

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

THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC	:	
COMPANY d/b/a NATIONAL GRID	:	
NOTICE OF INTENT APPLICATION	:	DOCKET NO. SB-2021-05
K-189 115 kV THERMAL UPGRADE	:	
AND G-185 115 kV LINE	:	
RECONDUCTORING PROJECT	:	

DECISION AND ORDER

On December 7, 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).¹ The application proposed thermal upgrading of the existing K-189 115 kV overhead transmission line (K-189 Line) and the reconductoring of the existing G-185N 115 kV overhead transmission line (G-185N Line) both of which are approximately one mile long and located between the Drumrock Substation and Kent County Substation, within the same right-of-way (ROW), in the City of Warwick. Both lines were originally constructed in 2002.

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 Warwick City Clerk for distribution

¹ 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, and the applicant may proceed without further review.

to the Warwick City Council on December 7, 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. Significant modifications are needed to accommodate the interconnection of a number of photo-voltaic (PV) installations. An Impact Study and analysis was performed to determine whether interconnection of the PV installations could impact the stability, reliability, and operating characteristics of the transmission system. The study determined that significant transmission modifications were required to interconnect the PV installations. The K-189 Line requires an upgrade to increase the thermal rating which will require the replacement of all existing single die compression dead ends and all single die compression splices. Additionally, three out of the existing fourteen spans will require replacement of the insulator assemblies on two structures. The G-185N Line requires reconductoring which will entail replacing the existing conductor only. No work is required for the shield wires or existing structures.

National Grid considered three alternative ways to solve the identified problem. The No-Action alternative was unacceptable in that it would result in overloading and would not maintain a reliable electric supply. The second alternative, which would consist of constructing a new overhead transmission line parallel to the existing lines, would result in significant costs and significantly more impacts to the surrounding natural and social environments. Thus, according to the Company, of the three, only the chosen alternative, which is the subject of this docket, would effectively accomplish the goal of reinforcing reliability of the K-189 and G-185N Lines 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 expected to have only negligible impacts on the geology, surficial geology, air quality, population trends, and employment and labor force. 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 conducted outreach with state and local officials and will send out mailers to affiliated landowners and abutters and advance notification to city and state officials and agencies prior to commencement of construction. Construction is expected to begin in March 2022 and be completed in April 2022. National Grid estimated the cost of the project to be approximately \$2.382 million.

A public hearing was held on January 25, 2022. Prior to the start of the National Grid's presentation, the Chairman solicited public comment. None was offered. The Company presented the following witnesses: 1) Nelson Antunes, the Principal Project Manager with National Grid; 2) Heidi Graf, an ecologist and associate project manager with BSC Group; and 3) Carlos Perez-Perez, a manager in the transmission planning department with National Grid. The witnesses supported the details in the Application and the Environmental Report and responded to inquiries from the Board.

Mr. Antunes 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 second quarter of 2022 and should be completed within two months. He also detailed the meetings that occurred with City of Warwick officials and noted that the City did not raise any concerns with the work to be performed. He stated that additional community outreach would be undertaken in advance of construction.

Ms. Graf described the environmental impacts, noting that none were expected to be long-term or permanent. She highlighted the two wetlands within the project right-of-way and explained the environmental controls that would be implemented to ensure protection of environmental resources. She stated that there were three major surface water resources in the study area but noted that none were in the project right-of-way. There is one stone feature that she testified was identified by a member of the Narragansett Indian Tribe as an area of concern that will be designated as a no access or no impact zone during construction. She stated that the right-of-way will not require widening. She noted that construction noise will be limited by use of mufflers on construction equipment and that any increase in traffic during construction will be small and temporary. She provided that the project will not have a significant impact on the natural or social environment.

In response to a question from the Chairman, Mr. Perez-Perez explained that the overloads identified during the impact assessment for interconnection of renewable energy resources were the result of a number of solar facilities being installed. He testified that the Impact Study revealed that only 132 megawatts of the expected 228 megawatts that would be connected could be supported without the upgrade.

On February 2, 2022, 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 existing K-189 Line and the reconductoring of the existing G-185N Line to be necessary to support the addition of renewable energy sources. This is not only a positive and necessary step in ensuring reliability to the area but in furtherance of the State's energy goals. Based on the evidence provided, 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

(152) 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 FEBRUARY 23, 2022,
PURSUANT TO AN OPEN MEETING DECISION. WRITTEN ORDER ISSUED FEBRUARY
23, 2022.

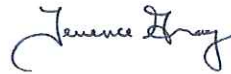
ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD



Ronald T. Gerwatowski, Chairman



Meredith E. Brady, Member



Terrence Gray, Member

