

# Utilities commission approves sale of AltaLink to Buffett company

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The Alberta Utilities Commission said Friday it has approved the purchase of AltaLink by Warren Buffett's Berkshire Hathaway Energy for an estimated \$3.2 billion.

AltaLink, Alberta's largest regulated electricity transmission company, owns more than half of Alberta's transmission grid, some 12,000 kilometres of transmission lines, as well as 280 substations, delivering electricity to about 85 per cent of the province's population.

Current owner SNC-Lavalin announced its intention to sell AltaLink to Buffett's firm in May. The deal won federal approval in July, subject to a long list of conditions, but needed final approval from the AUC.

The commission said Friday its review found that the sale met its "no harm" test for financial impacts on customer rates and service quality.

Customers will face no additional costs as a direct result of the transaction or as a consequence of commitments made to obtain the federal approval, the commission said in a news release.

The change in ownership will not adversely affect the operation or financing of AltaLink, the AUC found. Credit rating analyses consider the deal to be neutral or beneficial to the cost of debt, it said.

The purchase should be "a net benefit to ratepayers from a financing perspective" as AltaLink works to raise funds for its current large build of transmission lines, the AUC said.

Existing management expertise and capability won't change and may benefit from the new ownership, the commission found. The AUC also said the ownership change won't affect AltaLink's credit quality or its operational independence.

"The AUC will continue to regulate AltaLink in exactly the same way as it did before the change in ownership," the AUC said.

"AUC's rates, its owner's return on investment, and the assurance of customer service quality and reliability will continue to be set, as always, by the AUC in a fully public process."

On its website, AltaLink said it is pleased with the AUC's decision and that it expects the transaction to close as soon as possible.

Based in Des Moines, Iowa, Berkshire Hathaway Energy has assets of \$70 billion. It owns and operates 284,000 kilometres of transmission and distribution lines.