

**BEFORE THE  
MARYLAND PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION**

Application of The Potomac Edison \*  
Company for a Certificate of Public \*  
Convenience and Necessity to Rebuild the \*  
Messick Road–Morgan 138 Kilovolt \*  
Transmission Line in Allegany County, \*  
Maryland \*

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

**APPLICATION OF THE POTOMAC EDISON COMPANY  
FOR A CERTIFICATE OF PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY FOR THE  
MESSICK ROAD–MORGAN 138 KV TRANSMISSION LINE REBUILD PROJECT**

May 1, 2026

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The Potomac Edison Company (“Potomac Edison” or the “Company”),<sup>1</sup> a subsidiary of FirstEnergy Corp. (“FirstEnergy”), submits this application (“Application”) for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (“CPCN”) to rebuild the Maryland portion of the Messick Road–Morgan 138 kilovolt (“kV”) transmission line to increase the current-carrying capability (“loadability”) of the line (the “Project”). The Application is submitted in accordance with the Maryland Public Service Commission’s (“Commission”) authority under § 7-207 of the Maryland Annotated Code, Public Utilities Article (“PUA”) and Title 20, Subtitle 79 of the Code of Maryland Regulations (“COMAR”).

## II. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Project, which is needed to ensure the continued reliability of the transmission system in Maryland, consists of rebuilding approximately 16.4 miles of Potomac Edison’s existing 138 kV transmission line in Allegany County, which continues into Morgan County, West Virginia, to increase the loadability of the line and replace structures.<sup>2</sup>

In Maryland, the Project consists of removing 92 wooden structures within the existing transmission corridor and installing new structures to support the new conductors (954 kmil 45/7 ACSR conductor) for the Project. In two locations, the existing right-of-way (“ROW”) will need to be expanded to accommodate the minimum required space to account for horizontal sag of the conductor span (“blowout” areas). The blowout areas will expand the ROW between Structures

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<sup>1</sup> Potomac Edison is an electric company under Maryland law and is regulated by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) as a public utility. *See* Md. Code Ann., Pub. Util. § 7-207(b)(3)(iii).

<sup>2</sup> This Application only pertains to the Maryland portion of the Project, which is approximately 16.4 miles. The Messick Road–Morgan 138 kV Transmission Line rebuild project is proposed for approximately 27.3 miles of the existing transmission corridor, of which approximately 10.9 miles is in Morgan County, West Virginia and is subject to review and approval by the Public Service Commission of West Virginia.

292 to 293 (200 feet wider) and Structures 293 to 295 (95 feet wider), which is approximately 1.4 miles of line length. The Project also involves installing two new structures within the existing ROW (Structure 208 and Structure 291) to avoid expanding the ROW near the C&O Canal National Historical Park and to avoid expanding the ROW near residential houses.

The Project is necessary to ensure continued reliable electric service in Maryland. As a Transmission Owner (“TO”) in the PJM Interconnection, L.L.C. (“PJM”) region, Potomac Edison is obligated to construct, operate, and own transmission facilities designated by PJM in its annual Regional Transmission Expansion Plan (“RTEP”) process. As part of its 2022 RTEP Open Window 1 annual evaluation process, in which PJM studied the anticipated needs of the regional transmission system for the year 2027, PJM identified that the existing Messick Road–Morgan 138 kV line would become overloaded under certain operating conditions in violation of North American Electric Reliability Corporation (“NERC”) reliability standards.<sup>3</sup>

In response, Potomac Edison designed the Project to prevent the reliability criteria violations identified by PJM. The Project was then submitted to PJM for its review and evaluation through the established RTEP process. After conducting the necessary series of RTEP studies, PJM confirmed that the Project addressed the identified reliability criteria violations. As a result, PJM selected the Project for inclusion in the RTEP as a “baseline” reliability upgrade.<sup>4</sup> Based on the Company’s evaluation of these reliability criteria violations, the FirstEnergy Transmission Planning Department has determined that the Project will provide additional reliability and

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<sup>3</sup> NERC reliability standards require that the bulk electric system be designed to operate within applicable thermal and voltage criteria limits, defined in FirstEnergy and PJM Planning Criteria, under various system loading conditions and in consideration of credible outages of elements on the bulk electric system.

<sup>4</sup> A baseline reliability upgrade includes regional and subregional RTEP projects and is driven by ensuring market efficiency criteria, public policy needs, or operational performance requirements (such as fixing congestion issues, short circuit currents, bus voltage drops, and line overloads).

stability benefits beyond resolving the identified reliability criteria violations. For instance, the Project provides Potomac Edison's service area (primarily served from 500 kV transmission corridors) with increased operational flexibility to support local loads by providing additional transmission capacity that interconnects with local distribution substations in Maryland, which are vital for supplying power to industrial, commercial, and residential areas in Allegany County, Maryland. Additionally, by increasing the capability of the existing Messick Road–Morgan transmission corridor, the Project also enhances regional distribution of electricity and provides greater operational flexibility when the grid presents adverse system conditions or is met by planned and unplanned outages.

