

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-East Lima) Case No. 21-0979-EL-BNR
Cut-In North Woodcock Station 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 27, 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 27, 2021, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Theresa White
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 21-0979-EL-BNR
Project Name: Fostoria-East Lima Cut-In North Woodcock Station Project
Project Location: Allen County
Applicant: Ohio Power Company
Application Filing Date: September 29, 2021
Filing Type: Construction Notice
Inspection Date: December 10, 2021
Report Date: December 20, 2021
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: December 27, 2021
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: A. Holderbaum, T. Crawford

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description and Need

The AEP Ohio Power Company, Inc. ("AEP Ohio" or the "Applicant") has proposed to replace the existing hard tap along the Fostoria-East Lima 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line. The hard tap would be replaced with a looped configuration to provide service to the non-jurisdictional North Woodcock Substation. Three new steel poles (142, 142A, and 142B) would be used to effect the in-and-out configuration of two separate 138 kV extensions from the transmission line into the North Woodcock Substation. The length of each extension would be less than 500 feet. An existing lattice structure would be replaced with a galvanized steel pole (141) to increase the elevation of the Fostoria-East Lima transmission line to provide adequate clearance above the new North Woodcock 69 kV extension line from the existing Findlay-Woodcock 69 kV transmission line.

The Applicant claims the in-and-out configuration is necessary to accommodate adjustments and replace deteriorating equipment inside the North Woodcock Substation. These would include a 138/69/34.5 kV transformer with deteriorating dielectric material and short circuit issues, some 34.5 kV and 69 kV oil-type breakers having bushing damage and excessive numbers of faults, and a grounding transformer having dielectric strength breakdown. The project would also have the direct effect of improving reliability and performance of non-jurisdictional lines in the area. This project is part of the overall Bluffton Area Improvements Project, submitted to PJM in the AEP Local Plan of 2019.

Upgrades and modifications to the transmission system are part of PJM Interconnection, LLC's (PJM) Regional Transmission Expansion Planning (RTEP) process.¹ The need and solution were presented and reviewed with stakeholders at the January 11, 2019 and the September 25, 2019, 2020 PJM SRRTEP Western meeting, respectively.² The PJM number assigned for this supplemental project is s2060, and its progress can be tracked on PJM's website.

The Applicant states that the project was identified in the Company's most recent 2021 Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, filed in Case No. 21-1501-EL-FOR.³

The Applicant proposes to begin construction in January 2022 and expects to place the project in-service in October 2022. The capital cost estimate of the line extension is approximately \$600,000 using a Class 4 estimate.⁴

Nature of Impacts

Land Use

The project is located within an agricultural area adjacent to an existing substation. The project would be located entirely on land owned by the Applicant. No Agricultural District land parcels were identified in the project area. Impacts to agricultural land are not anticipated. Two residences are located within 1,000 feet of the project, however, both residences are over 100 feet away from the project. No parks, schools, churches, cemeteries, or nature preserve lands are located within 1,000 feet of the project. None of these establishments would be impacted by this project.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review and a history/architecture survey 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. No previous unrecorded sites were identified during the surveys. No impacts to cultural resources are expected to occur.

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.

1. 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 their system impacts. PJM's RTEP identifies transmission system additions and improvements needed to keep electricity flowing to the millions of customers throughout PJM's region. See PJM Regional Transmission Expansion Plan, <https://www.pjm.com/library/reports-notice/rtep-documents.aspx>, (Accessed December 9, 2021)

2. The Subregional RTEP Committee (SRRTEP) review and provide input on subregional RTEP projects and provide recommendations to the Transmission Expansion Advisory Committee (TEAC) concerning regional RTEP projects. See PJM Submission of Supplemental Projects for Inclusion in the Local Plan, <https://www.pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/srrtep-w/postings/aep-local-plan-submission-of-the-supplemental-projects-for-2019-rtep.aspx> (Accessed December 9, 2021)

3. AEP Ohio Power Company, inc. "Long-Term Forecast Report", Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 21-0501-EL-FOR, April 15, 2021, Form FE-T9, page 72.

4. The Applicant indicates the costs of the project are projected to be transmission plant and included in the Applicant's FERC formula rate (Attachment H-14 to the PJM Open Access Transmission Tariff), and would be allocated to all customers in the AEP Zone.

*Listed Species*⁵

Impacts to state and federal listed species would not occur due to no proposed in-stream work, no tree clearing required, or impacts to habitats of listed wildlife within the range of the project.

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 27, 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.

5. Based on agency coordination with the USFWS and ODNR, identified listed species of concern are generally defined as including those species that are protected under the federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. §§ 1531-1544), and/or according to the Conservation of Natural Resources within RC Title XV (§ 1518.01-1518.99; 1531.25, 1531.99, etc.). One of the missions of the ODNR is to "conserve and improve the fish and wildlife resources and their habitats, and promote their use and appreciation by the public so that these resources continue to enhance the quality of life for all Ohioans." In carrying out this mission, the ODNR considers the "status of native wildlife species [to be] very important" and therefore lists wildlife species needing protection. (ODNR, *State Listed Species*, <https://ohiodnr.gov/wps/portal/gov/odnr/discover-and-learn/safety-conservation/about-ODNR/wildlife/state-listed-species>). In addition to endangered species, those species classified as "threatened" are considered during OPSB project planning and approval because these species are those "whose survival in Ohio is not in immediate jeopardy, but to which a threat exists. Continued or increased stress will result in it becoming endangered."

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Case No(s). 21-0979-EL-BNR

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by BreAnna J. Freeman
on behalf of Staff of OPSB