



## **Media Advisory**

### **Bury the Line Rally**

**(Sherwood Park)** March 14, 2011. RETA (Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans) is sponsoring a Bury the Line public rally:

Saturday, March 19, 2011, 2:00 p.m.  
Alberta Legislature Building (front steps)  
107 Street and 97 Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta

To send the Alberta Government a strong message that high voltage power lines must be buried whenever they are built close to homes, schools, daycare centres, hospitals and environmentally sensitive areas. As well, RETA wants to let the Alberta Government know that many of the new power lines planned are not necessary or at minimum are significant overbuilds.

Bill 50, the *Electric Statutes Amendment Act, 2009*, passed in November 2009 by the Alberta Government, legislated the building of several 500 kilovolt power lines in Alberta. These particular lines, dubiously labelled as “critical transmission infrastructure” by the Alberta Government, are being built without any public input on whether or not the lines are even necessary.

The siting of three of these lines is currently in the process of being considered by their proponents and the Alberta Utilities Commission. The lines are:

- Heartland AC Transmission Project from Wabamun to Industrial Heartland: EPCOR and AltaLink
- Eastern Alberta DC Transmission Line from Redwater to Brooks: ATCO Electric
- Western Alberta DC Transmission Line from Genesee (near Edmonton) to Langdon (near Calgary): AltaLink

Not only have Albertans been excluded, by law, from being consulted on the need for these lines, but the Alberta Government has also exempted these and all high voltage power lines from the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment. As well, Bill 19, the *Land Assembly Project Area Act*, also passed

by the Alberta Government in 2009, gives the government carte blanche with respect to designating private land as a corridor for high voltage transmission lines.

In fact, from a legal perspective, the Alberta Government has streamlined the process for the construction of new high voltage power lines in Alberta to the point where landowners and other concerned stakeholders really have no meaningful role to play anymore in any electricity transmission decisions made in our province.

It is within this context that frustrated and angry Albertans across the province have held town hall and community meetings during the last several years to let their MLAs know that they are not going to let the Alberta Government continue trampling on their private landowner rights and their rights to play a meaningful role in determining the need for all of these new power lines, the siting of these lines, and the technologies to be used in building the lines.

Research conducted by RETA and its experts indicate that burying high voltage power lines in Alberta is reliable, technically feasible and financially practicable. When compared to overhead high voltage lines, underground lines:

- Have significantly lower impacts on health
- Are safer because they cannot electrocute people and animals, and cannot fall over in a storm
- Do not cause nearby pipeline corrosion or induced currents in pipelines
- Do not lower property values
- Are not an eyesore and a blight on the landscape
- Do not negatively affect tourism
- Do not kill birds through collision with lines and towers
- Are more reliable
- Have lower maintenance costs
- Are more efficient and have lower transmission loss costs
- Can be buried for the same or similar capital costs as overhead lines

With respect to the capital costs of burying lines, RETA's experts indicate that, for example, the partial underground Heartland option costs only \$51.5 million more than the \$581 million cost to build an entirely above-ground Heartland line. That's only 8.9% more in capital costs which is a rounding error within the electricity transmission industry. The proponents, the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) and Alberta Energy have been grossly and intentionally inflating the costs to bury high voltage power lines in order to make this technology appear unattractive.