Potomac Edison now files this Application for Commission approval to construct the Project. In support of this Application, Potomac Edison includes the written direct testimony and supporting exhibits of five witnesses:

**Travis M. Turner**, Engineer IV, Transmission Siting at FirstEnergy Service Company ("FirstEnergy Service Co."), provides an introduction of Potomac Edison's four other witnesses, summarizes how the Project meets Maryland's regulatory requirements, describes Potomac Edison's outreach to the public, and provides the estimated capital cost and annual operating cost for the Project, as well as the estimated capital and operating costs of alternative routes evaluated by the Company.

**Jacquelyn L. Lojek**, Manager, Transmission Planning of the Transmission Planning and Protection Department at FirstEnergy Service Co., identifies the electrical need for the Project, its benefits, and the consequences of deferring the Project, and describes the alternatives to the Project that were considered. She also describes the FirstEnergy Transmission Load Connection Process and the PJM RTEP process.

**Richard A. Hoch, Jr.**, Senior Manager/Senior Consultant – Electric Grid Infrastructure Services Group at Sargent & Lundy, LLC, describes the design and engineering for the Project, its safety and design standards, a description of the right-of-way clearance, preparation, and maintenance, as well as the Project's construction activities and impacts, including vegetation maintenance activities and practices.

**Amy M. Ruzala**, Supervisor of Transmission Permitting, FirstEnergy Service Co., describes the route evaluation process, provides a description of the environment and land use features, including any potential impacts to these features, and describes the

visual impact of the Project, sponsors the permit matrix applicable to the Project’s site, provides an overview of agency outreach and correspondence, and sponsors the environmental studies conducted for the Project, including **Attachment 2** to the Application, which is the Project’s Environmental Review Document.

**Justin P. Marx**, Manager, Transmission Rates and Regulatory Affairs, FirstEnergy Service Company, provides an overview of the determination and allocation of revenue requirements associated with the Project and an estimate of the Project’s impact on customers’ bills.

**Attachment 1** to this Application contains a cross-reference chart for Maryland transmission line CPCN regulations. As noted above, **Attachment 2** to the Application contains the Project’s Environmental Review Document (“ERD”). **Attachment 3** to the Application contains the Project’s Alternative Route Analysis. The Project’s in-service date is June 15, 2029. If this Application is granted, the Company anticipates needing to begin construction of the Project in Spring 2028 to meet the in-service date. After consideration of this Application and the supporting testimony and exhibits, the Applicant respectfully requests that the Commission approve this Application.

### **III. PURPOSE AND JUSTIFICATION OF PROJECT UNDER COMAR 20.79.04.01**

As required by COMAR 20.79.04.01, the information presented below shows the need for the Project, justification for the Project, consequences of not approving the Project, and cost-effectiveness of the Project, as well as the Project’s impact on the economies of the State.

#### **A. An Explanation of the Need for the Project in Meeting Demands for Service.<sup>5</sup>**

The Project is needed to meet the demands for service in Maryland and the surrounding region. The Messick Road–Morgan 138 kV transmission line corridor serves regional demand needs for Allegany County, Maryland and Mineral County, West Virginia. As discussed in the

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<sup>5</sup> See COMAR 20.79.04.01A(1) (An application for a proposed transmission line or modification to an existing transmission line shall include an “explanation of the need for the project in meeting demands for service”).

Direct Testimony of Jacquelyn L. Lojek, PJM identified projected thermal violations of the existing Messick Road–Morgan 138 kV transmission line under NERC Category P2 conditions.<sup>6</sup> The NERC Category P2 contingency was identified following a faulted 500 kV circuit breaker at Bedington Substation, creating an outage on the Bedington–Black Oak 500 kV transmission line. The FirstEnergy Transmission Planning Department reviewed and verified this violation. This Project resolves the identified NERC Category P2 violation and increases loadability for the Messick Road–Morgan transmission corridor and the customers served by this line, and supports Potomac Edison’s broader 138 kV transmission system.

**B. A Description of the Effect of the Project on System Reliability and Stability.<sup>7</sup>**

By increasing the loadability of the line, the Project helps assure future reliability of Potomac Edison’s transmission system and allows additional transmission capacity into Maryland. The Project provides operational flexibility for the transmission system that was identified to be compromised by events resulting in the loss of multiple transmission elements, in particular NERC Category P2 contingencies. Because the Company’s 138 kV transmission lines connect Extra High Voltage (“EHV”) transmission substations to local distribution substations, the Messick Road–Morgan transmission corridor is vital for supplying power to industrial, commercial, and residential customer needs and areas over medium distances. The Project also enhances the stability of the grid by providing greater operational flexibility that will assist both PJM (as the transmission grid operator) and Potomac Edison (as the transmission owner) in withstanding and recovering from planned and unplanned disruptions. As such, the Project would enhance system

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<sup>6</sup> NERC Category P2 contingencies are events resulting in the loss of multiple transmission elements; a NERC P2 contingency is a faulted circuit breaker.

