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Province needs to step up on power line

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I would like to commend Councillor Vic Bidzinski and other members of the Strathcona County Council for continuing to advocate for the rights of their constituents whose health, safety and security are being threatened by the spectre of the 500 kV power lines slated to run past their homes and schools.

In response to the requests of the Heartland group and AESO for homeowners to "participate" in the "hearings" and "information sessions" staged by these groups, I wrote a letter to the Heartland Project expressing my concerns as a citizen. I received a most distressing and patronizing response. I was "reassured" that a) proximity to power lines does not impact health, and b) property values of homes near power lines do not decrease. These statements run contrary to both research and professional judgments, and are patently absurd. I am left feeling that input from citizen stakeholders is neither desired nor respected, and that to even call this exercise "lip service" would be generous.

It is high time for Premier Ed Stelmach, MLA Iris Evans and MLA Dave Quest to follow the example of Councillor Bidzinski, and go on the record in defence of the rights of their constituents, as they have been elected to do.

MLA Evans, in particular, in her role as Alberta's representative on the world stage, is being handed a golden opportunity to showcase our province as being at the forefront of modern, responsible, underground modes of electrical transmission. Wouldn't it be wonderful if the world suddenly viewed Alberta as the leader in progressive, ecologically-responsible energy management?

S. Benson

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