

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: Manitoba Hydro
PROPOSAL NAME: St. Vital Transmission Complex
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: 2
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Transportation and Transmission
CLIENT FILE NO.: 5719.00

OVERVIEW:

Manitoba Sustainable Development received a proposal dated May 30, 2014 for a Class 2 licence pursuant to *The Environment Act* for the St. Vital Transmission Complex project. The project includes two new 230 kV transmission lines, called Letellier and La Verendrye, which would originate from the St. Vital Station located near the intersection of Bishop Grandin and Lagimodiere boulevards. The Letellier line (119 km) would travel through south-central Manitoba to the Letellier Station near Letellier, Manitoba. The La Verendrye line (37 km) would traverse south of Winnipeg to the La Verendrye Station located near Oak Bluff, Manitoba.

Copies of the Proposal were placed in the Public Registries located at the Legislative Library (200 Vaughan Street), the Winnipeg Millennium Public Library, and the Environmental Approvals Branch Website at <http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/eal/registries/5719hydrostvital/index.html>.

A notice soliciting public comments on the Proposal was placed in the Winnipeg Free Press and the Emerson Southeast Journal on Saturday, July 5, 2014, and in the Steinbach Carillon on Thursday, July 3, 2014. Copies of the Proposal were also provided to the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for this project, which is composed of provincial government representatives with expertise on the potential impacts of the project. The newspaper and TAC notifications invited responses until August 5, 2014.

A request for additional information based on the comments received from the public and the TAC was sent to the proponent on September 15, 2014. A response was received on October 6, 2014. The information request and the proponent's response were placed in the public registries.

This report provides a summary of the Environmental Approvals Branch's review of the public and TAC comments received on the Proposal and licence recommendations. A draft Environment Act licence is attached.

ENVIRONMENT ACT PROPOSAL – REVIEW SUMMARY

Following is a summary of the comments received from the public pertaining to the Proposal, additional information requested based on these comments, the responses received, and the disposition of the comments.

ASSESSMENT OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

List of Public Commenters:

No.	Name
1	Frank Capasso, President, Sage Creek Residents' Association
2	Don Doerksen
3	Myron Knodel
4	Jay Amell
5	Jay Myshkowsky
6	Alex Sotiriadis
7	Greg Wolitski
8	Jennifer Ham
9	Van Ngo
10	Chris Bohemier
11	Antonina and Patrick De Pau
12	Nicole Hartleb
13	Angela Taylor
14	Ashley Davis
15	Beverley Hedley-Kippen & James Kippen
16	Scott Loepp
17	Patrick Macchia
18	SC Spak
19	South of Sage Creek
20	David Bastable
21	Dave & Michelle Wowchuk
22	Jessica Keus
23	Brigitte L.
24	Dale LaMonica

Summary of Public Comments:

- Transmission lines should be routed outside of the city, around Sage Creek;
- The lines through the Sage Creek housing development should be buried;
- If the proposed transmission lines can't be buried, they should both be placed on one line of towers;

- The existing and the two proposed transmission lines should be placed on one lines of towers;
- A petition opposing the transmission line routing through Sage Creek has been signed by 500 people;
- Sage Creek is supposed to be a “naturally appealing” community, the transmission lines will not be visually appealing and contradict the goals of the community;
- The transmission lines would ruin the beautiful green landscape in Sage Creek;
- Installation of the transmission lines in the corridor would result in a reduction of property values;
- The transmission line corridor is a green space with walking paths, the project would reduce the community’s green space and create an eye sore;
- Concerns regarding the health risks associated with living near transmission lines;
- Burying the lines in Sage Creek would reduce the exposure to EMF;
- Concerns regarding the location of the transmission lines in close proximity to the future site of a new school in Sage Creek;
- Since there is no guarantee that there are no health risks associated with locating transmission lines near houses, other options should be used when available;
- Current scientific studies on electro-magnetic frequencies conclude that there are not enough studies done to conclusively say whether or not transmission lines are safe;
- Concern for the health and safety of the many animals, particularly migratory birds, around the transmission line;
- In Europe, transmission lines are forbidden within a certain distance of habitation, and they have been linked to leukemia within young children; many young families live in this neighbourhood;
- The corridor was obtained by Manitoba Hydro when it was in a farmer’s field, it is now located in a family housing development;
- Concern regarding noise associated with the transmission lines due to Corona effects;
- Residents of Sage Creek were not made aware of the project when they purchased their properties;
- The Community of Sage Creeks supports economic development, but it should not be done at the expense of having the community transformed into an industrial park;
- Rather than installing these lines, the energy that is currently being exported could be rerouted to service southern Manitoba;
- Concern that having four transmission lines in the corridor south of Sage Creek up to the floodway will reduce property values, increase health risks, and decrease the enjoyment of life for those whose properties they cross;
- The health risks associated with four transmission lines in one corridor has not been studied by Manitoba Hydro;
- The lines should be double circuited up to the floodway, landowners should be compensated, or the properties should be purchased by Manitoba Hydro;
- Concern regarding having the infrastructure close to a farm yard due to line buzz, stray voltage, and the inconvenience;
- Concern that the proposed transmission lines traverse a farm instead of following the existing Hydro corridor close to the proposed route;
- Hydro poles are a hazard on farm land, they impose a cost and inconvenience to the farmer, and are more problematic as equipment sizes increase;
- The area parallel to the existing line is now wasted land and infested with weeds; and