<sup>7</sup> See COMAR 20.79.04.01A(2) (An application for a proposed transmission line or modification to an existing transmission line shall include a “description of the effect of the project on system stability and reliability”).

reliability and stability of the transmission system that serves Maryland, including the Potomac Edison customers in Allegany County, Maryland that are served through the Messick Road Substation.

**C. Description of the Consequences if the Project is Not Approved.<sup>8</sup>**

As described in the Direct Testimony of Jacquelyn L. Lojek, if the Project does not proceed as planned, the reliability of Potomac Edison’s 138 kV transmission system network serving Allegany County and the surrounding area will be at risk due to compromised infrastructure, decreased transmission capacity, and decreased reliability of transmission service for Maryland customers.

**D. An Explanation of the Cost Effectiveness of the Project, Including an Estimate of Capital Cost and Annual Operating Cost.<sup>9</sup>**

The estimated total cost of the Project is approximately \$52,270,000.<sup>10</sup> Of this amount, approximately \$1,235,000 is for substation upgrades and approximately \$51,035,000 pertains to the transmission line upgrades. The estimated operating cost for the Maryland portion is approximately \$23,775,000.<sup>11</sup>

Information regarding the cost-effectiveness of the Project is discussed more fully in the Direct Testimony of Travis M. Turner and the Direct Testimony of Jacquelyn L. Lojek. As

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<sup>8</sup> See COMAR 20.79.04.01A(3) (An application for a proposed transmission line or modification to an existing transmission line shall include a “description of the consequences if the project is delayed or not approved”).

<sup>9</sup> See COMAR 20.79.04.01A(4) (An application for a proposed transmission line or modification to an existing transmission line shall include an “explanation of the cost effectiveness of the project, including an estimate of capital cost and annual operating cost”).

<sup>10</sup> The cost of the proposed upgrades in West Virginia is approximately \$38,969,000. The total approximate cost for both Maryland and West Virginia project upgrades is \$91,239,000.

<sup>11</sup> Operating costs are estimated based on standard costs associated with transmission line maintenance and vegetation schedules. These costs do not include any emergency costs.

described in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala, by utilizing the existing transmission corridor through a rebuild project, the Project lowers (i) the footprint of socioeconomic and environmental impacts, and (ii) purchase costs related to acquiring property rights for the Project, as well as related legal and permitting costs.

**E. A Description of the Impact of the Project on the Economies of the State.**<sup>12</sup>

The Project will positively contribute to the economies of the State by, among other things, helping ensure the reliability of Maryland’s transmission system and the continued reliable provision of electric service to Maryland customers. Furthermore, as described in detail in the Direct Testimony of Travis M. Turner, the Company expects that Allegany County, Maryland will benefit economically. The real estate property tax for the Project is estimated to be approximately \$396,000.<sup>13</sup> As addressed in the Direct Testimony of Richard A. Hoch, Jr., Potomac Edison expects a small increase in taxes and spending associated with the estimated 65-100 workers required for the Project’s construction workforce. The Company will provide opportunities for local companies to supply labor and some materials, as needed by the construction contractor. Additional workers could be required based on outage constraints or compressed work schedules. Finally, the Direct Testimony of Justin P. Marx provides an overview of the Project’s current estimated retail rate impact on Maryland customers (\$0.25 per month).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See COMAR 20.79.04.01A(5) (An application for a proposed transmission line or modification to an existing transmission line shall include a “description of the impact of the project on the economies of the State”).

<sup>13</sup> This estimate is calculated based on the approximate taxes due in the year after the in-service date and differs from the actual property tax levied on Potomac Edison because of several factors such as values of real and personal property, operating income, and other factors.

<sup>14</sup> The Direct Testimony of Justin P. Marx also outlines the cost-allocation methodology in accordance with the PJM Operating Agreement for regional projects set forth in Schedule 12 of the Open Access Transmission Tariff (“OATT”).

#### IV. DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT UNDER COMAR 20.79.04.02

As required by COMAR 20.79.04.02, the information presented below describes in detail the features of the Project.

##### A. COMAR 20.79.04.02A: Description of Engineering and Construction Features of the Project.

A complete description of the engineering and construction features of the Project, including a comparison of the current transmission line design specifications and corresponding changes, is contained in the Direct Testimony of Richard A. Hoch, Jr. attached to this Application. The Project rebuilds the existing single-circuit 138 kV transmission line to increase loadability by upgrading the existing 138 kV conductors on suspension or dead-end steel structures. An overview of the construction and engineering features in accordance with COMAR 20.79.04.02A follows herein.

<b>COMAR 20.79.04.02A: Engineering and Construction Features</b>	
(1) <u>Width, Length, and Total Acreage of the Right-of-Way in Maryland</u>	Approximately 16.4 miles of 150-foot ROW   approximately 257 acres in total
(2) <u>Line Voltage</u>	138 kV
(3) <u>Number of Circuits</u>	Single Circuit
(4) <u>Number of Circuits per structure</u>	One Circuit per structure
(5) <u>Structure Type and Dimensions</u>	Self-supporting steel pole H-frames; 3-pole steel structures; or steel monopole structures, in a dead-end structure (depicted in <b>Exhibit RAH-3, RAH-4, and RAH-7</b> ) or suspension attachment (depicted in <b>Exhibits RAH-1, RAH-2, RAH-5, and RAH-6</b> ).

