



Endangered species such as these burrowing owls live on the Potatogate lands. AWA applauds Premier Redford for cancelling this attempt to sell these public lands.

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AWA Fights New Transmission Lines in the Livingstone

This summer AWA joined local residents and landowners opposing rampant transmission line development in southwest Alberta's Livingstone region. On August 23, 2011, a three-day Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) hearing began in Pincher Creek to discuss preliminary issues in the application process by the Alberta Energy Systems Operator (AESO) and Altalink to build 240 kV transmission lines through this beautiful and pristine landscape.

AESO and Altalink's development proposals seem to fly in the face of commitments made on numerous occasions by Altalink President and Chief Executive Officer, Scott Thon. In 2007, Thon promised to take "an innovative approach to transmission by focusing first on reusing existing rights-of-way and reusing the land currently occupied by older, lower capacity lines for new, high capacity lines before we look to cut a new path of land." This message does not seem to have been delivered to and/or heard by the staff planning to construct a new Fidler to Chapel Rock line through Alberta's unspoiled Livingstone Range.

Previously AUC granted a "needs" approval to AESO. This recognized the "need" for a new transmission line running from Goose Lake, near the Oldman Dam, west to the Crowsnest Pass. (AWA did not agree that such a "need" had been demonstrated, nor that AESO considered seriously alternatives such as buried lines). Since receiving "needs" approval for that specific corridor, Altalink has proposed a dizzying

number of alternative locations and routes for substations and transmission lines, including options far beyond the route for which they originally received permission. AWA believes that receiving "needs" permission for one particular route should not give Altalink carte blanche to build transmission lines wherever they want in southern Alberta without due process. If they do need to construct new lines, which is questionable, then they should be looking to honour the promises made by their own president and use already existing transmission corridors.

Peter Sherrington, AWA member and former president, represented AWA at the hearing. Numerous local landowners and members of the Livingstone Landowners' Group also played a major role. Peter commented afterwards that the issue is as "close to a no-brainer" as he's seen.

- Nigel Douglas