

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS

PROPONENT: Manitoba Hydro
PROPOSAL NAME: Pointe du Bois / Bernic Lake 138 kV
Transmission Line
CLASS OF DEVELOPMENT: 2
TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT: Transmission
CLIENT FILE NO.: 4290.00

OVERVIEW:

The Proposal was dated December 15, 1997 and was received on December 19, 1997. The advertisement of the Proposal read as follows:

"A Proposal filed by Manitoba Hydro to construct a 20 kilometer, 138 kV transmission line originating from the Winnipeg Hydro owned Pointe du Bois transformer station and terminating at the Bernic Lake mine transformer station. The new line is needed to replace the existing 72 kV line from Pointe du Bois to Bernic Lake in order to meet current and future electrical needs in the Bernic Lake area. The project will use a portion of the existing 72 kV line right-of-way for 65% of its length. The remaining distance near the Pointe du Bois area will be located on new right-of-way. Once the new line is in service, the 72 kV will be decommissioned and salvaged. An Environmental Impact Statement has been filed by Manitoba Hydro in support of their Application. The in-service date for the project is targeted for the end of October, 1999."

The Proposal was advertised in the Lac du Bonnet Leader on Tuesday, January 6, 1998. It was made available for public review at registries located at the Manitoba Eco-Network, the Centennial Public Library, the Rural Municipality of Lac du Bonnet and the Village of Lac du Bonnet. It was also distributed to the "Transmission" TAC members for comment. All comments were requested by January 28, 1998.

PUBLIC RESPONSE

Stuart Jonasson
Manitoba Trappers Association
Box 49
Great Falls, MB R0E 0V0

- Fax received January 28, 1998.
- express the following concerns:
 - the potential negative impact on traplines directly affected by the project, and
 - the impact of the line clearing on wildlife habitat, in particular the pine marten.

The respondent notes that he has had direct discussions with Manitoba Hydro regarding these concerns and anticipates that these concerns can be satisfactorily addressed.

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Alice Chambers
10 Burrows Road
Pinawa, MB R0E 1L0

- letter dated January 28, 1998 and received by Fax on January 29, 1998.
- compliment Hydro on their pre-proposal consultation process and their efforts into collecting input and making the public aware of the project.
- note that the proposal is deficient in the following areas:
 - lack of a rehabilitation plan for the portions of the portions of the present line that will not be included within the ROW for the new line.
 - lack of information on the flora and fauna in the area, particularly rare and endangered species of plants and a list of migratory birds or year round birds and their flightpaths in the area.
 - mitigation for avian collisions.
 - definitive justification for the increase in voltage and plans for additional lines in the area.
 - identification, mitigation and decommissioning of any access roads and borrow pits required for the project.
 - practices to prevent leaching of wood preservatives from poles and spills of hazardous materials from entering wetlands and watercourses.
- recommend that a more thorough study of the proposed route be undertaken which would include a long term vegetation management plan for the line.

The plan should also address preventative methods to reduce the potential for avian collisions with the line.

TAC COMMENTS

Natural Resources

- request that Manitoba Hydro contact DNR regional staff well in advance of any work beginning on the project so that on-site details can be worked out.
- request that all merchantable timber be salvaged according to DNR guidelines.

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Disposition: DNR comments can be accommodated as conditions of licencing.

Environment(Eastern-Interlake):

- recommend that the proponent ensure that all gasoline and associated products and all waste, including hazardous and non-hazardous waste, is handled, stored and collected in accordance with all applicable Manitoba Environment legislation and regulations.
- recommend that the contractor and sub-contractors are aware of those particular conditions in the licence that pertain to the construction or pre-construction activity in which they are involved. Recommend that this requirement be accomplished by providing a copy of the licence to the contractor and holding a pre-construction meeting where the details of the licence can be reviewed.

Disposition: Comments can be accommodated as licencing conditions.

- (Water Quality Management) - most of Water Quality Management's concerns have been addressed in the Proposal.
- recommend that any salvaged wood poles stored in temporary storage sites should be elevated to prevent leachate from wood preservatives directly contacting the soil.
- recommend that Manitoba Hydro continue to maintain custody of the old poles until such time as they can be disposed of in an appropriate manner. Manitoba Hydro should advise Manitoba Environment in writing as to the intended method of

disposal of the old poles and cross arms and receive approval from Manitoba Environment with regard to the intended method of disposal.

- recommend that the setback distance for temporary marshaling yards or remote temporary storage sites be located a minimum distance of 100 metres from any wetland or watercourse.