	The average height of the structures is approximately 105 feet based on preliminary line design.
(6) <u>Conductor Configuration and Size</u>	954 KCM, 45/7 aluminum conductor, steel reinforced (“ACSR”), also known as “rail”
(7) <u>Nominal Capacity (MVA)</u>	308/376/424 MVA SN/SE/SLD and 349/445/481 MVA WN/WE/WLD ratings
(8) <u>Nominal Length of Span between Structures</u>	Approximately 920 feet (average span)

### ***Proposed Line Design***

The Project consists of rebuilding approximately 16.4 miles of a 138 kV transmission line in Maryland within existing 150-foot-wide transmission ROW.<sup>15</sup> The Project uses design configurations for the wood pole structures and self-supporting steel structures similar to those that are currently used for the structures in the existing transmission corridor, except for changes in the height of the structures.

### ***Right-of-Way Requirements***

The Project uses the existing 150-foot-wide ROW along the Messick Road–Morgan transmission line corridor. However, there are two areas where the ROW must be expanded to accommodate conductor blowout, which is the space required for conductor sway clearance. The blowout areas will expand the ROW between Structures 292 to 293 (200 feet wider) and Structures

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<sup>15</sup> The total length of Maryland and West Virginia components of the project upgrades is approximately 27.0 miles.

293 to 295 (95 feet wider), which is approximately 1.4 miles of line length. The Project's ROW will be approximately 257 acres in total.

### ***Design Features and Construction Safety Practices***

The Project is designed to meet or exceed National Electrical Safety Code ("NESC") requirements. NESC requirements informed the choice of line tension, which will be approximately 40% of the conductor's rated breaking strength for the loading distribution in this Project. The Project will also meet or exceed the NESC design clearances for sag conditions for its entire length. The Project structures will also provide sufficient clearances between the three conductor phases to allow for servicing and maintenance while the conductors are energized (referred to as "live" line work).

The Project will also meet or exceed the conductor-to-ground clearances set by NESC, which are based upon terrain or land use features traversed by the existing transmission corridor. Porcelain or toughened glass insulators will be used for all structures in the Project. Furthermore, galvanized steel or aluminum will be used to support conductors through the full range of operating temperatures. Further details on design features, including conductor sag parameters, can be found in the Direct Testimony of Richard A. Hoch, Jr.

Finally, project activities such as ROW clearing, pole foundation installation, and subsequent rehabilitation will conform to all applicable state requirements, as well as the appropriate permit forms submitted to the Maryland Department of the Environment and, as necessary, to Allegany County officials. Potomac Edison will employ Good Utility Practice and efficient engineering design and construction practices in developing the Project.

### *Climate Change and Severe Weather Conditions*<sup>16</sup>

In the last decade, incorporating strategies for climate resilience has become an important priority for businesses, states, and municipalities. PUA § 7-207(e)(3) requires the Commission to give due consideration to the effects of climate change on an overhead transmission line based on the best available scientific information recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, prior to taking final action on an application.

Extreme weather events due to climate change are anticipated to influence the reliability of overhead transmission lines. As provided in Section 7 of **Attachment 2** (Environmental Review Document) to this Application, the Company has designed the Project using 2023 NESC guidance, including NESC Rule 250B, which pertains to the “Heavy Loading” condition and NESC Rule 250C, which pertains to the “Extreme Wind Loading” condition. Both of these standards have been incorporated into the design of the Project and address the “loads” on conductors and supporting structures to account for external pressures created through the weight of ice and wind pressure in light of the weight of the conductors. By integrating NESC clearances as such, the Project has been designed to account for safety of unknown or unanticipated contingencies. Additionally, all Project structures will be protected from lightning strikes with the use of shield wire and optical guide wires located above the phase conductors.

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<sup>16</sup> See PUA § 7-207(e)(3) (The Commission must give due consideration to “the effect of climate change on the generating station, overhead transmission line, or qualified generator lead line based on the best available scientific information recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.”).

### *Vegetation Management*

The Direct Testimony of Richard A. Hoch, Jr. provides a detailed description of the vegetation plan for the Project ROW. The Project ROW will be maintained in accordance with FirstEnergy Service Co.'s Transmission Vegetation Management Program ("TVMP").

**B. COMAR 20.79.04.02.B: Description of Property Acquired or Property Right to Be Acquired.**

As described by Witness Ruzsala, the Project will utilize the existing transmission line ROW associated with the existing 138 kV transmission infrastructure. However, there are two areas where the ROW must be expanded to accommodate conductor blowout, which is the space required for conductor sway clearance. As such, Potomac Edison is pursuing additional easements with property owners to account for conductor movement under blowout conditions.

