

GUIDELINES

for

Environmental Preview Report

for the

Star Lake to Valentine Gold Transmission Line TL271 Project

Honourable Bernard Davis

Minister

Environment and Climate Change

September 22, 2021

ENVIRONMENTAL PREVIEW REPORT GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are intended to assist the proponent, Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, with the preparation of the Environmental Preview Report (EPR) for the proposed Star Lake to Valentine Gold Transmission Line TL271 Project. The EPR is a report that presents the results of an investigation based on readily available information that supplements the information provided by the proponent upon registration of the undertaking. The purpose of the information in the EPR is to assist the Minister of Environment and Climate Change in making a determination as to the potential for significant environmental from the proposed undertaking and whether an environmental impact statement will be required. The EPR is expected to be as concise as possible while presenting the comprehensive information necessary to make an informed decision.

The EPR should include and update the information provided in the original registration document(s) and focus on the information gaps identified during the government and public review of the registration. The EPR should address the information gaps in sufficient detail to enable the Minister of Environment and Climate Change to make an informed decision as to the potential for significant environmental effect from the undertaking.

The contents of the EPR should be organized according to the following format:

1. NAME OF UNDERTAKING:

The undertaking has been assigned the Name “Star Lake to Valentine Gold Transmission Line TL271 Project”.

2. PROPONENT:

Name the proponent and the corporate body, if any, and state the mailing and e-mail address.

Name the chief executive officer if a corporate body, and telephone number and e-mail address.

Name the principal contact person for purposes of environmental assessment and state the official title, telephone number and e-mail address.

3. THE UNDERTAKING:

State the nature of the project.

State the purpose/rationale/need for the project. If the proposal is in response to an established need, this should be clearly stated. Identify needs that are immediate as well as potential future needs.

4. DESCRIPTION OF THE UNDERTAKING:

Provide a complete overview of the project in the following subsections, including information about the preferred choice of location, design, construction standards, operation and maintenance standards, etc.

4.1 Geographical Location / Physical Components / Existing Environment:

This section shall include, at a minimum, the following:

1. An accurate description of the proposed preferred and alternative transmission line routes, access routes, facilities and equipment, including GPS location coordinates and digital GIS files (e.g. Google Earth *.kml file, a GPS (*.gpx) file, a shapefile). Attach an original base map (1:25,000 scale) and/or recent air photos/aerial imagery, and,
 - a) Existing trails/ roads for access; sections requiring maintenance or new construction; a description of any cutting, in-filling, ditching, etc.;
 - b) Source and location of in-filling materials, if required;
 - c) Pole/tower locations;
 - d) A commitment to maintain a minimum 30-meter undisturbed zone between waterbodies that appear on 1:50,000 scale National Topographic System maps or the topographic mapping layer shown in the Provincial Land Use Atlas at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/landuseatlas/details/> or on Google Earth at <https://www.google.com/earth/>.
 - e) Identification of any areas where a 30-meter buffer cannot be maintained around the above waterbodies;
 - f) A description of all waterbody and wetland crossings. A wetland includes any wetland that appears on the Natural Resources Canada 1:50,000 scale National Topographic System maps or on the topographic mapping layer shown in the Provincial Land Use Atlas at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/landuseatlas/details/>.
2. The EPR shall include a description of the freshwater environment. The information provided shall include, but not be limited to, a description of:
 - a) A general overview of the freshwater environment in the area;
 - b) The location of all in-water works, e.g. all stream crossings, noting tributaries of rivers that are scheduled rivers under the Fisheries Act;
 - c)
3. With regards to wetlands, as defined above, and federally and provincially listed species at risk:

- a) Describe/identify all wetlands within the project boundary. Provide a detailed description and specify the area of all wetlands that will be impacted by the proposed project.
- b) Describe/identify all habitats of federally and provincially listed species at risk within the project boundary.

4.2 Construction:

State the time period in which proposed construction will proceed (if staged, list each stage and its approximate duration) and proposed date of first physical construction-related activity.

The details, materials, methods, schedule, and location of all planned construction activities must be presented.

Describe how the project would be constructed if there was a future requirement to decommission and rehabilitate the area. The description shall include, but not be limited to:

1. Details regarding the design, construction, installation, and operation of all project components that may impact fish and fish habitat including:
 - a) The timing and duration of the construction period for in-water works;
 - b) For all in-water works include whether installation of infrastructure is required, such as culverts (open or bottom-less culverts) or bridge structures; and
 - c) A description of project components for in-water works such as fording, removal of aquatic and/or stream side vegetation, infilling, water use activities, changes to natural flow regime.
2. Scheduling must take into consideration mitigations to help reduce any negative effects on wildlife in the area including a description of how construction activities will be planned to avoid and/or reduce disturbance or harm to migratory birds and their nests, and species at risk. An Avifauna Management Plan shall be included that outlines mitigation measures and monitoring to reduce potential effects. The plan may be included as an appendix to the EPR.
3. The Office of Women and Gender Equality requires a commitment for the development a Women's Employment Plan to improve employment and training opportunities for women and other underrepresented groups.
 - a) The WEP should identify specific commitments to support the recruitment, training, employment and retention of women and diverse populations.
 - b) Women's Employment Plans should include establish proactive policies, practices, and lines of accountability aimed at creating inclusive workplaces free from harassment and discrimination. The WEP must outline clear lines of communication to ensure adherence to the company's WEP for contractors, sub-contractors and unions.

