Neighbours on the Line
c/o Robin Sadko, Communications Director
[redacted]

Nancy Marconi
Registrar
Ontario Energy Board
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Ref. EB- 2023-0198

November 16, 2023

Dear Ms. Marconi,

We are writing to you to clarify, at your request, our initial application to become an Intervenor at the Hydro One hearing.

Neighbours on the Line (NOTL) is an ad hoc group created to inform the directly affected and adjacent landowners of the Environmental Assessment (EA) process and to exchange information with each other.
We take our direction from these community members.

As a result of the Waasigan Transmission Line Project Proposal, our entire communities will be affected – not just the directly affected landowners. The devalued property values and loss of tax base will be felt by all.

There are 100 +/- directly affected landowners and about 2,500 residents from Shuniah to Shabaqua who will feel the negative effects of this power project. Our meetings were open to all these residents and many of them shared their concerns at the meetings or on Facebook and our website.

Alternate Route and Cost Reductions

In our discussions with Hydro through the EA process, we had proposed an alternate route to the one through our community. From that evaluation we realized that the most cost-effective route would be to go directly to Dryden via Upsala and Ignace, bypassing Atikokan. From Hydro One's figures as presented, we estimate there would be significant cost savings.

Our proposed route would follow the NOTL alternate route north of Thunder Bay to west of Upsala then northwest past Ignace to follow the existing 230KV Transmission Line to Dryden.

Advantages

Going directly to Dryden would save between $90 – 100 million, based on HONI estimates.

No major improvements to the MacKenzie Station in Atikokan would be required.

The power demands from the IESO report included in the Hydro One submission show that the majority of future power requirements in the northwest are north of Dryden.

Local knowledge reports that the Atikokan projects as described in the application are not going to happen for a long while, if ever.

If a twin 230KV TL is completed directly from Thunder Bay to Dryden there would remain an extra 230KV circuit available to supply Atikokan and Fort Francis areas.

Given the increased uncertainty related to Global Warming the separation of the Transmission Lines would reduce the risk of disruption. Our suggested alternate route would create a more secure power grid to the northwest.

Our alternate route would move the line away from the majority of private lands, parks, conservation reserves and active mining claims.

Since Hydro One does not pay property taxes as do other private utilities pay taxes to our communities, eg. Trans Canada Pipeline. All community taxpayers will be negatively affected if Hydro One's proposal goes through.

Land owner Agreements

Brought up in community discussion were the landowner agreements. In our opinion, the agreement contains an overreach on behalf Hydro regarding access and use of existing infrastructure on private property without proper compensation or consultation with the landowner. This is making people reluctant to pursue land agreements with Hydro One and they will pursue to resolve this in court if not resolved.

The Landowner Agreements state that Hydro One could transfer their right to individual properties to another company. They also state that the Easement may be used for Telecommunication. There has been no discussion or public information presented that Hydro One wants to add telecommunication lines to its towers. There has been no public consultation regarding telecommunication infrastructure.

This was not mentioned in the EA. This was only discovered upon examination of the landowner agreements.

How can the OEB approve the Landowner Agreements as part of the Leave to Construct when Telecommunications is not part of the Ontario Energy Board's mandate?

Additional Comments

We wish to be able to make a verbal presentation of our position to the OEB on these matters, in person or electronically.

Hydro One has revised their submissions three times. These are lengthy documents. Replying within seven days has been difficult.

We may wish to update our comments once we receive information once the completed Environmental Assessment is released.

We request the opportunity to submit more information because of Hydro One's continuous changes to their application.

There could be more information which Is not available to us today and we know is coming with the EA. We request an extension of at least two weeks.

We invite members of the Energy Board to come visit and view the proposed location of the Waasigan Transmission Line Project to see how it will affect so many residents.

A map of NOTL alternate route, Thunder Bay to Dryden, to follow.

Neighbours on the Line