- The proposed route also passes through a tree line which acts as a wind break and is used as a blind for goose hunting.

Information Request:

The Environmental Approvals Branch requested that the proponent provide information and responses to specific concerns raised by the public relating to proposed realignments in agricultural land and around Sage Creek, and additional health risks where there would be four transmission lines in one right-of-way.

Disposition of Public Comments:

- Manitoba Hydro's response to the information request satisfactorily addresses the public concerns included in the request.
- In response to the concerns raised by members of the Community of Sage Creek during the public engagement process, Manitoba Hydro changed the design of the project to have the two transmission lines placed on one line of towers (double circuit) through Sage Creek. Only one mile of transmission line can be double circuited due to North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) standards.
- The routing through Sage Creek is on an existing right-of-way owned by Manitoba Hydro since 1970. Manitoba Hydro's intention to install additional transmission lines in this right-of-way were communicated to Qualico and their representatives in early 2004, December 2004, and in June 2006. Home building in Sage Creek began in early 2007.
- Routing around Sage Creek would require acquisition of property rights, impact to additional private lands, additional length, and additional project cost.
- Manitoba Hydro indicated in the Proposal that burying the lines would be more than 10 times the cost of an overhead design.
- Regarding concerns of routing through agricultural land, the Proposal states that in-field placement of the lines was avoided where possible and that between St. Vital Station and Letellier Station, a tubular steel H-frame tower design will be used, which have a smaller footprint than self supporting structures.
- The Proposal includes a description of compensation for inconvenience and increased costs associated with farming around tower structures, including reduced productivity and weed control.
- The Proposal states that shelterbelts that could not be avoided during routing will be replaced by Manitoba Hydro with a new location determined in discussion with the landowner.
- The Proposal states the following regarding exposure to EMF:
 - a. The Manitoba Clean Environment Commission developed a Health and EMF Expert's Consensus Statement on the Human Health Effects of EMF in 2001 which concluded that "The weight of scientific evidence does not support the conclusion that extremely low frequency EMFs such as those produced by power lines are a cause of adverse effects on human health.";
 - b. In Canada, the Federal Provincial Territorial Radiation Protection Committee (FPTRPC) has established a Working Group to carry out periodic reviews, recommend appropriate actions and provide position statements that reflect the common opinion of intergovernmental authorities on EMFs. The FPTRPC concluded that "there is insufficient scientific evidence showing exposure to EMFs from power lines can cause adverse health effects such as cancer"; and

- c. Detailed scientific assessments by the World Health Organization, the National Cancer Institute (US) and other health agencies have found that the epidemiological research, which notes a correlation between EMF and childhood leukemia, does not provide a reliable scientific basis (with evidence of causality) to conclude that exposure to EMF below the science-based international exposure guidelines can cause or contribute to any adverse health effects.
- Magnetic and electric fields at the edge of the right-of-way with the proposed four transmission lines were assessed to be well below International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation (INCIRP) guidelines. INCIRP guidelines are endorsed by the World Health Organization as protective of public health.

ASSESSMENT OF TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

The following is a summary of comments received from the TAC pertaining to the Proposal, additional information requested based on these comments, the responses received, and the disposition of the comments.

