

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Letter of Notification Application )  
of AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. for a )  
Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public ) Case No. 22-0010-EL-BLN  
Need for the Hillsboro-Millbrook Park 138 kV Circuit )  
Rebuild Adjustment 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 4906-6.

Staff recommends the application for automatic approval March 25, 2022, 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 March 25, 2022, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Respectfully submitted,

Merna White

Theresa White  
Executive Director  
Ohio Power Siting Board

## OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**Case Number:** 22-0010-EL-BLN  
**Project Name:** Hillsboro-Millbrook Park 138 kV Circuit Rebuild Adjustment Project  
**Project Location:** Highland, Adams, Pike, and Scioto counties  
**Applicant:** AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc.  
**Application Filing Date:** January 18, 2022  
**Filing Type:** Letter of Notification  
**Report Date:** March 18, 2022  
**Recommended Automatic Approval Date:** March 25, 2022  
**Staff Assigned:** G. Zeto, J. Cross

### Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

### Project Description and Need

On August 10, 2021, AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Incorporated's (Applicant) application titled the Hillsboro-Millbrook Park 138 kV Circuit Rebuild (Case No. 21-0268-EL-BLN), was automatically approved. The Applicant was approved to rebuild approximately 52 miles of existing 138 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, located within the existing right-of-way, and consisting primarily of steel monopole structures.<sup>1</sup> Construction began in November 2021.

In this application, the Applicant proposes to adjust 28 transmission line structures, in seven separate locations, totaling 6.8 miles of the line. The maximum distance of structure adjustment from the approved centerline is 33 feet. All changes to the line would occur within the approved right-of-way. The Applicant states that the adjustments are necessary due to the results of the negotiations with property owners.

The transmission line adjustments would not have any impact on the Applicants original submissions with PJM Interconnection, LLC (PJM). The project's need and solution were presented and reviewed with PJM stakeholders at the Subregional Regional Transmission

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1. The Applicant states the Hillsboro-Millbrook Park 138 kV transmission line rebuild is needed because of reliability issues related to aging equipment and customer minutes of interruption (CMI) on South Central Power's Sinking Springs delivery point. In addition, the line serves as an interconnection to the Dayton Power & Light (DPL) zone and provides service to DPL and Duke Energy Ohio. The existing transmission line was constructed in the 1940's where approximately fifty percent of the original structures are still in-service. The Applicant states there are 1,342 open conditions which include, pole, shielding, and grounding issues. Reliability issues have accounted for 3.5 million CMI on South Central Power's Sinking Springs delivery point.

Expansion Plan (SRRTEP) Committee on May 20, 2019, and February 21, 2020.<sup>2</sup> Transmission owners plan supplemental projects in accordance with PJM's Open Access Transmission Tariff, Attachment M-3 process. The project was issued supplemental PJM upgrade ID s2201, whereby the project status can be tracked on PJM's website.<sup>3</sup> The project was included in the Applicant's 2021 Long Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio, filed in Case No. 21-1501-EL-FOR.<sup>4</sup> The capital and total costs of this proposed transmission line project are estimated to be \$160,000,000.<sup>5</sup>

## **Nature of Impacts**

### *Land Use*

The project is located in Highland, Adams, Pike and Scioto counties. The project would be constructed within the Applicant's existing right-of-way. Land use in the project area consists primarily of existing utility infrastructure, agricultural, residential, and woodlots. As the project is a rebuild within existing right-of-way, it would not be expected to impact the designation of agricultural district parcels. The adjustments are not expected to result in increased impacts to land uses.

### *Cultural Resources*

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant 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. The Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) provided a letter dated June 28, 2021, stating that as the proposed project will have no adverse effect on historic properties, no further coordination with their office is necessary. Staff concurs with the survey results and findings of the SHPO. The adjustments would not result in increased impacts to cultural resources.

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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 Interconnection, "Subregional RTEP Committee - Western," May 20, 2019, AEP Supplemental Projects, Need No. (AEP-2019-OH024), <https://pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/srrtep-w/20190520/20190520-aep-supplementals.ashx> (Accessed February 28, 2021).

PJM Interconnection, "Subregional RTEP Committee - Western," February 21, 2020, AEP Supplemental Upgrades, Need No. (AEP-2019-OH024), <https://pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/srrtep-w/2020/20200221/20200221-aep-supplementals.ashx> (Accessed February 28, 2021).

3. PJM Interconnection, "Transmission Construction Status," <https://pjm.com/planning/project-construction.aspx>. (Accessed February 28, 2021).

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 50, effective July 1, 2021, available at: <https://www.pjm.com/-/media/documents/manuals/m14b.ashx>.

4. AEP Ohio Transmission Company, "Long-Term Forecast Report to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio," Public Utilities Commission of Ohio Case No. 21-1501-EL-FOR, April 15, 2021.

5. Applicant indicates that, \$160,000,000, will be included in the Applicant's formula rate (Attachment H-20 to the PJM OATT) and would be assessed on all transmission customers within the AEP zone.

### *Surface Waters*

No new surface water impacts would occur as result of the proposed adjustments. The Applicant continues to commit to no in-water work.

### *Listed Species*<sup>6, 7</sup>

The project area is within the range of state and federal endangered Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*), the federal threatened northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), the state threatened loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), state threatened lark sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), the state endangered and a federal threatened timber rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus horridus*). The adjustments are not expected to result in increased impacts to these species or impacts to any additional species.

### **Recommended Findings**

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 March 25, 2022, subject to the conditions below. 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 Applicant shall continue to adhere to all conditions adopted in the associated Hillsboro-Millbrook Park 138 kV Circuit Rebuild project as approved in Case No. 21-0268-EL-BLN and as amended through this application.

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6. 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.).

7. 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."

**This foregoing document was electronically filed with the Public Utilities  
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**in**

**Case No(s). 22-0010-EL-BLN**

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