



## News Release

### **Progressive Conservative MLAs Refuse to Answer Questions About Power Lines in Their Constituencies**

**(Sherwood Park)** March 7, 2011. Not one Progressive Conservative MLA answered questions asked by Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans (RETA) about high voltage power lines planned within their constituencies.

RETA had asked the 21 MLAs who are slated to have 500 kilovolt power lines run through their constituencies what their position is on a number of issues related to electricity transmission in Alberta. A short questionnaire was sent to those MLAs whose constituents will be directly affected by the proposed Heartland AC Transmission Project, Western Alberta DC Transmission Line, and Eastern Alberta DC Transmission Line.”

Of the 21 MLAs who received the questionnaire (copy attached), only one responded – Rob Anderson, Wildrose Alliance MLA for Airdrie-Chestermere. Not one of the 20 Progressive Conservative MLAs who received the questionnaire responded. (A list of MLAs who received the questionnaire is attached.)

RETA sent the questionnaire on February 2, asking the 21 affected MLAs what their thoughts are about need for the lines, their impacts, and whether or not they believe these lines should be buried in certain circumstances. February 18, 2011 was the deadline for submitting responses.

“We sincerely thank MLA Rob Anderson for taking the time to answer the questionnaire. At the same time, we cannot believe that 20 P.C. MLAs who have at least one of these new 500 kilovolt lines planned to run through their constituencies did not bother to respond,” said Bruce Johnson, President of RETA. “Do they really think their constituents will let them get away with hiding their heads in the sand on this issue?”

Electricity transmission has become one of the most controversial issues facing Albertans during the past few years, particularly since the Alberta Government passed legislation which significantly limits the public’s role in reviewing applications for new power lines.

“Our public polling; letters, phone calls and e-mails we receive from Albertans; and meetings being held across the province tell us that Albertans are concerned, frustrated and angry about the way this provincial government is handling the electricity transmission file,” said John Kristensen, Vice President Technical of RETA.

During the past several years, Albertans have expressed concerns about the documented health, safety, property value and environmental impacts of overhead high voltage power lines, and many are convinced all of these new lines aren’t even necessary. Polling conducted by Leger Marketing in late 2009 indicates that 70% of Albertans think high voltage power lines should be buried if they run close to homes or schools.

As transmission facility operators such as AltaLink, EPCOR and ATCO Electric submit their plans for new AC and DC 500 kilovolt power lines, Albertans are becoming aware of just how extensive and far-reaching the Alberta Government's plans are for construction of new monster power lines. Albertans are learning that some of these lines will include towers twice as high as any built before in our province – towers as high as a 20 story building.

Johnson continued, "We also think it's important, especially at this time when the Alberta Progressive Conservative Party will be looking for a new Leader, for people directly affected by these power lines to find out what their MLAs think about electricity transmission. We're strongly encouraging residents who live in the 21 provincial constituencies to directly contact their MLAs and ask questions similar to those asked by RETA's questionnaire."

MLA Rob Anderson's responses included the following:

- Did not think the Western Alberta DC Transmission Line proposed to run through his constituency is needed.
- Does not support Bill 19 and Bill 50 as currently drafted.
- Personally believes overhead high voltage lines may impact safety, property values, the environment and visual aesthetics; and is aware that many of his constituents think so too.
- Does not believe that the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) has explored all of the alternatives to overhead electricity transmission.
- Thinks high voltage lines probably should be buried (would like more information), and finds an additional cost of 10% to 20% of the overall project cost to be acceptable. (For example, experts have calculated the capital cost of an underground Heartland line to be only 8.9% more than an above ground line, which in the transmission industry is a rounding error.)
- Any additional costs to bury lines should be borne by the people who transmit the power and benefit from the lines.

RETA will be sponsoring a **BURY THE LINE PUBLIC RALLY** at the Alberta Legislature Building on Saturday, March 19, 2011, at 2:00 p.m. (Hot chocolate will be served.) RETA wants to send a strong message to the Alberta Government that high voltage power lines must be buried if they are built close to homes, schools, daycares, hospitals, and environmentally sensitive areas.

RETA is a not-for-profit society with over 8,000 registered members that encourages responsible electricity transmission in Alberta which includes: questioning the need for overhead high voltage towers and lines to criss-cross the province; if these lines are built, burying them whenever they run close to homes, schools, daycares, hospitals and environmentally sensitive areas; fairly compensating landowners if lines run near them and are not buried; and developing more efficient and environmentally-friendly ways of generating and transmitting electricity.

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For more information or questions, see [www.RETA.ca](http://www.RETA.ca) or contact:

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Attachments: Questions for affected MLAs  
List of affected MLAs