

Bulletin 2010-04

January 20, 2010

Heartland Transmission Project Notice of Enhanced Process

Background:

The proposed Heartland Transmission Project is the first of the Alberta critical transmission infrastructure projects set out in the *Electric Utilities Act* to proceed to consultation and eventual hearing before the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or Commission). Under that act the Government of Alberta designated the Heartland Transmission Project as critical transmission infrastructure. Accordingly, the need for the Heartland Transmission Project does not require Commission approval.

The project involves 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 for approval of the project from AltaLink and EPCOR (the transmission facility owners for the project) in the spring of this year.

On January 6, 2010, EPCOR and Altalink began public consultation on two proposed routes for the double circuit transmission lines: a preferred route along the south and east boundaries of the City of Edmonton and an alternate route located west and north of Edmonton. The Commission understands that these routes may change as a consequence of public consultation and that these changes will be reflected in the application filed with the Commission.

Upon receipt of the application, the Commission will conduct a review of the application to ensure it is administratively and technically complete. Following a public hearing the Commission will decide whether or not the route, location and design of the project is in the public interest. However, in making this decision the Commission cannot consider whether the project is required to meet the needs of Alberta.

To maximize the preparation time for parties that may be directly and adversely affected by the Commission's decision on the application, and in recognition of the scope, nature and timeframe of this project, the Commission intends to adopt an enhanced process described below. The *Hydro and Electric Energy Act* requires the Commission to issue a decision in a timely manner and, if possible, within 180 days from the date an application is considered complete.

Standing:

Persons (including 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 persons are said to have standing to participate in the process.

Standing will be given to parties once the application is filed. If a person (individual or corporation) owns or resides on property that is within 800 metres of the edge of the finalized rights-of-way (for either the preferred or alternate route) the Commission will grant that person standing subject to there not being any objections to that standing from another party. If there is an objection the Commission will make a decision on the person's standing based on the facts presented by both parties. 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.

Three options for participation:

Interveners with standing will have three options for participation in the proceedings:

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

Pre-registration of intention to participate:

All interested persons have the opportunity to pre-register in the proceeding by submitting a statement of intent to participate (SIP) with the Commission. All SIP submissions should include the following information:

- Your name or organization name, address and/or legal land description, telephone number, and email address (if available);
(If you are represented by a representative include their name, address in Alberta, telephone number, fax number and, if available, email address.)
- A description of the nature of your interest and/or concern with the project (i.e. how you may be directly and adversely affected by the proposed project);
- The location of your land, residence or activity in relation to the project and whether you reside within 800 metres of the edge of the currently-proposed right of way of the preferred and/or alternate route; and
- The nature and scope of your intended participation (i.e. do you intend to participate formally, informally or in the form of a written submission).

An electronic copy of the SIP, with a reference to EPS Proceeding ID 457, should be sent to the Commission at the following email address: filings@auc.ab.ca. The Commission would appreciate receiving SIPs in electronic form if possible, but recognizes that some individuals may not have the ability to do so, in which case they should send one copy of the submission to:

Alberta Utilities Commission
Fifth Avenue Place, 4th floor, 425 – 1 Street SW
Calgary, AB T2P 3L8
Attention: Keith Gladwyn
Subject: EPS Proceeding ID. 457

Subject to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, all documents filed in this proceeding, including any documents filed prior to the start of this proceeding, must be placed on the public record. Also, your written submissions and any other documents you file will be accessible to the public through the Proceeding Search System on the Commission website.

Please indicate on your submission if you do not want your information to be accessible on the Internet. If you do not want your document or any part of it to be placed on the public record, you must apply to the Commission under section 13 of the *Commission Rules of Practice* for a confidentiality order before you file your document. **Please ensure that any document you file is free of information that you do not want to appear on a public record.**

Information sessions and process meeting:

The Commission is committed to ensuring that Albertans who believe that they may be directly and adversely affected by the Commission's decision on the application are informed about the project and understand their opportunities to participate in the hearing process. The Commission will be holding a series of information sessions in March and April to explain how to participate in the hearing process and the Commission's local intervener 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, scheduling and issues to be addressed during the hearing.

Interested persons with similar concerns or interests are encouraged to collaborate in their involvement in the Commission's Heartland Transmission Project application process. Further information on the process and the upcoming information sessions can be found on the Commission website at www.auc.ab.ca.

Any questions relating to this bulletin should be directed to Keith Gladwyn, by email at keith.gladwyn@auc.ab.ca or by telephone at 403-592-4414.

(original signed by)

Willie Grieve
Chair