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Facilities Division
Phone: 403-592-4403 and ask to speak to the Facilities Division

Complaints Group
Phone: 780-427-4903, or
Email: utilitiesconcerns@auc.ab.ca

Information Services
Phone: 780-427-9362, or
Email: info@auc.ab.ca

Electronic Filing (E-Filing) Services
Phone: 780-643-1055, or
Email: systemservices@auc.ab.ca

Any questions or concerns about the AUC's adjudication of Heartland Transmission Project can be directed to the AUC Complaints team at utilitiesconcerns@auc.ab.ca or 780-427-4903.



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www.auc.ab.ca

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The independent public hearing process for the HEARTLAND TRANSMISSION PROJECT



The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or Commission) is a quasi-judicial regulatory body responsible for making decisions about utility-related applications, such as the siting for transmission lines, substations and power plants. The AUC will determine whether the proposed Heartland transmission route is in the public interest bearing in mind the social, economic and environmental effects.

Enhanced AUC process for the Heartland Transmission Project

The AUC believes a transparent and fully-informed process allows it to render the best possible decisions. In an effort to maximize the preparation time for parties that may be directly and adversely affected by the Commission's decision, and in recognition of the scope, nature and timeframe of this proceeding, the Commission intends to adopt a process that has been enhanced in four ways, described below:

1) Streamlined standing process for participants

Individuals and corporations that may be directly and adversely affected by the Commission's decision on the application are entitled to participate in a public hearing. Those parties are said to have standing to participate in the process. Parties that own or reside on property located within 800 metres of the edge of the finalized rights-of-way (for either the preferred or alternate route) will be considered to have standing. Any persons that own property or reside on property located outside the 800-metre zone may apply to the Commission for standing and the Commission will make a determination on standing on a case-by-case basis by determining whether that person may be directly and adversely affected.

2) Pre-registration of intention to participate

All interested parties have the opportunity to pre-register in the proceeding, before the Commission receives the application, by filing a statement of intent to participate (SIP) with the Commission. More information on SIP submissions and what they should include can be found in the *Public involvement in Needs and Facilities Applications Brochure* (page 6) or on the AUC website www.auc.ab.ca under Involving Albertans > Getting Involved > How to Participate in Facility Applications.

3) Three options for participation

Intervenors with standing will have three options for participation in this proceeding:

- Intervenors can fully participate in the Commission's quasi-judicial hearing. Dates and a location will be announced by the Commission after the application is submitted and deemed complete;
- Intervenors can participate informally by presenting their position to the Commission at the quasi-judicial hearing without participating in the full hearing; or
- Intervenors can provide a written submission.

4) Information sessions and process meeting

The AUC is committed to ensuring that Albertans who believe that they may be directly and adversely affected by its decision are informed about the project and understand their opportunity to participate in the hearing process. The AUC will be holding a series of information sessions in March and April to explain the hearing process, how to participate in the process and to explain the Commission's local intervenor funding process. The location and dates for these information sessions will be provided in the coming weeks. The Commission can also provide information sessions to larger groups upon request. Please note that the Commission will also hold a process meeting within 30 days of the application being filed. The process meeting will provide further details and particulars regarding the format of the hearing and issues to be addressed during the hearing.

The four enhancements listed above establish a process that allows early intervenor participation, even before a formal application is filed with the AUC. The enhanced process for this proceeding also allows the Commission to make and communicate decisions on scheduling, process, standing and local intervenor costs as early as possible.

Summary of the AUC public hearing process for the Heartland Transmission Project

Electric Utilities Act implications for the Heartland Transmission Project

The proposed Heartland Transmission Project is the first of the Alberta critical transmission infrastructure projects set out in the *Electric Utilities Act* (amended with the passing of Bill 50 on November 26, 2009) to proceed to consultation and eventual hearing before the Alberta Utilities Commission. Under the amended *Electric Utilities Act* the Government of Alberta approved the need for four critical transmission infrastructure projects, including the Heartland Transmission Project. The need for the Heartland project will not be addressed in the AUC's proceeding.

Role of the AUC:

Companies that propose to construct electric transmission facilities in Alberta, such as the Heartland Transmission Project, must apply to the Commission for approval. When reviewing the utility's application for new facilities, the Commission considers the public interest bearing in mind social, environmental and economic effects.

The AUC is committed to ensuring that every Albertan whose rights may be directly and adversely affected by an application for these facilities is informed of the application and has the opportunity to have their concerns heard, considered and understood.

After considering the facilities application, the AUC has three options in reaching a decision: approve the application as applied for, approve it with conditions, or deny it.

What is involved in the proposed project?

The project proposes the construction of a double-circuit, 500-kilovolt (kV) transmission line to connect the Heartland region northeast of Fort Saskatchewan to existing 500-kV transmission facilities south of Edmonton. The Commission anticipates that it will receive an application to approve the project from AltaLink L.P. and EPCOR Utilities Ltd. (AltaLink and EPCOR) (the transmission facility owners for the project) in the spring of this year.

Public consultations by proponent:

Prior to making an application to the Commission, AltaLink and EPCOR are required to conduct public consultation in the area of the proposed transmission project so that concerns may be raised, properly addressed and if possible, resolved. The AUC has set out requirements for applicants to follow regarding public consultation in *Rule 007, Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, and Industrial System Designations*. Potentially-affected parties are strongly encouraged to participate in the initial public consultation, as early involvement in informal discussions with an applicant may lead to greater influence on project planning.

What has happened so far?

EPCOR and Altalink announced on January 6, 2010 their preferred route for the proposed transmission line which largely uses the transportation/utility corridor on the east side of Edmonton, then travels northeast to the Heartland region. An alternate route was also identified. It passes to the east of Spruce Grove, to the west and north of Morinville, then east to the Heartland region. For more information on the proponents' current plans and their preferred and alternate routes, please see the Heartland Transmission Project website at www.heartlandtransmission.ca.

What happens next?

Once AltaLink and EPCOR have conducted their public consultation process, they will take into consideration what they learned during consultations and make any amendments they see necessary and reasonable to their proposal and submit an application to the AUC.

When the application is submitted to the AUC, the Commission will conduct a review of the application to ensure it is administratively and technically complete. The Commission will schedule a process meeting within 30 days of receiving an application. This will finalize process, scheduling, and issues in advance of a full public hearing. Extensive public notice will provide key dates, contacts and information on how to participate.