

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

In the Matter of the Expedited Construction Notice)
Application of East Ohio Gas d /b/a Dominion Energy) **Case No. 22-0166-GA-BNR**
Ohio for PIR 2387, 30th and West Avenue 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 April 1, 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 April 1, 2022, which is the recommended automatic approval date.

Sincerely,



Theresa White
Executive Director
Ohio Power Siting Board

OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

Case Number: 22-0166-GA-BNR
Project Name: Pipeline Infrastructure Replacement (PIR) 2387 – 30th and West Avenue
Project Location: City of Ashtabula, Ashtabula County
Applicant: East Ohio Gas Company d /b/a Dominion Energy Ohio
Filing Type: Expedited Construction Notice
Inspection Date: March 14, 2022
Report Date: March 25, 2022
Recommended Automatic Approval Date: April 1, 2022
Applicant's Waiver Requests: None
Staff Assigned: A. Renick, A. Delong, M. Bellamy, A. Conway

Summary of Staff Recommendations (see discussion below):

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

Project Description and Need

East Ohio Gas Company d/b/a Dominion Energy Ohio (Applicant) proposes to replace a 1,335 feet long portion of its existing 10-inch diameter natural gas transmission line, known as Line #4, with a 16-inch diameter, fusion bonded-epoxy or powercrete epoxy coated steel pipe. The new modern pipe would be operated at a maximum allowable operating pressure of 187 pounds per square inch gauge. Additionally, a currently inoperable valve would also be replaced as part of this project.

The section of pipeline to be replaced is located along W. 30th Street in Ashtabula, from Dominion Energy Ohio's metering station (near the intersection of W. 30th St. and West Ave.) to just north of the intersection of W. 30th St. and Humphrey Ave. The Applicant plans to install the pipe using the open cut trench method in public road right-of-way using existing easements. One segment of the installation would use auger bore methods to cross underneath Norfolk Southern and CSX railroad tracks. The segment of pipeline underneath the railroad would be encased in a protective 24-inch steel casing pipe to prevent damage. After the pipeline project is complete, the retired 10-inch diameter pipe would be abandoned in place.

For this proposed project, the Applicant would begin construction in April 2021 and place the facility in service by the end of third quarter 2022 (approximately September 2022). The Applicant estimates the total cost of the project to be approximately \$1.9 million. The Applicant also indicates that cost associated with this project will be allocated to, recovered through, and amortized within its existing Pipeline Infrastructure Replacement (PIR) Cost Recovery Charge

program and the Capital Expenditure Program (CEP) rider.¹ This pipeline has been identified and qualifies as a segment to be replaced within Dominion Energy Ohio's PIR program due to the age of the pipe (installed circa 1954).

The Applicant states that the pipe segment, Line #4, currently has an inoperable valve and that this segment of pipe is a constraint on its natural gas delivery system. The Applicant has found that slight supply disruption from the Applicant's Cochranon Line, which supplies the Ashtabula area, would cause pressure issues in the neighboring Conneaut, Ohio area. The existing 10-inch diameter line, Line #4, causes a large amount of pressure drop on that Cochranon line as a constraint. The Applicant proposed a slightly larger pipeline diameter (16-inch) for this project to make it consistent with the connecting and neighboring pipes in Dominion Energy Ohio's high-pressure system. The Applicant has evaluated the use of a 12-inch diameter pipe in this segment but finds that size would not provide sufficient improvement in pressure. The Applicant rejected use of a 14-inch diameter pipe, because that is not a standard size for Dominion Energy Ohio's system. The Applicant anticipates that these improvements will be for its existing customer base. The Applicant also indicates that replacing the line would allow a complete integrity evaluation, pressure test, and leak survey along its high-pressure pipeline Line #4.

Staff believes that the Applicant has shown the need for replacement of the existing pipeline segment and a benefit from additional natural gas supply in the area. The natural gas line proposed by the Applicant would serve to address this need. However, Dominion Energy Ohio has not necessarily established that the full size and pressure of the planned pipeline are needed to serve current and anticipated loads in the area. The primary negative consequence of installing a pipeline of greater capacity than necessary would be that additional cost would be associated with the additional size increment. Such cost ramifications, and their impacts on gas customer rates, are properly addressed through base rate proceedings before the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO). Nothing in this report should be construed as Staff's pre-approval of cost recovery in future rate proceedings.

Nature of Impacts

Agricultural Land

This project would be located wholly within the City of Ashtabula in Ashtabula County. The primary land uses within the project area are industrial and commercial. There are two operating railroads that occur within the project area. The Applicant states there is not a need for tree clearing. The environmental field study performed by Davey Resource Group established that there are no streams or wetlands within the project area.

This project would not cross any agricultural land or Agricultural District Land parcels.

Cultural Resources

The Applicant's cultural resources consultant performed a literature review for the project. The consultant did not discover previously identified cultural resources from the literature review.

1. The Applicant's PUCO approved final tariffs are on file with the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio in Case No. 89-8006-GA-TRF.

Dominion Energy Ohio, "Pipeline Infrastructure Replacement OH", <https://www.dominionenergy.com/projects-and-facilities/natural-gas-projects/pipeline-infrastructure-replacement-oh>, (Accessed March 18, 2022).

Given the results of the literature review and the presence of existing roads, sidewalks, other utilities, and structures within the project area the Applicant concluded the project is not anticipated to have adverse effects on cultural resources. Staff agrees the Applicant's conclusion.

Surface Waters

Wetland and stream delineation field surveys were completed within the project area by the Applicant's consultant on August 1, 2017.² No wetlands or streams were identified within the project area. This project does not overlap with any Federal Emergency Management Agency 100-year floodplains.

Due to the area of ground disturbance totaling less than one acre, the Applicant would not file a Notice of Intent for coverage under the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency Construction Storm Water General Permit. The Applicant has submitted an Ohio Small Site Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan to the City of Ashtabula Engineering Department on March 23, 2020. The City of Ashtabula issued an indefinite plan approval on May 14, 2020.

Threatened and Endangered Species

The Applicant utilized the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Tool to review federally listed species which could be impacted by the project. Typically, Staff requests that the Applicant request project-specific environmental review of the project directly from the USFWS; however, due to the limited extent and nature of the project, Staff was able to sufficiently evaluate impacts to federally listed species with the information provided in the application. According to the IPaC system, there are nine federally listed species with ranges that overlap with Ashtabula County. The Applicant requested further information from the USFWS on one of these species, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), due to USFWS records indicating that nests were known to exist in Ashtabula County. The USFWS stated that no nests were within 0.5 miles of the project that the project is unlikely to impact bald eagles. This project is unlikely to impact any other federally listed species due to lack of suitable habitat, in-water work, and tree clearing.

The Applicant received environmental review of the project from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources on May 6, 2020. This project is within range of 13 state listed species. This project is unlikely to impact state listed species due to lack of suitable habitat, in-water work, and tree clearing.

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 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

2. 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.

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). 22-0166-GA-BNR

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