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## Heartland Electricity Transmission Line (March 17, 2011)

Mr. Hehr: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. This government's heartland 500-kilovolt transmission project will have significant impacts on the people living in the county of Strathcona and the city of Edmonton.

This high-voltage power line is scheduled to be built in close proximity to homes, schools, daycares, hospitals, and environmentally sensitive areas. To the Minister of Energy: does the minister deny that there are health impacts to residents in close proximity to the above-ground high-voltage power lines that are going to be built?

The Speaker: Hon. minister, if it's an opinion, it doesn't count. Government policy.

Mr. Liepert: Well, I think it's important, Mr. Speaker, to put some facts on the record because this member has just made some allegations or comments that I think need to be refuted. First of all, there is a hearing by the Alberta Utilities Commission that will commence next month. All of the facts will be laid before the commission, including anyone who wants to lay supposed health facts before the commission. All I can say is that Health Canada monitors these situations. There are no known risks according to Health Canada with electric currents in any form.

Mr. Hehr: Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for that answer. I guess the follow-up is: are these citizens wrong to insist that these high-voltage power lines that will be going up in their neighbourhood should be buried underground?

Mr. Liepert: Again, Mr. Speaker, I'm not saying anybody is right or wrong. All I'm saying is that we are doing what we should be doing: having a full, open, independent hearing on these power lines. In addition to that, we are using statistical data that Health Canada has on its website, if the member would like to take a look. We're trusting those who are experts.

The Speaker: The hon. member.

Mr. Hehr: Well, I thank you. So just confirming here, this government is open to other options besides running these highpowered lines above ground in Strathcona. Is that what I'm hearing?

Mr. Liepert: Well, Mr. Speaker, I think this member was in the Legislature when we approved Bill 50 with four critical transmission lines; one of them is the heartland transmission line. Within that, however, the process is that the Alberta Utilities Commission will determine such things as siting, cost allocation, and that's what will be the subject of the hearing next month.

*Alberta Hansard*, March 17, 2011

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