**C. COMAR 20.79.04.02.C: Description of Access Roads for Construction or Maintenance.**

As described in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzsala, construction access routes will be minimized to the extent possible. For example, the Company will use existing and proposed access roads within and adjacent to the ROW. The proposed locations of access roads associated with the Project are depicted on **Exhibit AMR-7**, pending final design revisions. Potential road widening and clearing associated with the access roads is expected to be minor. The Company typically uses temporary access roads. In the event that new access routes are required for construction, the routes will be re-graded to as near pre-construction contours as practicable and re-vegetated as appropriate upon completion. For further information on construction-related management practices of existing or new access roads, please see the Direct Testimony of Richard A. Hoch, Jr.

**D. COMAR 20.79.04.02.D: Location and Identification of Sites from Which the Project Would Clearly Be Visible.**

A Visual Simulation of the design changes of the Project has been prepared for the Project and is included as **Exhibit AMR-2** to Amy M. Ruzala's Direct Testimony. The Visual Simulation evaluated features using ArcGIS to determine what features may be impacted by the Project, and then a second viewshed analysis was incorporated based on the proposed height increase of the structures associated with the Project. Table 1 of **Exhibit AMR-5** contains a list of features, such as parks, historic sites and landmarks, scenic rivers, that have a possibility of being in the zone of potential influence. These features are also shown on **Exhibit AMR-1**. Both exhibits are appended to the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala. Details of the evaluation methodology for the Visual Simulation may be found in the Direct Testimony of Witness Ruzala.

Based on the Company's evaluation of visual impacts and because the Project involves rebuilding structures within the existing transmission line corridor, the Project will have an insignificant visual impact on historic resources. Nevertheless, after the Project's design is finalized, the Company will consult with the Maryland Historical Trust to determine the appropriate methodological and investigative approach for historic resources or potential viewshed impacts to the same. Overall, because the structures being replaced will be located within the existing transmission line corridor, visual impact is estimated to be low or negligible.

**E. COMAR 20.79.04.02.E: Construction Within the 100-Year Floodplain.**

As provided in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala, the existing Messick Road–Morgan transmission corridor crosses the 100-year floodplain designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency ("FEMA") associated with the Potomac River and Town Creek, as well as the floodplains of smaller tributaries that do not have FEMA-designated floodplains. The Company will secure applicable permits and approvals prior to construction. A table of the

associated permits required for the Project may be found in **Table 5** (Anticipated Permits, Approvals, and Consultations) in **Exhibit AMR-5** (Tables) appended to the Direct Testimony of Witness Ruzala. The status of the applicable permits is provided in **Exhibit AMR-9**, appended to the Direct Testimony of Witness Ruzala.

**F. COMAR 20.79.04.02.F: Location and Identification of Public Airports Within One Mile of the Line.**

There are no public airports within one mile of the Project. The Company does not expect the Project will hazard the airport's flight operations. Nevertheless, upon the finalization of the Project's design, the Company will coordinate with the Federal Aviation Administration ("FAA") with regard to any FAA markers that may be required due to the proximity to the Greater Cumberland Regional Airport (approximately 1.5 miles west of the western terminus of the Project). The Company also intends to file the appropriate documentation with Maryland Aviation Administration to ensure the Project complies with applicable regulations and project review.

**G. COMAR 20.79.04.02.G: Depiction on Topographical Map.**

The required maps are included with this Application in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala, **Exhibit AMR-1a** (Constraints Mapping – Topographic).

**V. INFORMATION ON ALTERNATIVE ROUTES UNDER COMAR 20.79.04.03 AND PUA § 7-209**

PUA § 7-209 and COMAR 20.79.04.03 require that for a new greenfield transmission line, the applicant must examine construction and routing alternatives, including the use of existing transmission line corridors. COMAR 20.79.04.03(B) states that "[f]or modifications to existing transmission lines," such as this rebuild Project, "alternative routes need not be evaluated." Even though these requirements do not apply to this Project, the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala provides an assessment of the development of potential and alternative routes. Additionally, **Attachment 3** (Alternative Route Analysis) to the Application contains Potomac Edison's

evaluation of alternative routes for this Project and the West Virginia component of the Project. As Witness Ruzala explains, the Company evaluated the existing transmission corridor and two alternative routes. The Company evaluated routing constraints, such as the location of 138 kV infrastructure; required ROW width; urban features such as cemeteries; potential hazardous waste issues; residences, churches, schools, barns, and other major structures; topographic features, such as streams, wetlands, forests, floodplains, and geological features; conservation areas, such as agricultural easements, archeological and historic sites; and locations of and potential impacts to threatened or endangered species. The Company also considered the cost of new right-of-way versus maintenance of an existing transmission corridor, as well as the potential impacts to present and future land use. In the Company's analysis, the alternative routes were rejected in favor of the use of the existing 138 kV transmission corridor. Using the existing ROW reduces costs and environmental impacts associated with acquiring new property rights, access routes, and the increase in development in the surrounding area.

