



## News Release

# Myths vs. Facts: It's Time for the Truth about Electricity Transmission in Alberta

**(Edmonton)** March 30, 2011. Responsible Electricity Transmission for Albertans (RETA) disagrees with recent public comments and statements about electricity transmission in Alberta made by the Alberta Government, the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO), AltaLink, EPCOR and ATCO Electric. Accordingly, RETA has prepared a list of **Myths vs. Facts**, a copy of which is attached, to set the record straight.

RETA has closely followed comments and statements made over the past few months by representatives of the Alberta Government, the AESO and transmission facility operators (TFOs) during public consultation processes, at public events, in advertisements, to the media and in letters to the editor of many newspapers across Alberta.

"It's time we commented on some of the very selective information, misleading information and in some cases fallacies provided by the government, the AESO, and transmission companies," said Bruce Johnson, President of RETA. "It's one thing to embellish certain elements of a particular subject matter in an attempt to influence public thinking; however, it's another thing to intentionally mislead or misinform the public."

"When government representatives indicate that specific legislation such as Bill 19 does not diminish private property rights in relation to electricity transmission, that is a fallacy," Johnson continued. "All anyone has to do is carefully read this legislation to discover that private property rights are very much diminished because this law affords the Alberta Government and specific Ministers with additional powers over rights that property owners used to have."

The need for hundreds of kilometers of new overhead high voltage power lines has been repeated by the provincial government, the AESO and transmission companies as rationale for passing Bill 50 in late 2009 even though there was strong opposition across Alberta. On the other hand, academic reports, Enmax, Alberta Direct Connect, Industrial Power Consumers Association of Alberta, the ex-Utilities Consumer Advocate and many others who have researched this matter indicate all of these lines are not needed, or at the very least are significant over-builds.

Alberta Government politicians and officials deny that any of the transmission lines that are to be paid for by Alberta electricity consumers will be used to export electricity to the United States. One has only to surf the internet to discover plans by industry and the Alberta Government to export vast amounts of electricity to the U.S. through transmission lines funded by Alberta electricity consumers.

For example, the Northern Lights proposal involves the export of electricity through transmission lines running from the Industrial Heartland in Alberta to Oregon, and then other lines on the

drawing board would carry the electricity to California, Nevada and elsewhere. The Northern Lights proposal is but one component within the overall plans of the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) (see <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/58423643/WECC-Phase-1-Rating-Process-Coordinated-Planning-and>).

John Kristensen, VP Technical of RETA, said, "Our members have heard so many advertisements lately on the radio wherein AltaLink and ATCO Electric describe the many public consultations they have had in an attempt to convince the public that they listen carefully to the concerns of potentially affected landowners. Well we know from the public consultations held by AltaLink and EPCOR on the proposed Heartland Transmission Project that not only do they not listen carefully to concerns of landowners, but they prompt those landowners interviewed with misleading and false information before asking for comments on health, safety, environmental, property value and other concerns."

Whenever burying high voltage power lines is recommended as a way of reducing health, safety, environmental and property value impacts, Alberta Energy, the AESO and the transmission companies cite one reason after the other for dismissing this technology. When RETA first presented this technology as an option in early 2009, Alberta Energy and transmission companies said it was not possible because the technology had not yet been developed, and it would cost far more than to build overhead lines.

RETA has since presented research data and brought underground cable experts to Alberta to show that the technology has been developed and in fact has been used successfully for decades. Based on data from these experts and the AESO, RETA has also shown that burying high voltage power lines can be done for the same or lower cost compared to overhead lines when the full life cycle of the lines is considered.

In spite of all this factual information, AltaLink, EPCOR, ATCO Electric, Alberta Energy and the AESO continue to say that technical difficulties and high cost of undergrounding are reasons they will not recommend this technology.

"We are at wits' end", said Johnson. "We have met and corresponded with the Premier, Energy Ministers, many other members of Cabinet and Caucus, the AESO, and TFOs over the past few years, and we really are no farther along in convincing these people that there are very real concerns and impacts of overhead high voltage power lines. In many cases, particular lines are not even needed; in other cases they are major over-builds; and in some cases if these lines are built, they must be buried to eliminate impacts on health, safety, the environment and property values."

Johnson said, "The Alberta Government, the AESO, and transmission facility operators have failed to provide Albertans with complete and accurate information on electricity transmission in our province. It's time for the truth."

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

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Attachment: Myths vs. Facts