

Common Voice Northwest

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ENERGY TASK FORCE

May 16, 2022

Independent Electricity System Operator
Northwest Bulk Transmission Line Engagement

Greetings from the Common Voice Northwest Energy Task Force

We have been reviewing the proposed phasing of the Waasigan transmission line that will increase the capacity to move electricity from Thunder Bay through Atikokan to Dryden an important addition to the electrical grid in the region.

However, we now understand that while Phase 1 has a projected date of installation, the same does not apply to Phase 2 creating significant uncertainty in our minds. In the letter of May 3, 2022, from the IESO¹ it is written that

“The update shows that under the reference demand forecast, Phase 1 is needed from 2025 onwards and Phase 2 is needed from 2026 to 2027...”

However, the letter goes on to state that

“Phase 1 being placed in-service as close to the end of 2025 as possible” and that “The IESO will continue to monitor developments in the Region and provide the targeted in-service date for Phase 2”

The Energy Task Force fails to understand the uncertainty of the plans for Phase 2 in as much as the primary reason to increase the capacity of the

¹ Letter to R. Reinmuller, Director, Transmission Planning, Hydro One Inc. from Ahmad Maria, Director Transmission Planning, IESO, May 3, 2022.

system is to ensure that the mining projects of both today and tomorrow in the Dryden area have the supply needed to grow and operate.

As can be seen in the following map the bulk of the mining projects are well north of Atikokan and will only be served by phase 2. There is only one potential mine immediately north of Atikokan and its development has been on hold for a number of years. It is essential that Phase 2 be constructed as soon as possible!



Figure 1 Northwestern Ontario Map showing existing mines (red circle) and projects that are working towards building an operating mine (blue circle). All of the new mines will require a connection to the grid if they are to avoid using natural gas or diesel fuel

Constructing Phase 1 and 2 concurrently maximizes the benefits to the region and minimizes the disruption to individual communities. It also ensures that there can be continuous employment rather than employment followed by layoffs and then rehiring those that remain available.

Establishing a firm schedule now for Phase 2 will send a positive signal to the mining proponents in the Dryden area that power will be available when they are ready to commence production.

As this is now a partnership with a group of First Nations it is essential that the full project be scheduled rather than only one part. This would ensure that all training can be put directly to use without interruption. We understand that full benefits to Indigenous partners and communities can only be realized through building the whole line between Shuniah, Atikokan and Dryden

In addition, any delay in constructing phase 2 may place the entire project in jeopardy in the event that a new government is in power in 2026 and initially delays the construction while they 'study it' then decide on other priorities leaving in effect a stranded asset in place.

We respectfully request that the schedule be revised to ensure that Phase 2 is constructed in concert with Phase 1.

Yours truly

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Iain Angus". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Iain Angus
Chair
Common Voice Northwest Energy Task Force