## **VI. ENVIRONMENTAL DESCRIPTION, IMPACT, AND PROPOSED MITIGATION PLAN INFORMATION FOR THE PROJECT UNDER COMAR 20.79.04.04**

### **A. COMAR 20.79.04.04.A: General Description of the Physical, Biological, Aesthetic, and Cultural Features and Conditions of the Site and Adjacent Areas.**

The Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala provides a general description of the physical, biological, aesthetic, and cultural features of the Project. Witness Ruzala's testimony also addresses the features and conditions of the Project site.

### **B. COMAR 20.79.04.04.B: Summary of the Environmental and Socioeconomic Effects of the Construction and Operation of the Project.**

A detailed summary of the potential environmental impacts of the Project is found in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala and **Attachment 2** (Environmental Review Document) to this Application. Witness Ruzala's Direct Testimony also provides an overview of the

socioeconomic effects of the construction and operation of the Project, and the Direct Testimony of Travis M. Turner provides an overview of the tax and labor impacts of the Project in Maryland.

**C. COMAR 20.79.04.04.C: A Copy of All Studies of the Environmental Impact of the Project.**

**Attachment 2** (Environmental Review Document) and the corresponding exhibits to the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala listed below contain all copies of the studies regarding the Project's environmental impact:

<b>Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala</b>	
<u>Exhibit AMR-2</u>	Visual Simulation of Line Changes
<u>Exhibit AMR-5</u>	Tables (including recreational and cultural resources, field delineated streams, field delineated wetlands, and prime farmland of statewide importance)
<u>Exhibit AMR-6</u>	Wetland Delineation and Stream Identification Report <sup>17</sup>
<u>Exhibit AMR-8</u>	Zoning Map

**D. COMAR 20.79.04.04.D: A Statement of the Ability to Conform to Applicable Environmental Standards.**

The Company confirms that the Project will conform to all applicable environmental requirements. A list of anticipated permits and approvals for the Project is provided in **Exhibit AMR-5** (Tables), **Table 5** (Anticipated Permits, Approvals, and Consultations) to the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala.

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<sup>17</sup> The Wetland Delineation and Stream Identification Report is also contained in **Appendix B** to **Attachment 2** (ERD).

## **VII. PROJECT'S SATISFACTION OF FACTORS UNDER PUA § 7-207**

As described below, the Project meets all factors that the Commission is required to consider in evaluating a transmission line CPCN application under PUA § 7-207.

### **A. PUA § 7-207(e)(1): Recommendation of Governing Bodies of Each County or Municipal Corporation Where Proposed Transmission Line is To Be Located.**

Potomac Edison reviewed the Project and permitting requirements with Allegany County agencies on May 1, 2024. The Company developed a virtual engagement program, which became available on March 31, 2025. The Company notified and invited local and state public officials in Allegany County to engage with the virtual platform. As part of the virtual online engagement platform, attendees were provided the opportunity to review information and provide comments on the Project. The virtual open house platform included presentation slides and offered customers information regarding how to contact Potomac Edison with questions, concerns, or comments. In addition to the outreach described above, the Company engaged with state, local, and federal agencies by letter or online correspondence seeking review and input on the Project. A list and description of the input solicited is provided in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala and copies of the correspondence are appended to the ERD.

### **B. PUA § 7-207(e)(2): The Effect of the Transmission Line on (i) the Stability and Reliability of the Transmission System; (ii) Economics; (iii) Esthetics; (iv) Historic Sites; (v) Aviation Safety; and (vi) Air and Water Pollution.**

Please see **Section II** (Executive Summary) and **Section III** (Purpose and Justification of the Project) of this Application, *supra*, for a description of factors (i) and (ii) of PUA § 7-207(e)(2). **Section VI** (Environmental Information) of this Application, *supra*, addresses factors (iii) through (vi) of PUA § 7-207(e)(2). A detailed description of the resources in the Project's site and vicinity, including the Company's plan to use Best Management Practices to control dust and construction vehicle equipment to minimize the temporary impacts on air quality and comply with applicable

standards, is provided in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala. A table providing the estimated capital costs and estimated operating costs of the Project and the two greenfield alternative routes is provided in the Direct Testimony of Travis M. Turner.

**C. PUA § 7-207(e)(3): The Effect of Climate Change on the Overhead Transmission Line Based on the Best Available Scientific Information Recognized by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.**

As previously described in **Section IV** (Detailed Description of Project) of this Application, the Project will use best available design specifications and materials to withstand severe climate and weather conditions, which is addressed in more detail in **Attachment 2** (ERD) to this Application.

**D. PUA § 7-207(f)(1): The Need to Meet Existing and Future Demand for Service**  
**Sections II** (Executive Summary) and **III** (Purpose and Justification of the Project) of this Application provide an overview of the need for the transmission line to meet existing and future demand for service. The Direct Testimony of Jacquelyn L. Lojek provides a detailed description of the need for the Project.

**E. PUA § 7-207(f)(2): The Commission Shall Require as an Ongoing Condition of the CPCN That an Applicant Comply with: (i) All Relevant Obligations Imposed by PJM Interconnection LLC; and (ii) All Obligations Imposed by NERC and FERC.**

Potomac Edison agrees to comply with (i) all relevant agreements with PJM, or its successors, related to the ongoing operation and maintenance of the overhead transmission line; and (ii) all obligations imposed by NERC and FERC related to the ongoing operation and maintenance of the overhead transmission line.

