

**STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD**

<b>THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC</b>	:	
<b>COMPANY d/b/a NATIONAL GRID</b>	:	
<b>NOTICE OF INTENT APPLICATION</b>	:	<b>DOCKET NO. SB-2021-02</b>
<b>J16S 115 kV TRANSMISSION LINE</b>	:	
<b>THERMAL UPGRADE</b>	:	
<b>CUMBERLAND, RHODE ISLAND</b>	:	

**DECISION AND ORDER**

On February 5, 2021, the Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid (National Grid or Company) filed a Notice of Intent Application with the Energy Facility Siting Board (EFSB or Board) pursuant to Rule 1.6(F) of the Board’s Rules of Practice and Procedure (Rules).<sup>1</sup> The application proposed thermal upgrading of five spans or approximately 3,242 feet (0.61 mile) of the existing J16S 115 kW transmission line (J16S Line) located between Structures 130 and 135 in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Installed in the 1920s, the 1.7 mile-long J16S Line originates at the Staples Substation and terminates at the Highland Park Substation, both in Cumberland, Rhode Island. Since installation the J16S Line has undergone several upgrades. It consists of double-circuit square-base suspension and dead-end lattice towers which are shared with the R9 115 kV line (R9 Line). The R9 Line is approximately 10.4 miles long and runs

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<sup>1</sup> Rule 1.6(F) provides for an abbreviated review of an application for the construction of power lines of more than 1,000 feet, but less than 6,000 feet, or the modification or relocation of existing power lines. After the application is filed and a public hearing held in one or more of the cities or towns affected by the project, the Board must make a determination within sixty days of the filing as to whether the project “may result in a significant impact on the environment or the public health, safety and welfare.” If the Board finds no significant impact, the project does not constitute a major alteration. The applicant will, accordingly, be licensed to proceed without further review.

between the Riverside Substation in Woonsocket and the Valley Street Substation in Cumberland. It consists mainly of double-circuit steel lattice towers with intermittent double-circuit steel single-pole structures and a section of four-circuit steel dead-end structures. In addition to the thermal upgrade of the J16S Line, National Grid will re-conductor the portion of the R9 Line between Structures 130 and 135.

A copy of the Notice of Intent to Construct or Relocate Power Lines of More than 1,000 feet is required by 445-RICR-00-00-1.6(F) of the Rules to be filed with the Council of the municipality affected by the construction of said lines at least ninety days before construction is to commence. National Grid filed the Notice of Intent with the Cumberland Town Clerk for distribution to the Cumberland Town Council. The Company received confirmation that the filing was received on February 10, 2021, and the matter was on the Town Council agenda on March 3, 2021. The Rule also allows the municipality, or any intervenor, up to thirty days after the filing to file an objection with the Board. No such objection was received by the Board.

In its application, National Grid explained why the project is needed and provided a detailed description of the proposed work. That work will include: 1) the re-conductoring of the J16S and R9 Lines between Structures 130 and 135; 2) the reinforcement of Structures 130 and 135; 3) the replacement of tower hanger members at Structures 134 and 131; 4) the replacement of Structure 133 with a galvanized steel pole structure; 5) the replacement of insulator strands on Structures 130 through 135; 6) the conversion of Structure 132 to a suspension structure and replacement of hanger members; and 7) the installation of conductor weights on Structure 136.

National Grid explained that much of the load for eastern Rhode Island and southeast Massachusetts is served by local generation in Tiverton, Rhode Island and in Taunton, Dighton, and Dartmouth, Massachusetts. It noted that when one of these generation units is unavailable

certain contingencies can lead to thermal overloads which can comprise reliability on the transmission network which includes the J16S Line. In addition to the thermal upgrade of the J16S Line, National Grid will also have to re-conductor the R9 Line that shares structures with the J16S Line. The re-conducting of the R9 Line will be necessary, because the replacement of structure 133 with a taller one will require the splicing of R9 Line which is not consistent with Company standards. Both the J16S and the R9 Lines will be re-conducted with ACCC conductors that will mitigate the J16S clearance shortfalls to the ground and will alleviate potential line overloads on the J16S Line under contingency conditions.