Disposition: Comments can be accommodated as conditions of licencing.

Rural Development

- no planning concerns

Historic Resources

- note that Manitoba Hydro completed a heritage resource impact assessment (HRIA) during October 1997 in accordance with a request from the Historic Resources Branch. No heritage resources were located along the transmission line right-of-way.

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Therefore, the Historic Resources Branch has no further concerns with regard to the impact from the project on heritage resources.

Fisheries and Oceans

- no concerns with the project. The route selection and proposed mitigation measures considered potential impacts to fish and fish habitat.

Environment Canada

- comments provided on the project are as follows:
- recommend that a field survey of suspected rare and endangered species of birds and vegetation be undertaken prior to beginning construction.
- recommend that all construction and frequent use of the right-of-way not be done between April and July to avoid adverse impacts to nesting migratory birds.
- recommend that areas requiring hand clearing, buffer zones, sensitive areas, and required mitigation be identified prior to implementation. Permission for deviation should only be granted by a qualified DNR staff following a site inspection of the area.

- recommend that a rehabilitation plan for the abandoned transmission line and a vegetation management plan for the new line be developed.
- recommend that the transmission line crossing of Bernic Lake be marked to avoid avian strikes.
- recommend that a plan for the development, use and rehabilitation of borrow pits be provided.

Disposition: Additional information was requested from Manitoba Hydro to address the EPS comments.

Follow-up

In response to the comments provided by the public and the TAC on the Environment Act review of the Proposal Manitoba Hydro provided additional information to address the issues raised:

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- Manitoba Hydro will develop an Environmental Protection Plan prior to construction that will outline specific construction methods to be followed during construction and decommissioning. The plan will include:
 - instructions to construction personnel and contractors to minimize disturbance to the advanced state of vegetation growth along the unused portions of the existing ROW;
 - identification of travel corridors for wildlife in conjunction with the local Trappers Association and Natural Resources;
 - specific measures to mitigate environmental effects of access trail development and maintenance;
 - the identification of potentially sensitive areas along the proposed ROW and site specific measures to minimize ground disturbance in these areas.

- Manitoba Hydro will undertake a reconnaissance level rare and endangered plant survey along the proposed right-of-way during the summer of 1998. Ecosites favoured by rare and endangered plants will be identified in the Environmental Protection Plan with

specific construction methods identified for these areas. Trees beyond the right-of-way which may pose a hazard to the line will be specifically identified and either trimmed or removed. A monitoring program to evaluate vegetation response in select areas of the new ROW in the Pointe du Bois area will also be undertaken.

- Manitoba Hydro's review of available data and discussions with DNR staff indicate that no significant bird concentrations have been noted in proximity to the proposed route. The need for an avian survey was therefore not considered to be necessary. Birds species observed during the vegetation survey proposed for the summer of 1998 will be recorded. Manitoba Hydro intends to place aviation markers at the Bernic Lake crossing to improve the visibility of the transmission line for birds. The project will be constructed during the winter to minimize impacts on vegetation and migratory birds.

- Manitoba Hydro's vegetation management programs are directed towards reducing the use of herbicides in favour of mechanical, manual and biological control methods. Low growth vegetation within transmission line ROW is encouraged in order to provide cover for small mammals crossing transmission line ROW. Manitoba Hydro intends to work with the local trappers association and DNR to maintain travel corridors for wildlife, particularly the pine marten which was identified as local species of interest.

- Clearing and construction of the proposed line and any associated access trails and work pads will require modest amounts of borrow material which will be taken from existing borrow sites in the Pointe du Bois and Bernic Lake areas. Active sites will not require rehabilitation. Any rehabilitation required will be carried out according to the measures described in the EIS.

- The location of the proposed line along the western portion of the route in the Pointe du Bois area was selected to avoid encroachment on private property and to reduce visual impacts of the towers to cottagers.

- Fixed width transmission line ROW are associated with safety requirements for helicopter based inspections.

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Conclusion and Recommendation

On February 16, 1998 Alice Chambers wrote to the Approval Branch to advise that Manitoba Hydro's response clarified the majority of the concerns which were raised in her letter to the Approvals Branch dated January 28, 1998. Approvals Branch concludes that Manitoba Hydro has satisfactorily addressed the public and TAC

comments on the Proposal. A public hearing on the proposal is not recommended. It is recommended that the proposal be licenced as applied for and in accordance with limits, terms and conditions provided in the attached draft Environment Act Licence. It is further recommended that the enforcement of the Licence be assigned to staff of the Manitoba Environment Eastern-Interlake Region.