



December 6, 2011

Expert committee to review north-south transmission plans

Report to be delivered by mid-February

Edmonton... The Alberta government has appointed an independent panel of experts to review plans for two high-voltage transmission lines between the Edmonton and Calgary regions.

The committee will review the Alberta Electric System Operator's (AESO) assessment of the electricity transmission requirements in this part of the province, the selection of High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) technology, and the timing of the planned north-south lines.

The committee will make recommendations to government by Feb. 10, 2012, taking into account all factors including cost and industry competitiveness.

"Alberta's complex transmission system must support our industries' ever-increasing demand for power without impacting their competitiveness," Energy Minister Ted Morton said. "We must be certain we meet the growing electricity needs of Albertans but also keep the price of electricity affordable."

As part of its deliberations, the four-person panel will also consider public input by reviewing previously received landowner feedback and consulting with specifically identified organizations representing landowners, electricity producers, and large and small consumers. Panellists will also obtain and consider expert advice from the AESO.

"Our role is to ensure that all factors have been carefully considered, including cost to consumers and impact on industry," said committee chair Brian Heidecker, former chair of the University of Alberta Board of Governors. "We look forward to the challenge ahead of us and to the opportunity to provide comment and recommendations to the Government of Alberta."

The other members of the committee are Dr. Roy Billinton, Dr. Joseph Doucet, and Henry Yip.

Applications for the proposed transmission projects, each with a capacity of 1,000 megawatts, are before the Alberta Utilities Commission and were set for public hearings in November and January. In October, Morton asked the commission to adjourn hearing the applications pending government review.

The need for reinforcement between Edmonton-Calgary was identified by the AESO in 2002 to address issues with reliability, maximize efficiency, accommodate long-term growth and encourage new generation.

- 30 -

Backgrounder: North-south transmission committee members, responsibilities and timelines

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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North-south transmission committee members, responsibilities and timelines

Committee members

Brian Heidecker, Chair: As founder and operator of the Drylander Ranch Ltd, Heidecker has extensive experience in the agriculture industry. He has also served on the board of several financial institutions, including Alberta Treasury Branch Financial and the Bank of Canada. Most recently, Heidecker was Chairman of the University of Alberta Board of Governors.

Dr. Roy Billinton: Billinton has provided consulting services to organizations around the world. He has also authored or co-authored eight books on reliability evaluation and more than 775 papers on power system reliability evaluation, economic system operation and power system analysis. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, the Electrical Institute of Canada, the United Kingdom Safety and Reliability Society and the Royal Society of Canada. He is also Chairman of the Canadian Electrical Association, Consultative Committee in Outage Statistics and a Professional Engineer in the Province of Saskatchewan.

Dr. Joseph Doucet: Doucet is the Director of the University of Alberta's School of Energy and the Environment (SEE), an Enbridge Professor of Energy Policy, and President of the Canadian affiliate of the International Association for Energy Economics (IAEE). In addition, he directs a specialized MBA program in natural resources and energy at the Alberta School of Business.

Henry Yip: Yip is a senior business executive with more than 30 years of broad business experience in Canada. He has advised governments on city planning, strategy development, technology commercialization, international business collaboration and grant applications approval. He is currently the President of Candace Development and Chair of the Transmission Facilities Costs Monitoring Committee.

Responsibilities of the Critical Transmission Review Committee

- Review the process and information used by the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) in considering and developing the north-south transmission reinforcement plan.
- Conduct the review with regard for Alberta legislation, the Provincial Energy Strategy, and current regulatory and market dynamics.
- Consider public input by reviewing previously received landowner feedback and by consulting with specifically identified organizations representing landowners, electricity producers, and large and small consumers.
- Obtain and consider expert input from the AESO on the current load and generation forecasts and reliability standards.
- Provide the committee's opinion on the AESO's system forecast, the selection of High Voltage Direct Current technology for the north-south transmission reinforcements, and the timing of the planned north-south reinforcements.
- Consider and recommend, with justification, whether the AESO's assessment of the issue is reasonable, generally reasonable but requires modifications, or not reasonable, taking into account all factors including cost and industry competitiveness.
- Consider and recommend appropriate changes to the *Electric Statutes Amendment Act, 2009*.

The Committee is expected to submit to the Minister of Energy a written report detailing the results of the review by February 10, 2012.

Organizations that will be invited to participate

- Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties
- Alberta Direct Connect Consumers Association
- Alberta Electric System Operator
- Alberta Federation of Rural Electrification Associations
- Alberta Landowners Council
- Alberta Urban Municipalities Association
- Balancing Pool
- Canadian Wind Energy Association
- Consumer's Coalition of Alberta
- Canadian Federation of Independent Business
- electric utilities in the Province of Alberta
- Independent Power Producers Society of Alberta
- Industrial Power Consumers Association of Alberta
- Lavesta Area Group
- Market Surveillance Administrator
- Office of the Utilities Consumer Advocate
- Oil Sands Developers Group
- applicants for approval of the Eastern and Western Alberta Transmission Lines (ATCO Electric Ltd. and AltaLink Management Ltd., respectively)

Timeline

- The requirement for north-south transmission reinforcement was first identified by the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) in the early 2000s.
- The need was formally identified in AESO's 2009 Long-Term Transmission plan. Consultations with landowners and stakeholders took place prior to and following release of the long-term plan.
- AltaLink filed a facilities application with the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) on March 1, 2011 for the Western Alberta Transmission Line (WATL). ATCO Electric filed a facilities application with the AUC on March 25, 2011 for the Eastern Alberta Transmission Line (EATL).
- On October 19, 2011, Energy Minister Ted Morton asked the AUC to adjourn its consideration of both lines pending further review. Siting hearings were scheduled to commence November 7, 2011 (western line) and January 16, 2012 (eastern line).

- 30 -

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