



News Release

Bury the Line Public Rally – Alberta Legislature Building Saturday, March 19, 2011

(Edmonton) March 18, 2011. A public rally in support of burying high voltage power lines in Alberta whenever they are built near homes, schools, daycares, hospitals and environmentally sensitive areas will be held:

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

Confirmed speakers at the rally include: representatives of Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans (RETA), Linda Duncan (MP, Edmonton Strathcona), Dave Quest (MLA, Strathcona), Brian Mason (Alberta NDP Leader), Kent Hehr (MLA, Calgary Buffalo), Linda Osinchuk (Mayor, Strathcona County), Sue Huff (Alberta Party Leader), and Colchester Elementary School Parents' Association and students. Possible additional speakers include; Naresh Bhardwaj (MLA, Edmonton Ellerslie), Laurie Blakeman (MLA, Edmonton Centre), a Wildrose Alliance representative, Amarjeet Sohi (Edmonton City Councillor Ward 12), and Vic Bidzinski (Strathcona County Councillor Ward 1).

RETA, which represents over 8,000 registered members, wants to send the Alberta Government a strong message that Albertans are concerned about the government's plans to criss-cross the province with overhead high voltage power lines. Many of these are 500 kilovolts and with towers up to 75 metres (246 feet) tall, twice the height of any existing high voltage lines in Alberta.

Albertans are concerned about the health, safety, environmental, property value and aesthetic impacts of overhead power lines. The Alberta Government's focus on coal-fired electricity generation that includes long transmission lines is inefficient and has a huge carbon footprint. There are new, well-tested, more innovative and cost effective ways of generating and transmitting electricity that minimize, and in some cases eliminate, the negative impacts.

Legislation passed and amended during the past three years by the Alberta Government has:

- Identified specific high voltage lines as "critical transmission infrastructure" with little or no justification
- Excluded Albertans from being consulted on the need for all of these new power lines
- Given the Alberta Government carte blanche to designate private land as electricity transmission corridors
- Exempted all high voltage lines from the requirement for an Environmental Impact Assessment

The only issue in which Alberta citizens now have a minor role to play is siting of these power lines, and then only after the transmission facility operators have narrowed down the options for each major project to one or two routes.

Albertans need to get re-involved in reviewing whether or not new power lines that cost billions of dollars are even necessary. Albertans need to get re-involved in reviewing the potential environmental impacts of these proposed lines with formal Environmental Impact Assessments being required. And, Albertans need to be given an opportunity for meaningful input into determining the kind of technologies that should be utilized to make electricity generation and transmission more efficient and environmentally friendly.

Burying high voltage power lines is a technology that significantly minimizes the negative impacts of above ground high voltage lines. The capital cost of burying lines is similar to that of building them overhead. For example, in the case of the proposed Heartland Transmission Project, a partially buried line could cost only 8.9% more to build than an entirely above ground line – that's a rounding error within the electricity transmission industry. If one combines the capital, maintenance and transmission loss costs over the life of a line, buried lines can be less costly than overhead lines. If one adds in the potential health and property devaluation costs of overhead lines, buried lines are most certainly less costly.

It's time Alberta catches up with the rest of the world when it comes to electricity generation and transmission.

RETA encourages everyone who is interested in improving electricity generation and transmission in Alberta to attend the rally on Saturday at the Legislature Building. Bring the whole family. The weather forecast is positive, and there will be hot chocolate, Timbits and **Bury the Line** T-shirts.

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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)