**F. PUA § 7-207(f)(3): The Commission Shall Require the Applicant to Identify Whether the Transmission Line is to be Constructed on: (i) An Existing**

**Brownfields Site; (ii) Property That is Subject to an Existing Easement; or (iii) A Site Where a Tower or Structure to Support an Overhead Transmission Line Exists.**

As described in the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala and provided in the maps appended to her testimony in **Exhibit AMR-1** (Constraint Mapping-Topographic and Aerial), the Project will use the existing transmission corridor with the exception of two areas of the ROW (comprising approximately 1.4 miles in length)<sup>18</sup> that will need to be expanded to accommodate conductor blowout.

**G. PUA § 7-207(g)(1): The Commission May Not Authorize the Construction of an Overhead Transmission Line Unless the Federal Aviation Administration and the Maryland Aviation Administration determine the Construction will Not Constitute a Hazard to Air Navigation**

As described in **Section IV.F.** of this Application and the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala, there are no public airports within one mile of the transmission line. The Company has submitted design information to the FAA, which is currently still under review, and will seek the appropriate review and documentation from the Maryland Aviation Administration on the same. As noted in the Direct Testimony of Richard A. Hoch, Jr., after the Project's design is finalized, the Company will coordinate with the FAA to receive a determination of the final number of shield wires that may require FAA markers due to the height and proximity of these wires to Greater Cumberland Regional Airport.

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<sup>18</sup> The blowout areas will expand the ROW between Structures 292 to 293 (200 feet wider) and Structures 293 to 295 (95 feet wider).

**VIII. GENERAL FILING REQUIREMENTS UNDER COMAR 20.79.01.06**

**A. COMAR 20.79.01.06A: Name of the Applicant.**

The name of the Applicant is The Potomac Edison Company.

**B. COMAR 20.79.01.06.B: Address of the Principal Business Office of the Applicant.**

The address of the principal business office of Applicant is: 10802 Bower Ave, Williamsport, MD 21795.

**C. COMAR 20.79.01.06.C: Persons Authorized to Receive Notices and Communication.**

The names, titles, addresses, and email addresses of the people authorized to receive notices and communications with respect to the Application are:

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**D. COMAR 20.79.01.06.E: Location at Which a Copy of the Application May be Inspected by the Public.**

A copy of the Application will be filed with the Commission, and as such, it may be accessed by the public online through the Commission's website ([www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us)). A copy of the Application will also be posted on the Company's website

[https://www.firstenergycorp.com/about/transmission\\_projects/maryland/messick-road-morgan.html](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/about/transmission_projects/maryland/messick-road-morgan.html)). The public may also inspect a copy of this Application at the following library:

**Allegany County – South Cumberland Public Library**  
100 Seymour St, Cumberland, MD 21502

**E. COMAR 20.79.01.06.F: Local, State, and Federal Government Agencies Having Authority to Approve or Disapprove the Construction or Operation of the Project.**

In addition to the certificate sought through the CPCN Application herein, the Company has provided a list of permitting authorities having oversight of the Project's construction in **Table 5 of Exhibit AMR-5** (Tables), and a summary of the status of the permit approvals is provided in **Exhibit AMR-9** attached to the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala. Copies of the letters and responses received from local, state, and Federal government agencies may also be found in **Exhibit AMR-3** attached to the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala, and **Appendix A of Attachment 2** (ERD) to this Application. All applicable permits and approvals required for the construction and operation of the Project will be obtained from these agencies.<sup>19</sup>

**F. COMAR 20.79.01.06H: Information Required on Project Need and Justification for Transmission Lines.**

**Section III** (Purpose and Justification of the Project) of this Application provides the required information under COMAR 20.79.04.01 for transmission line facilities.

**G. COMAR 20.79.01.06I: Information Required on Project Description and Alternative Routes Considered.**

**Section IV** (Detailed Description of the Project) of this Application provides the required information under COMAR 20.79.04.02. The Project is a modification to an existing transmission

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<sup>19</sup> In addition to the entities provided above, the West Virginia portions of the Project are the subject of a separate siting application filed with the Public Service Commission of West Virginia. *See supra* n.2.

line corridor. Therefore, the requirement to describe and evaluate alternative routes under COMAR 20.79.04.03 does not apply. Nevertheless, **Section V** (Information on Alternative Routes) and **Attachment 3** (Alternative Route Analysis) of this Application and the Direct Testimony of Amy M. Ruzala provides an overview of the route selection and the alternatives analysis conducted by the Company. The Direct Testimony of Travis M. Turner provides the estimated capital and operating costs of the evaluated alternative routes.

#### **H. COMAR 20.79.01.06.J: An Implementation Schedule for the Project.**

The in-service date for the Project is June 15, 2029. To meet this in-service date, construction is scheduled to begin in or about Spring 2028, pending Commission approval of the Application.

