

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Construction Notice Application of)
Ohio Power Company for the Fostoria Central Station) Case No. 21-0899-EL-BNR
Expansion Project)

Members of the Board:

Chair, Public Utilities Commission	Ohio House of Representatives
Director, Department of Development	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 December 2, 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 objections you or your designee may have with this case to my office at least four business days prior to December 2, 2021, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Theresa White
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 21-0899-EL-BNR
Project Name: Fostoria Central Station Expansion Project
Project Location: Hancock County
Applicant: Ohio Power Company
Application Filing Date: September 1, 2021
Filing Type: Construction Notice
Inspection Date: October 26, 2021
Report Date: November 24, 2021
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: December 2, 2021
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: A. Conway, J. Cross, M. Bellamy, T. November

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description and Need

Ohio Power Company (Applicant) proposes to expand the footprint of its existing Fostoria Central Substation and install a new perimeter fence and inner fence system at the substation. There is no transmission line adjustment proposed for this project.

The purpose of this project is to expand the existing substation fence line to allow future addition and upgrade of equipment and infrastructure within the Fostoria Central Station footprint. The Applicant states that these upgrades would bring the station up to current standards to satisfy resiliency, safety, and operational performance. Additionally, the fence is being upgraded to comply with Ohio Power Company and industry standards and guidelines pertaining to public safety and security.

The area within the fence line of the substation would increase by approximately 1.76 acres which is roughly a 24 percent expansion. All work to be performed for this project, including the expanded fence line, is located on the Applicant's property. No additional property easements or approvals from landowners are needed for the proposed project.

The Applicant states that because this proposed project would not result in operational, modeling or topology changes, the project will not be included in the PJM Interconnection, LLC's (PJM)

Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (RTEP).¹ The Applicant states that PJM is aware of the station upgrade project and has been consulted regarding the project. The proposed project is not expected to adversely impact the existing transmission grid. In addition, the Applicant states the project was not included in the most recent Long-Term Forecast Report (LTFR) because it is an existing substation.²

The capital and total cost of this proposed substation expansion project are estimated to be \$6,467,639. The Applicant indicates that all of the cost of this transmission line project would be included in the Applicant's formula rate (i.e., the annual transmission revenue applicable under PJM's Open Access Transmission Tariff, Attachment H-14) and would be assessed on all transmission customers within the AEP Zone.

The Applicant anticipates that construction of this project would begin in the first quarter of 2022, and that the upgraded and expanded substation facility would be placed in service by October 2022.

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

The project is located in Washington Township, Hancock County. Washington Township is an unincorporated area. The land use in the project area is primarily agricultural with scattered residences and commercial facilities nearby, but the substation expansion will occur on land owned by the Applicant. There is also a railroad line south of the substation.

The Applicant has consulted the Hancock County Auditor, and the Applicant states that there is no agricultural district land within the project area.

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 not involve or impact any significant cultural 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 would not affect historic properties, and that no additional cultural resources studies are needed. Staff agrees with these findings.

1. PJM Interconnection, LLC 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 October 5, 2021).

2. Staff notes Ohio Revised Code (R.C.) 4935.04 requires an LTFR to include a: "description of proposed changes in the transmission system planned for the next five years." This project being a "change" to the transmission system, Staff recommends the Applicant include future changes to the transmission system, even ones occurring on an "existing substation," within its LTFR.

Surface Waters

The Applicant's consultant, AECOM, delineated one category 1 wetland within the project.³ No impacts are anticipated to this delineated wetland as it would be outside of the proposed project's footprint. No streams were delineated within the project area. A Notice of Intent would be filed with the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency for coverage under its Construction Storm Water General Permit (OHC000005) and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) would be prepared prior to the start of construction; which is a requirement for that permit. The project is not within a 100-year floodplain and therefore no floodplain permitting would be required.

Threatened and Endangered Species

Consultation with the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service did not identify any concerns regarding impacts to listed plant or animal species due to a lack of suitable habitat within the project area. Furthermore, impacts to state and federally listed mussel and fish species would not occur due to no proposed in-water work. Impacts to state and federally listed bat species would not occur as no tree clearing would be anticipated for this proposed project. During the winter months, bats hibernate in caves and abandoned mines, also known as hibernacula. The proposed project is not expected to impact any bat hibernacula.

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 December 2, 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.

3. Wetlands falling within the purview of the Clean Water Act are regulated within Ohio by R.C. 6111, et seq. and Ohio Adm.Code 3745-1-50, et seq. Ohio Adm.Code 3745-1-54 establishes wetland categories.

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Case No(s). 21-0899-EL-BNR

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