



ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION

"Defending Wild Alberta through Awareness and Action"

Premier Ed Stelmach
Room 307, Legislature Bldg.
10800 – 97th Ave.
Edmonton, AB T5K 2B7

January 10, 2011

Re: Proposed Fidler to Chapel Rock Transmission Project

Dear Premier Stelmach:

Alberta Wilderness Association (AWA) strongly opposes Altalink's proposed Fidler to Chapel Rock Transmission Project, as described in recent Altalink correspondence. The principle reasons for our opposition are:

Absence of discussion on the need for the transmission line

No justification has been offered for the need for the proposed transmission line. AWA is not aware that this need has been discussed in any public forum. AWA firmly believes that this project should not be approved without any public discussion, including documentation, of the need for the project.

Absence of discussion on alternatives to the transmission line

Nowhere in the documentation is there any suggestions that alternatives to an above-ground 240 kV 60 metre high transmission line have ever been considered.

In jurisdictions around the world, the use of underground transmission is increasingly being used. Why has this not option been discussed in this case?

Route selection

Until these fundamental issues have been addressed, AWA does not wish to engage in any discussions about which of the different proposed lines might or might not be preferable. Such a discussion would be clearly be premature.

Environmentally Significant Areas

Much of the area which would be affected by these developments has been recognized by your government as *Nationally Environmentally Significant*. One proposed route could hardly have been designed to have more impact on the *Nationally Environmentally Significant* area.

Visual blight

The proposed transmission line would be an unacceptable visual and environmental blight on this landscape.

Pre-empting the Land-Use Framework

The Alberta government's December 2008 *Land-use Framework* (LUF) has placed a renewed emphasis on the Eastern Slopes as the source of clean drinking water for southern Alberta. "Historically, watershed and recreation were deemed priority uses of the Eastern Slopes. These priorities should be confirmed, and sooner rather than later."

The LUF recognizes that "There are more and more people doing more and more activities on the same piece of land," and stressed that "Our land, air and water are not unlimited. They can be exhausted or degraded by overuse...We have reached a tipping point, where sticking to the old rules will not produce the quality of life we have come to expect. If we want our children to enjoy the same quality of life that current generations have, we need a new land-use system."

If the "old rules" are clearly not working, and the "new rules" are currently being developed by the South Saskatchewan Regional Advisory Council and others, it would make no sense to approve such a significant development before the guidelines are in place to determine whether it is appropriate in this area or not. AWA also notes that in the October 2007 *Land-Use Framework Workbook Summary Report*, 74.3% of participants believed that "At present, the balance between developing and using our land versus conservation of our land is too focused on economic development and growth."

In an article in the January 10, 2011 Calgary Herald, Finance Minister Ted Morton is quoted about the proposed magnetite mine, but his comments apply equally to the proposed AltaLink developments: "If you look at the policy document for the land-use framework, it identifies the Eastern Slopes in terms of priority uses, as watershed and recreation -- not mining." Minister Morton concludes that "It would be premature to approve a project like this before the regional plan for the South Saskatchewan region is finalized." AWA believes that exactly the same thing applies to the AltaLink proposals.

Yours truly

ALBERTA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION



Nigel Douglas,
Conservation Specialist

cc: Hon. Ted Morton, Minister of Finance
cc: Hon. Mel Knight, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development
cc: Evan Berger, MLA
cc: David Swann, Leader Alberta Liberal Party
cc: Brian Mason, Leader Alberta NDP Party
cc: Paul Hinman, MLA
cc: AltaLink