#### **I. COMAR 20.79.01.06K: Environmental, Natural Resources, and Socioeconomic Information Required for Transmission Line Projects.**

**Section VI** (Environmental Information) of this Application provides the required information under COMAR 20.79.04 for transmission line facilities.

### **IX. CONCLUSION**

Based on the foregoing, Potomac Edison requests that the Maryland Public Service Commission review and approve this Application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity as in the public interest for the siting and construction of the Maryland portion of the Messick Road–Morgan 138 kV Rebuild Project, as described herein and in the supporting documents attached hereto and accompanying this Application, and grant any additional authorizations, waivers, approvals, or other relief as may be necessary to authorize the construction of the Project.

Respectfully Submitted,

/s/ C. S. Gunderson

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Ananya G. Sinha

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*Attorneys for The Potomac Edison  
Company*

**VERIFICATION REQUIRED BY COMAR 20.79.02.01**

State of Maryland            )  
                                          )  
Town of Oakland            )

I, Donald J. McGettigan, Vice President, Operations for West Virginia and Maryland of The Potomac Edison Company (“Potomac Edison” or the “Company”), on behalf of the Company, being duly sworn, affirm that the matters and facts set forth in the Application Of The Potomac Edison Company for a Certificate Of Public Convenience and Necessity for the Messick Road-Morgan 138 kV Transmission Line Rebuild Project are true and correct to the best of my information, knowledge, and belief.



---

Donald J. McGettigan, Vice President, Operations  
West Virginia and Maryland  
The Potomac Edison Company

Taken, sworn to and subscribed before me this <sup>th</sup>27 day of April, 2026.



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Notary Public



My commission expires on the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that, pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Pub. Util. § 7-207(c) and COMAR 20.79.02.02, the foregoing Application of The Potomac Edison Company for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity was forwarded via email, or by U.S. mail if an email address was not available, to the following:

Commissioner David J. Caporale, President  
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701 Kelly Road  
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Pursuant to Md. Code Ann., Pub. Util. § 7-207(c) and COMAR 20.79.02.02, a letter notifying all owners of land or owners of adjacent land of the foregoing Application of The Potomac Edison Company for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity, attached hereto, was provided to the following via U.S. first-class mail, postage prepaid:

William D. Adams 12624 Ruppenkamp Rd SE Cumberland, MD 21502	Steven Thomas Eastman 185 Lowes Way Pasadena, MD 21122	Gary L. Holtz 10037 Pleasant View Dr Hagerstown, MD 21710
Shaun P. Appel 13800 Bear Hill Rd SE Oldtown, MD 21555	William H. Evans 13217 Moores Hallow Rd Cumberland, MD 21502	Gary A. Irons 13305 Irons Mountain Rd SE Cumberland, MD 21502
At Last Hunt Club Inc. 14233 Rinehart Rd Smithsburg, MD 21783	Tara N. Facha 12603 Limestone Rd Cumberland, MD 21502	Lawrence R. Kessel 66 Cutoff Rd Keyser, WV 26726
Rignal W. Baldwin Jr. & Mary C. Baldwin 1100 W Lake Ave Baltimore, MD 21210	Flo Group 1521 Azalea Rd Mobile, AL 36693	John S. Knippenberg, Jr & Todd R. Knippenberg 5500 Holmes Run Pkwy. Apt 311
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*/s/ C. S. Gunderson*

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*Attorney for The Potomac Edison  
Company*

Via First-Class Mail

May 1, 2026

BEFORE THE MARYLAND PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Case No. \_\_\_\_\_

*In the Matter of the Application of The Potomac Edison Company for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity to Rebuild the Messick Road-Morgan  
138 Kilovolt Transmission Line*

Pursuant to Public Utilities Article Section 7-207(c) of the Annotated Code of Maryland and Code of Maryland Regulations Section 20.79.02.02B, The Potomac Edison Company (“Potomac Edison”) hereby provides you with notice of Potomac Edison’s filing with the Maryland Public Service Commission (“PSC”) on May 1, 2026, of an application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity (“CPCN”) to rebuild a single-circuit 138 kV overhead transmission line on the existing Messick Road-Morgan 138 kV transmission line in Allegany County, Maryland (the “Application”) for the Messick Road-Morgan Rebuild Project (the “Project”).

A copy of the Application is available for inspection on the PSC’s website, [www.psc.state.md.us](http://www.psc.state.md.us), by clicking on the “Case/Maillog Search” link on the PSC website homepage (<https://webpscxb.psc.state.md.us/DMS/home>), entering “\_####\_” in the Search bar, and then clicking on the link to the Application filing (Docket Entry No. “1”) in the docket for the above-captioned case.

A physical copy of the Application is also available for inspection and copying at the following public library:

Allegany County Public Library  
South Cumberland Branch  
100 Seymour St.  
Cumberland, MD 21502

For additional information about the Project, please visit the Project website at: [https://www.firstenergycorp.com/about/transmission\\_projects/maryland/messick-road-morgan.html](https://www.firstenergycorp.com/about/transmission_projects/maryland/messick-road-morgan.html).