Technical Advisory Committee Member	Response Provided
Manitoba Sustainable Development: Compliance and Enforcement Branch Climate Change and Air Quality Branch Wildlife and Fisheries Branch Parks and Protected Spaces Branch Forestry Branch Indigenous Relations Branch Lands Branch Water Quality Management Section Groundwater Management Section Office of Drinking Water Water Use Licensing Section Water Control Works Licensing Section Regional Services Branch	No response See below No concerns No response No response No response See below No response No response No concerns No concerns No concerns No response
Manitoba Sport, Culture, and Heritage: Heritage Branch	No response
Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade: Energy Development Branch Petroleum Branch Office of Fire Commissioner Work Place Safety & Health	No response
Manitoba Infrastructure: Flood Forecasting Branch Highway Planning and Design Branch	No response See below
Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations	No response
Manitoba Health, Seniors and Active Living	No response
Manitoba Agriculture: Land Use Branch	See below

Manitoba Sustainable Development, Air Quality Section

Summary of Comments:

The Proposal is not expected to have a significant impact on air quality provided that the measures cited are implemented. A clause regarding noise should be included in the License.

Disposition:

The draft licence contains a clause that addresses noise nuisance.

Manitoba Sustainable Development, Lands Branch**Summary of Comments:**

The Lands Branch has no concerns, but notes that a portion of the Southern Loop Transmission line:

- The proposed line traverses Duff Roblin Provincial Park. Approval from the Director of Parks and Protected Areas is required for all activities that will impact the Provincial Park; and
- The Wildlife and Fisheries Branch should have an opportunity to comment on lands impacted by the project that are coded for wildlife management.

Disposition:

The requirement for permanent right to access the right-of-way from the Parks Branch for the crossing of the park is noted in the Proposal. The Proposal was reviewed by the Wildlife and Fisheries Branch. They indicated they had no concerns with the project.

Manitoba Infrastructure, Highway Planning and Design Branch**Summary of Comments:**

Information on permits that may be required for the project was provided. It was noted that Manitoba Infrastructure (MI) has several long-term plans and initiatives that might affect and/or be affected by the proposed alignment and that Manitoba Hydro should contact them to discuss these plans and initiatives. MI also expressed concerns regarding:

- the potential for towers to hinder future expansion of the Red River Floodway and maintenance such as vegetation control;
- tower placement on the dikes of the floodway;
- proximity of the floodway crossing to the control structure;
- proximity of the transmission line to the Seine River Siphon; and
- the number of proposed transmission lines crossing the Floodway Yard.

Disposition:

These comments were forwarded to the proponent for consideration. The draft licence contains a clause requiring the proponent to enter into a memorandum of agreement with the Government of Manitoba relating to the construction and operation of the crossing of provincial waterways, including the Red River Floodway.

Manitoba Agriculture, Land Use Branch (formerly Crops Branch)

Summary of Comments:

Biosecurity is important to the agriculture community and to Manitoba Agriculture. The same commitment to address biosecurity concerns indicated in the Vegetation Management Section of the Proposal should be made by all sectors of Manitoba Hydro's operations where entry to agricultures land occurs, including but not limited to operations of surveying, construction and line maintenance.

Disposition:

The draft licence contains a clause requiring Manitoba Hydro to submit a detailed biosecurity plan for the project during construction and maintenance. The Proposal states that Manitoba Hydro and contractors will follow their Agricultural Biosecurity Policy where applicable.

PUBLIC HEARING:

There was one request for a Clean Environment Commission public hearing. A hearing is not recommended as the concerns received from the public have been addressed by the proponent in their response to the Information Request, by the proposed mitigation measures, and in the conditions of the draft licence.

CROWN CONSULTATION OF INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES:

Crown Consultation of Indigenous Communities is being carried out for the project. An Environment Act licence will not be issued for the project until the Consultation is complete.

RECOMMENDATION:

The concerns raised in the TAC and public comments received relating to the Proposal can be addressed in the mitigation proposed by the proponent, as conditions of licensing for the project, or have been forwarded to the proponent for information where applicable. It is recommended that an Environment Act licence be issued for the project subject to the limits, terms and conditions as described in the attached draft licence. Enforcement of the licence is assigned to the Environmental Compliance and Enforcement Branch of Manitoba Sustainable Development.

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