

NEPA ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

For the

Commonwealth of PA Middle
Mile Broadband Project
Cameron County, Clearfield County,
Clinton County, Elk County, Jefferson
County, Lycoming County, McKean
County, Potter County, Tioga County, and
Warren County, Pennsylvania

Prepared for

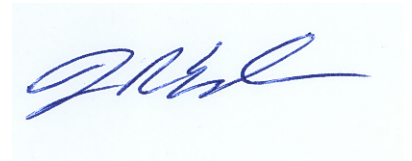
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PSI has completed an EA for the Commonwealth of PA Middle Mile Broadband Project, in general compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the NTIA BTOP EA Guidance protocol dated February 4, 2010. The report has been prepared for the Pennsylvania Office of Public Safety Radio Services (OPRS) and NTIA.

The OPRS Middle Mile Broadband project construction activities include the construction of 6 new towers (to replace existing towers that did not have the structural stability for the new antenna and equipment), the replacement of equipment at the base of 9 existing towers, equipment upgrades at another 51 existing tower sites, and 43 micro cell upgrades. The microcell upgrades and 51 tower upgrades will include the replacement of antennas and pole mounted equipment, with no ground disturbance. The tower sites are located in ten counties including Cameron County, Clearfield County, Clinton County, Elk County, Jefferson County, Lycoming County, McKean County, Potter County, Tioga County, and Warren County, Pennsylvania.

The purpose of the proposed project is to add bandwidth throughout Pennsylvania's unserved and underserved northern tier available for anchor institutions and last mile providers seeking to link into the middle mile backbone. The microcell upgrades and 51 tower upgrades will include the replacement of antennas or pole mounted equipment, with no ground disturbance. Other alternatives were considered but were eliminated from analysis because they would be costlier as well as potentially produce greater environmental impacts.

1.1 Summary of Environmental Consequences

Based on the information obtained and reviewed by PSI to date, the three planned actions of construction of 6 new towers, equipment being constructed at the base of 9 existing towers, equipment upgrades at 51 tower sites, and 43 micro pole modifications, is expected to have no significant effects as summarized below.

Resource Areas	Direct Effects	Indirect Effects
Noise	No significant	No significant
Air Quality	No significant	No significant
Geology and Soils	No significant	No significant
Water Resources	No	No significant
Biological Resources	No	No
Historic and Cultural Resources	No (final pending)	No (final pending)
Aesthetic and Visual Resources	No	No significant
Land Use	No	No significant
Infrastructure	No	No
Socioeconomic Resources	No	No
Human Health and Safety	No	No

The “no significant effects” are summarized below with “no effects” presented in section 6 of this report.

Noise and Air Quality

Air quality at the proposed Commonwealth of PA Middle Mile Broadband Project would not be adversely impacted by the installation of the generators. The land owners have approved the installation of new generators.

Based on limited generator operation, absence of long term human occupancy, existing and new generators complying with US EPA regulations, and OPRS’s plan to follow Executive Order 13514, air quality and noise impacts are not considered to be significant. No additional generators are being added as part of the project. Therefore the project will have no significant direct or significant indirect effects on air quality or noise.

Geology and Soils

The proposed project is entirely within the right-of-way of the existing lease areas or compounds. The surrounding site usage is generally wooded land with limited commercial and residential use. Only CLEA-11 has adjoining agricultural use. Compound expansion is limited to 9 sites with expansion ranging from approximately 1,600 square feet to 3,000 square feet with a total area of approximately 18,213 square feet (0.42 acres). Eight sites including CLEA-11 have prime farm land soils in the site vicinity. Based on the current sites usage and limited project foot print (less than 0.5 acres), the project will have no significant direct effects on geology and soils.

Based on the limited project foot print (less than 0.5 acres), the project will have no significant indirect effects on geology and soils.

Water Resources

Although hydric soils are located in the vicinity of some sites and a wetland area appears located within 300 feet of TIOG-01 site, no wetland areas were observed on any of the sites. Therefore the project will have no direct effects on wetlands or other water resources. No permits are required from the Army Corp of Engineers.

Based on the limited project foot print (less than 0.5 acres) and the above findings, the project will have no significant indirect effects wetlands or water resources.

Aesthetic and Visual Resources and Land Use

The proposed project is entirely within the right-of-way of the existing lease areas or compounds. Therefore the project will have no direct effects on land use, aesthetics and visual resources.

Twelve of the sites are located in State Forests, State Game Lands, or near the Allegheny National Forest. Since communication towers already are located at the project sites, and proposed equipment shelters are of similar character of existing conditions, the proposed project will have no significant indirect effects on land use, aesthetics and visual resources.

Historic and Cultural Resources

PSI has requested information from the Pennsylvania Bureau for Historic Preservation and tribal notification regarding historical and cultural resources. According to the BHP response letter dated June 17, 2010, "Based on our survey files, which include both archaeological sites and standing structures, there are no National Register eligible or listed historic or archaeological properties in the area of the proposed project."

Based on review of information to date the project will have no direct or indirect effects on historical and cultural resources. However, a response from some tribes is still pending.

1.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, based on the information obtained to date, the project will not have a significant adverse environmental or socioeconomic impact. A "Finding of No Significant Impact" (FONSI) should be generated by the Client.