

July 22, 2020

Ahmed Maria
Director, Transmission Planning
Independent Electricity System Operator
1600-120 Adelaide Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 1T1

Dear Mr. Maria,

NextBridge Infrastructure LP (“NextBridge”) is writing today to request that the Independent Electricity System Operator (“IESO”) confirm that there is no unacceptable risk to reliability if the East-West Tie Line comes into service on March 31, 2022. NextBridge is considering the potential for construction costs avoidance that could result if it is provided with the flexibility to extend construction to March 31, 2022.

Due to the potential impacts to the health and safety of its construction workers, NextBridge temporarily suspended all construction activities on April 3, 2020 and resumed again on May 19, 2020, resulting in the loss of over six weeks of winter construction. Since resuming construction, NextBridge has been working on its construction schedule in order to ensure the project will be in service for October 28, 2021, which per the Ontario Energy Board’s (“OEB”) February 11, 2019 Order was coordinated with Hydro One Network’s (“HONI”) projected completion of the station work. A key consideration in this schedule is the seasonal nature of construction that works within timing windows to avoid disturbances to species at risk, like caribou.


Current conditions of the Overall Benefits Permit (“OBP”) from the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Parks limit the time NextBridge can work by only using winter roads within the Lake Superior caribou habitat. Building winter roads result in less ground disturbance, are generally less environmentally impactful, and are less costly than building all season roads.

Due to winter road restriction in the OBP, only one winter construction season remains to complete construction on the approximately 80 kilometer transmission line segment in the Lake Superior caribou habitat. To mitigate this schedule risk and ensure an October 28, 2021 in service date, NextBridge is seeking an amendment to this condition which would allow for all season roads to be built in order to extend the construction season. However, the building of these roads could result in an increased cost to the project of between \$15-\$20 million. If acceptable to the IESO, NextBridge's preference would be to avoid these additional costs to customers and, at the same time, comply with the current condition, both of which would be achievable with increased flexibility to extend the in service date to March 31, 2022.

NextBridge understands that on July 26, 2018 the IESO filed with the OEB an *Addendum to its Updated Needs Assessment* that continued to recommend that the transmission line be in-service by the end of 2020. However, to align the transmission and station work as required by the OEB, NextBridge and HONI have been working towards an in-service date for the new transmission line would be October 28, 2021. NextBridge will, therefore, not make any decision on moving the current projected October 28, 2021 in-service date until it receives the IESO's opinion related to the reliability risk of a March 31, 2022 in-service date

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding this request.

Kind Regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Tidmarsh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J".

Jennifer Tidmarsh
Project Director, NextBridge

CC
Christine Long, Board Secretary, Ontario Energy Board