National Grid considered five alternative ways to solve the identified problem. According to the Company, of the five, only the chosen alternative, which is the subject of this docket, would effectively accomplish the goal of preventing thermal overloads on the J16S Line at a reasonable cost with a minimal impact to the environment.

National Grid described the location of the proposed project as an established and maintained Right-of-Way (ROW) and stated that the work is not expected to have any impacts on geology and farmlands. The Company anticipates only limited and temporary impacts on soils, vegetation, surface water, wetland and waterbodies, and wildlife. It provided that appropriate environmental controls will be installed, and an environmental monitor will be retained to oversee all construction activities to ensure compliance with all permit requirements. Additionally, after the work is complete, National Grid assured that all disturbed areas will be restored. The Company does not expect the project to have any long-term impacts on the natural or social environment. National Grid estimated the cost of the project to be approximately \$2.189 million.

At the public hearing on December 17, 2019, the Company presented the following witnesses: 1) George DeLoureiro, the Project Manager with EN Engineering, who is responsible

for the scope, schedule and budget for the project; 2) David Halliwell, an environmental scientist and engineer with Power Engineers, who is responsible for identifying, permitting and recommendations for environmental resources in the vicinity of the project; and 3) Mark Stevens, a principle engineer with National Grid, who is responsible for planning future upgrades. The witnesses supported the details in the Application and the Environmental Report and responded to inquiries from the Board.

Mr. DeLoureiro reiterated the details set forth in the Notice of Intent and explained why the project was needed and the conditions that would occur if no action was taken. He also explained each of the alternatives reviewed and why each, other than the chosen one, was rejected. He described the construction sequence and noted that construction is planned to begin in the first quarter of 2022 and should be completed within four months. He also detailed the meetings that occurred with Town of Cumberland officials and how particular Town concerns were addressed.

Mr. Halliwell described the environmental impacts noting that none were expected to be long-term or permanent. He too discussed meeting with the Town officials regarding the project's impact on Sneece Pond and East Sneece Brook and explained the environmental controls that would be implemented to ensure protection of environmental resources. He noted that National Grid had met with the Cumberland Department of Public Works and prior to construction will meet with the Cumberland Water Department to ensure any specific issues concerning construction around a drinking water source are addressed. Mr. Stevens reiterated Mr. DeLoureiro's testimony regarding the need for the project and the conclusions of ISO-NE that without the upgrade the J16S Line would be overloaded by 2029.

After the Company's presentation ended, the Chairman solicited public comment. None was offered.

Immediately upon conclusion of the public hearing, the Board conducted an Open Meeting which had been properly noticed. For the reasons described below, the Board found that the project does not constitute an alteration of a major energy facility.

Decision

The Board finds the thermal upgrading of the J16S Line and the reconductoring of the J16S and R9 Lines to be a positive and necessary step in ensuring reliability to the area. The Board also finds the project will have no significant impact to the environment or public health, safety, and welfare. The social and environmental impacts resulting from the construction will be temporary and minimal. Moreover, the Board was assured that National Grid will engage in appropriate mitigation measures to minimize any disturbances to vegetation and soil and to the social environment. Accordingly, the Board unanimously finds that the project will not cause a significant impact on the environment, public health, safety, or welfare and, thus, is not an alteration of a major energy facility. National Grid may proceed without further review.

Accordingly, it is hereby

( 148 ) ORDERED:

The Energy Facility Siting Board finds that the project does not constitute an alteration of a major energy facility as defined by R.I. Gen. Laws § 42-98-4(b) in that it will not result in a significant impact on the environment or public health, safety, and welfare and that National Grid may proceed without further review.

DATED AND EFFECTIVE AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND ON MARCH 29, 2021,  
PURSUANT TO AN OPEN MEETING DECISION. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED APRIL 7,  
2021.

ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD



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Ronald T. Gerwatowski, Chairman



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Janet Coit, Member



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Meredith E. Brady, Member

