



News Release

RETA Requests Environmental Impact Assessment of Heartland Line

(Edmonton) January 5, 2011. Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans President Bruce Johnson has sent a letter to the Alberta Environment Minister requesting that he require AltaLink and EPCOR to conduct a formal Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the proposed Heartland Transmission Project. The EIA would contain the standard elements of environmental, public health and safety, and socio-economic impact assessments.

In April 2008, the Alberta Government exempted all electricity transmission lines from the requirement for formal EIAs. Prior to this regulatory amendment, EIAs for lines of 500kV or greater were mandatory and those less than 130kV were exempt.

However, the Environment Minister retains the authority under the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* to require an EIA, even with the exemption. It is on this basis that RETA is making the request of the Environment Minister.

The letter provides numerous reasons why a formal Environmental Impact Assessment under provincial legislation is necessary:

- The Heartland Line would be the largest ever built in Alberta (73-metre-tall towers).
- Environmental impacts of such a large line have never been reviewed before in Alberta.
- There are many significant natural areas and wildlife species along AltaLink's and EPCOR's preferred and alternate routes that would be adversely affected by an overhead line.
- There are many documented negative impacts of overhead high voltage power lines on wildlife, livestock and vegetation.
- Many studies report strong causal correlations between overhead high voltage power line electromagnetic fields and dozens of diseases and other health problems.
- Electric shock, pipelines, lightning, tornadoes, ice storms and weather deterioration have been reported as overhead high voltage power line safety concerns.
- Overhead high voltage power lines depreciate neighbouring property values.
- The environmental information required by the Alberta Utilities Commission is insufficient, considering the size and anticipated impacts of the proposed Heartland Line.

- 30 -

For more information or questions, see www.RETA.ca or contact:

Bruce Johnson
President, RETA
780-902-9511 (cell)

John Kristensen
VP Technical, RETA
780-467-1432 (home)
780-722-9866 (cell)

Attachment: January 5, 2011 letter to Honourable Rob Renner