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## Power line not just provincial issue

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I wish to challenge Vegreville-Wainright MP Leon Benoit's contention that the proposed 500 kV Heartland power line is only a provincial matter, as reported in the March 5, 2010 edition of the Sherwood Park News.

It is true that the Alberta Government does indeed play the primary role in this matter, by virtue of having established the Sherwood Park greenbelt in 1974 as a Restricted Development Area; the departments of Energy and Infrastructure play major roles in electricity transmission matters; and the Alberta Government exempted high-voltage power lines from the environmental impact assessment process in 2008, passed Bill 19 in 2009 negatively affecting private landowner rights regarding power line siting, passed Bill 50 late last year excluding public input to the needs assessment process, and established the Alberta Utilities Commission and appointed its commissioners.

However, the Alberta Electric System Operator, EPCOR, AltaLink, Alberta Energy and Alberta Health all cite Health Canada as indicating that overhead high voltage power line electromagnetic fields (EMFs) pose little or no danger to human health, and thereby justify the building of these power lines near people.

Our extensive research, as well as that of many others on this matter, indicates just the opposite — that is, EMFs and corona ions emitted from overhead high voltage power lines pose very serious health risks: leukemia, many other cancers, miscarriages and birth defects, Alzheimer's disease and dementia, suicide and depression, heart problems, immune system deficiencies, and many more. Medical experts who work on EMF effects have seriously criticized Health Canada for its "offside and out-of-touch" approach to not warning Canadians about the health risks of power line EMFs. See [www.RETA.ca](http://www.RETA.ca) for more details.

Health Canada is a federal government department, and we have contacted them repeatedly in an attempt to have them review their very antiquated position on EMFs. As well, we have contacted all of the local MPs, including Mr. Leon Benoit and Mr. Tim Uppal in this regard. Both MPs have been very helpful in contacting the federal Health Minister on their constituents' behalf, again in an attempt to trigger a review of Health Canada's position.

The siting of high voltage power lines near homes, schools, daycares, hospitals, and environmentally-sensitive areas is not just a provincial matter. Health Canada should play a very important role in ensuring the health of Canadians, but they are falling far short when it comes to warning Canadians about the health risks of overhead power lines.

John Kristensen

VP Technical

RETA (Responsible Electricity

Transmission for Albertans)

Sherwood Park

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