STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTAIONS
ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD

IN RE: THE NARRAGANSETT ELECTRIC COMPANY	**:**	
D/B/A NATIONAL GRID'S NOTICE OF INTENT	**:**	
APPLICATION FOR APPROVAL V-148N	**:**	**DOCKET NO. SB-2015-03**
115KV TRANSMISSION LINE	**:**	
RECONDUCTORING PROJECT	**:**	

DECISION AND ORDER

On June 18, 2015, 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[2] proposes to reconductor[3] approximately 4.2 miles of the existing V-148N line located between the Woonsocket Substation in North Smithfield, Rhode Island and the Washington Substation in Lincoln, Rhode Island. The project includes the replacement of existing conductors with larger conductors capable of carrying more power, the replacement of seven existing wood

[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. The applicant will, accordingly, be licensed to proceed without further review.

[2] The application provides a detailed description of the work to be performed as well as an extensive analysis of the impacts upon the natural and social environments and electromagnetic field levels. At the public hearing, the application and the various parts of the application at issue here were marked as full exhibits, National Grid Exhibit 1A, 1B, and 1C. Additionally, the Board marked the slide presentation as Exhibit 2 and the Response to Data Requests as Exhibit 3.

[3] Reconductoring is the replacement of conductors or an existing transmission line and may involve the replacement or reinforcement of existing towers and/or poles.

structures with six steel structures, and the reinforcement of thirty-one existing steel lattice tower structures to support the new conductors. The project is needed to address reliability issues in Southeastern Massachusetts and Rhode Island that will result from the planned retirement of the Brayton Point power station in June 2017 as determined by the ISO-NE Working Group. As required by the Rules and after public notice published in the local newspaper in each community, the Board held public hearings in North Smithfield and Lincoln.

At the public hearing in North Smithfield, the Company presented two witnesses: Erin Whoriskey, Lead Environmental Scientist at National Grid, and Melissa Kaplan, a project manager of wetland scientists with BSC Group, Inc.,[4] to describe the project and its effects, as set forth in the Application and the Environmental Report, and to respond to inquiries by the Board.

Ms. Whoriskey described the need for and the location of the project and explained the construction process and schedule. She identified the V-148 line as an existing 15-volt transmission line that extends from the Woonsocket Substation in North Smithfield to the Washington Substation in Lincoln.[5] She stated that the 4.3-mile line was originally constructed in the 1920s and upgraded in the 1950s. She described it as being made up of mostly 75-foot steel lattice towers in a right-of-way that ranges between 270 feet to 125 feet in width.[6] In addition to upgrading the line with new conductors capable of carrying more power, Ms. Whoriskey noted, the Company would replace six wooden structures with steel, eliminate one wood structure, reinforce 31 double circuit steel lattice tower structures, and replace the shield wire.[7]

The project was necessary, Ms. Whoriskey explained, to mitigate the potential thermal overload and address reliability issues that may result from the retirement of the Brayton Point

[4] BSC Group Inc. is an environmental consultant.
[5] Hr'g Tr. 6 (Aug. 3, 2015)
[6] *Id.* at 6-8.
[7] *Id.* at 8.

Power Station. She described the various alternatives considered, which included a do nothing alternative, a new parallel overhead line which would require additional tree clearing and environmental impact, and an underground alternative that would be more costly and take longer to construct.[8] Ms. Whoriskey discussed the project sequence timeline, noting that National Grid expected completion of the project by the summer of 2016. She discussed the Company's community outreach that commenced in December 2014, noting that outreach would continue through the life of the project. Finally, she noted that the cost of the project, originally estimated to be $12 million, was less than $7 million as a result of only six structures needing to be replaced.[9]

Ms. Kaplan described the natural and social environment of the project area, mitigation measures, and anticipated impacts. She noted that in addition to performing wetlands delineation, she prepared and submitted the environmental permits for the project and oversaw the environmental report. She described National Grid's program to maintain the right of way and the process for determining the environmental impact of the project.[10] She provided that the social impact was also evaluated. She described the best management practices, which include the use of swamp mats and the use of environmental monitors to ensure compliance with permits and environmental resource protection. Ms. Kaplan opined that the impacts caused by the project will be minimal.[11]

After the Company's presentation ended, the Chairperson solicited public comment; but none was offered.

A second public hearing was held in Lincoln on the same evening. Again, no public comment was offered. Immediately upon conclusion of the public hearing, the Board conducted

[8] *Id.* at 8-9.
[9] *Id.* at 9-10.
[10] Hr'g Tr. 11-13 (Aug. 3, 2015).
[11] *Id.* at 13-14.

an open meeting, which had been properly noticed. The Board found that the project is necessary to avoid thermal overloads under contingency conditions that could result in outages; to comply with industry standards; and to maintain safe, firm, and reliable electric supply to National Grid's customers. It also found that the project will not result in a significant impact to the environment or public health, safety, and welfare. The social and environmental impacts resulting from the construction will be negligible. Moreover, the Board is assured that National Grid will engage in appropriate mitigation measures to minimize any disturbances to vegetation and soil and to the social environment. Board member Kevin Flynn moved that the Board find the project would result in no significant impact to the environment or public health, safety, and welfare and that a license be granted. The motion was seconded by Chairperson Curran and approved.

ACCORDINGLY, it is:

(74) ORDERED:

The Energy Facility Siting Board hereby grants to the Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid a license under R.I. Gen. Laws §42-98-11 to authorize it to reconductor the V-148N 115 kV Transmission Line, as previously described, subject to the Narragansett Electric Company d/b/a National Grid's receipt of all other permits required for the project.

DATED AND EFFECTIVE at Lincoln, Rhode Island on August 3, 2015 pursuant to an open meeting decision. Written Order issued September 22, 2015.

ENERGY FACILITY SITING BOARD

Margaret E. Curran, Esq., Chairperson
Energy Facility Siting Board

Kevin M. Flynn, Associate Director
Division of Planning

Janet Coit, Director*
RI Department of Environmental Management

*Director Coit did not participate in this decision.