure-report.aspx> (Accessed January 29, 2021).

⁴ <https://www.pjm.com/-/media/library/reports-notices/state-specific-reports/2019/2019-ohio-state-infrastructure-report.ashx> (Accessed February 3, 2021).

⁵ PJM Manual 14B: PJM Region Transmission Planning Process, Revision 48, Effective Date: October 1, 2020.

⁶ This project is included on PUCO Form FE-T9, page 33 of 20-1501-EL-FOR for the AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc.

⁷ The Applicant indicates that the project cost is composed of tangible and capital costs, and it was obtained using a Class 3 estimate. The costs will be recovered in AEP Ohio's FERC formula rate (i.e. the annual transmission revenue applicable under the PJM Open Access Transmission Tariff, Attachment H-20) and would be assessed on all transmission customer in the AEP zone.

resources or landmarks, and that no further cultural resource management work was considered to be necessary. The findings were submitted to the Ohio Historic Preservation Office (OHPO). The OHPO responded to the consultant in concurrence that this project is not anticipated to affect historic properties and archaeological sites. Staff agrees with this conclusion.

Surface Waters

No streams or wetlands are present within the project area. No in-water work is planned, and no surface water impacts are proposed.

The Applicant would submit a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Permit. Staff does not anticipate issues with the procurement of this permit. As part of this permit, erosion control measures including silt fencing would be used where appropriate to minimize runoff impacts to nearby streams. The project does not cross a 100-year floodplain and no floodplain permit would be required.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The project area is currently agricultural row crop. No tree clearing or sensitive habitat would be impacted. Impacts to state and federal listed species would not occur due to a lack of proposed impacts to suitable habitats.

Conclusion

Staff's review of the application included consideration of the requirements listed in R.C. 4906.10. Based on Staff's review, the application meets the necessary criteria for granting a certificate. Staff recommends approval of this application on April 29, 2021 subject to the following conditions. 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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Case No(s). 21-0033-EL-BLN

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