

# Letter to the Editor

## Red Deer Advocate

### Re: Letter Safeguarding access to electrical power

Thursday, December 16

The Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) wants to respond to comments made in a letter that appeared in your publication on December 13.

The writer referenced the Edmonton to Calgary Transmission Reinforcement Project, one of four projects identified and approved as Critical Transmission Infrastructure under the Government of Alberta's *Electric Utilities Act*, and suggests the AESO should consider decommissioning one of the existing transmission lines and build new transmission infrastructure on the vacated right of way. The writer also suggests the AESO should expedite development of Enmax's Shepard Generation project to reduce demand on the existing North/South lines, allowing for the older lines to be removed.

The existing 240 kV system between Calgary and Edmonton includes six transmission lines that are currently running near capacity during certain times of the year, depending on the system demands as well as planned and unplanned line outages. The AESO is unable to remove any existing transmission infrastructure until the staged development of two 500 kV high voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission lines occurs and both lines are operational. At that time the AESO will do further studies to examine the possibility of removing some of the older infrastructure.

The planned reinforcement of the transmission system between the Edmonton and Calgary regions is needed to avoid reliability issues for consumers in southern and central Alberta, improve the efficiency of the transmission system, restore the capacity of existing 240 kV lines and interties and avoid congestion.

Regarding Enmax's proposed Shepard Generation project, the AESO supports the connection of all forms of generation, regardless of their type or location, and Shepard is no exception. In fact, the AESO will soon be filing its Needs Identification Document with the Alberta Utilities Commission to facilitate interconnection of the Shepard project to the electricity grid, even though the project's in-service date is not planned to occur until 2015. The AESO cannot control timelines imposed by a generator.

It is important to note that the development of generation cannot occur in the absence of a strong transmission grid to carry electricity from where it is produced to where it is needed. A robust transmission grid will ensure the market works in a fair and efficient manner and that competitively priced electricity is available to consumers everywhere in Alberta.

Transmission infrastructure is a public good that must be available in advance of need; Alberta's quality of life and economic well being depends on it. The AESO encourages you to visit our public engagement website for more information about the need for transmission upgrades in our province. Please go to [www.poweringalberta.com](http://www.poweringalberta.com) to learn more.

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