

MARC ATKINSON, ATKINSON FARMS & DAVID COE - INTERROGATORY #1

Interrogatory

References

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Preamble

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Questions / Requests

Please indicate why Dufferin Wind Power Inc. cannot or is unwilling to bury the transmission lines designed to traverse portions of the properties of Marc Atkinson, Atkinson Farms and David Coe as, we are advised, Dufferin Wind Power Inc. originally agreed to do, so as to minimize the significant interference with the farming activity the above-ground lines will cause?

Response

The Applicant did not previously agree to bury the transmission lines along the referenced properties. Rather, the Applicant has sought to minimize potential interference with farming activities by locating the transmission line along the edges of the referenced properties in consultation with the relevant landowners.

The Applicant's policy is to build high voltage lines above ground. This is the industry standard throughout North America for installation and construction of high voltage transmission lines. As explained in response to CORE interrogatory #6 in the leave to construct proceeding (EB-2012-0365), this practice recognizes, for instance, that underground lines typically experience additional line losses relative to overhead lines, that power quality on overhead lines is superior to underground lines, that life expectancy is greater for overhead lines, and that overhead lines are easier to maintain.

As further explained in the response to CORE interrogatory #6 in EB-2012-0365, DWPI's preference for designing and constructing the transmission facilities as overhead facilities is generally consistent with industry standards and the approach taken by other transmitters in Ontario. For example, it is the policy of Hydro One, Ontario's largest licensed transmitter, to build all high-voltage transmission lines above ground wherever possible and to place transmission lines underground only if there are technical constraints that prevent the construction of an overhead line or if for any particular area the cost of constructing an overhead

line is not practical (see OEB Decision and Order in EB-2009-0425 at p. 9). It is also instructive to consider that, as at December 31, 2012, Hydro One owns and operates 29,000 circuit kilometers of high-voltage transmission lines and that all of these lines are overhead with the exception of just 282 circuit kilometers (less than 1%), which consist of underground lines in urban areas.¹

In addition to the factors described above, underground installation of high voltage transmission lines is significantly more costly than overhead installation and can be more disruptive to agricultural lands than the installation of poles for overhead high voltage lines. Although the Applicant made an exception to its policy by agreeing to bury two discrete sections of the transmission line, including in particular the portion of the line that runs through the Town of Shelburne (being the most heavily populated area along the route) in response to public concerns, the Applicant is not willing to make such an exception along the subject properties.

Moreover, the Board has already approved the proposed transmission facilities in EB-2012-0365 on the condition that Dufferin Wind construct in accordance with the leave to construct application, evidence and undertakings, except as modified by the OEB's decision. Dufferin Wind's application and evidence in that proceeding called for an overhead line with two underground segments, one being through the Town of Shelburne and one being for purposes of crossing an existing Hydro One transmission line and County Road 11 at the southern end of the line. The Board's Decision and Order did not modify this. To construct the line otherwise would be contrary to the Board's decision and order. Notably, the Board also stated in its decision and order that the question of whether Dufferin should bury the transmission line is not a matter that falls under the jurisdiction of the Board unless it engages questions of reliability, which the Board found was not the case as confirmed by the System Impact Assessment report.

¹ <http://www.hydroone.com/OurCompany/Pages/QuickFacts.aspx>