

BEFORE THE POWER SITING BOARD OF THE STATE OF OHIO

**In the Matter of the Application of AEP Ohio** )  
**Transmission Company, for the Amendment to the** ) **Case No. 23-0643-EL-BTA**  
**Groves Road-Shannon 138 kV Electric Transmission** )  
**Line 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 rules. The application in this case is subject to an approval process as required by Section 4906.03 of the Ohio Revised Code.

Respectfully submitted,



Michael Williams  
Executive Director  
Ohio Power Siting Board

## OPSB STAFF REPORT OF INVESTIGATION

**Case Number:** 23-0643-EL-BTA  
**Project Name:** Amendment to the Groves Road-Shannon 138 kV Transmission Line (Ref: Case No. 21-0199-EL-BTX)  
**Project Location:** Franklin County  
**Applicant:** AEP Ohio Transmission Company  
**Application Filing Date:** June 12, 2023  
**Inspection Date:** August 23, 2023  
**Report Date:** September 8, 2023  
**Applicant's Waiver Requests:** None  
**Staff Assigned:** A. Conway, A. Holderbaum, J. Stottsberry

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

Application:  Approval  Disapproval  Approval with Condition

### Project Description and Need

On June 24, 2021, in Case No. 21-0199-EL-BTX, the Ohio Power Siting Board (Board) authorized AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. (Applicant) to construct, operate, and maintain the approximately 6.6-mile-long preferred route of the Groves Road-Shannon 138 kilovolt (kV) electric transmission line project in southeast Columbus and the Village of Brice in Franklin County (Original Certificate).

In this amendment application, the Applicant proposes an engineering adjustment to relocate a total of five structures along the electric transmission line route, and to revise Condition 19 of the Original Certificate to reflect new geotechnical information and analysis that was not previously submitted.

The Applicant states that the overall need for the transmission line project has not changed from that of the original certificate. The capital cost estimate of the overall project also has not changed from the original certificate.

The Applicant began construction, mainly tree and vegetation clearing activities, in March 2023. The Applicant also initiated construction of the southern portion of the Groves Road-Shannon 138 kV transmission route in August 2023, which is not part of this amendment application. The Applicant is still on track to place the entire project in service in July 2025.

## Application Review

### *Engineering Adjustment*

In this amendment application, the Applicant proposes an engineering adjustment to slightly shift a total of five structures along the electric transmission line route. These are necessary because previously unknown existing underground utilities were found at those original structure locations. The shifts from the approved centerline range from seven to ten feet. The Applicant found the underground utilities via the hydro-vac excavation technique. The Applicant also performed hydro-vac excavation at the new shifted locations and did not find existing underground utilities are at these sites.

### *Ecological Impacts*

Several minor updates were made to the total streams and wetlands delineated within the right-of-way; however, no new surface water crossings or impacts are being proposed with this amendment. No additional impacts to threatened and endangered species would occur. Due to a reduction in acreage of woodlot within the right-of-way, tree clearing has decreased from 11.2 to 11 acres.

### *Geology: Update to Condition 19 of the Stipulation*

The amendment application asks that the Board revise Condition 19 of the Case No: 21-0199-EL-BTX certificate to eliminate the requirement of a boring at every angled structure. According to the Applicant, it would be in the public interest to modify this condition to allow for a less intrusive approach to assessing geological risks involved in the project.

The amendment application includes two geotechnical exploration reports. One report represents a 1.4-mile segment (structures #62 through #93) of the overall project. The report dated May 28, 2021, includes the analysis of 10 geotechnical borings. The second report, dated October 11, 2021, includes analysis of 6 additional borings. Combined, the Applicant indicates the reports are representative of the project area which also includes a 3.7-mile segment (structures #1 through #61), and a 1.3-mile segment (structures #94 through #119). The application states: “The Company reviewed the site conditions and made an engineering judgement that the quantity of geotechnical data gathered was sufficient for all structures and appropriately characterizes the site conditions, provides parameters for design, and identifies potential construction challenges.”<sup>1</sup> Staff has no objections to this position. The application also asserts “Conducting additional borings is not preferred as the Engineer of Record did not require additional soil borings to complete the design.”<sup>2</sup>

Given Staff has no objections to the Applicant’s assessment that adequate geotechnical borings have been evaluated, Staff now recommends removal of Condition 19. Had the previously acquired

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<sup>1</sup> *In the Matter of the Amendment Application of AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Groves Road-Shannon 138 kV Transmission Line Project, Case No. 23-0643-EL-BTA, Amended Application at page 121 of 173 (June 12, 2023).*

<sup>2</sup> *In the Matter of the Amendment Application of AEP Ohio Transmission Company, Inc. for a Certificate of Environmental Compatibility and Public Need for the Groves Road-Shannon 138 kV Transmission Line Project, Case No. 23-0643-EL-BTA, Amended Application at page 120 of 173 (June 12, 2023).*

geotechnical information cited above been provided to Staff with the Original Certificate, Condition 19 would not have been necessary.

Staff recommends that Condition 19 of the Opinion, Order, and Certificate in 21-0199-EL-BTX filed on February 16, 2023, be removed.

### **Recommended Findings**

Staff recommends approval of this amendment provided that the following conditions are satisfied. Staff notes that its recommendation for approval of this amendment 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 as certificated in Case No. 21-0199-EL-BTX, with the exception of Condition No. 19.

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**Case No(s). 23-0643-EL-BTA**

Summary: Staff Report of Investigation electronically filed by Mr. Andrew S.  
Conway on behalf of Staff of the OPSB.