4.3 Operation and Maintenance:

All aspects of the operation and maintenance of the proposed development should be presented in detail, including but not limited to the following:

1. A description of how operation and maintenance activities will be planned to avoid and/or reduce disturbance or harm to migratory birds and their nests, and species at risk. An Avifauna Management Plan shall be included that outlines mitigation measures and monitoring to reduce potential effects;
2. A description of project lighting design associated with the operation and maintenance of the project; and,
3. A description of potential accidents and malfunctions that may occur as a result of the operation and maintenance of the project.

5. ALTERNATIVES

Alternative means of carrying out the project to meet the stated purpose and rationale must be provided.

The EPR must identify and describe alternative means and locations of carrying out the project that are technically and economically feasible. The following steps for addressing alternative means and locations are recommended:

- Identify any alternative means and locations to carry out the project;
- Identify the environmental of each alternative means and location;
- Identify the **preferred** means and location and provide rationale for selection; and,
- Provide reasons for the rejection of alternative sites.

Include information from previous project related studies describing alternate locations that were considered, including the expansion of existing sites, reasons for rejection, and reasons supporting the proposed site as the preferred location, if applicable. In addition to the potential environmental affects, each alternative must include a cost analysis and identify the party responsible for bearing the cost of the project.

Alternative locations should be clearly outlined on maps of a suitable scale (i.e. 1:50,000, 1:25,000), aerial imagery and GIS shape files.

6. POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL and MITIGATION:

In this section you will provide detailed information regarding the potential of the project on the environment and the proposed mitigation to be used to avoid adverse environmental effects.

This section must describe, at a minimum, the following:

1. Detailed information regarding the potential and cumulative of the project, both the preferred and alternative routes, on the environment and the proposed mitigation to be used to avoid adverse environmental, including:
 - a) A detailed assessment of potential spatial and temporal effects of the transmission line and associated infrastructure on resident and migrating caribou, with respect to:
 - i. effects from project associated upgrades to access roads and trails during their construction and maintenance;
 - ii. cumulative effects from the transmission line and existing and proposed linear features/corridors and the proposed mine's footprint;
 - b) Identification and assessment of potential spatial and temporal effects on other wildlife species and their habitat, particularly species designated and listed under the provincial **Endangered Species Act** and/or the **Federal Species at Risk Act**, sensitive wildlife species or species of conservation concern; and,
 - c) Identification and details of mitigations to avoid and/or minimize adverse effects to wildlife species, particularly during sensitive time periods such as breeding, brood rearing and migration.
2. The effects of the project on wetlands as previously defined. Include efforts to avoid and minimize wetlands within the project boundary.
3. The effects of the project on migratory birds. The EPR shall include an Avifauna Management Plan that describes appropriate measures to minimize the risk of effects of the construction and operation of the project. The plan may be included as an appendix to the EPR.
4. A description of the cumulative effects of the undertaking in addition to other existing and proposed linear features/corridors and the proposed Valentine Gold Mine footprint.
5. An assessment of the archaeological potential within the project footprint, in accordance with the **Historic Resources Act**, including:
 - a) Ground assessment of Medium Potential Zones to determine whether subsurface testing is warranted, and where warranted, subsurface testing will be undertaken;
 - b) Ground assessment and subsurface testing of High Potential Zones;
 - c) An assessment of the archaeological potential for upgraded and new access roads;
6. A description of the potential effects to fish and fish habitat associated with:
 - a) Work windows and sensitive times of the year (e.g. migration, feeding and spawning) which are critical for fish populations identified in the project area;
 - b) The construction of project facilities or infrastructure including,

- but not limited to; culvert and bridge structures;
- c) In-water works during construction such as; fording, removal of aquatic and/or stream side vegetation, infilling, changes to natural flow regime;
 - d) Turbidity, sedimentation, and/or siltation and other contamination from surface runoff;
 - e) The proponent shall describe mitigation measures to avoid possible death of fish and/or harmful alteration, disruption or destruction of fish habitat (HADD)
7. Measures that will be undertaken to mitigate the potential adverse effects of accidents and malfunctions described in section 4.3.
 8. Identification of how the project will avoid interference with the rights of other legitimate land owners/users; and,
 9. This project may have the potential for significant adverse effects to the outfitting industry through the disruption of wildlife. The primary concern is the Woodland Caribou herds that are within or very near the proposed project throughout different parts of the year. The project may also impact other wildlife, including moose and black bears, and has the potential to impact salmon and brook trout. The EPR shall outline efforts to mitigate negative effects on the big game carry capacity of the area.
 10. You are reminded that the modernized **Fisheries Act** (2019) includes fish and fish habitat protection provisions which came into effect on August 28, 2019. If you are conducting work in or near water you should refer to the *Projects Near Water* website (<http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/pnw-ppe/index-eng.html>) to get information about how to comply with the **Fisheries Act** and as well as information on the project review process. You are responsible for: understanding the effects your project will likely have on fish and fish habitat; taking measures to avoid and mitigate effects to fish and fish habitat; requesting an authorization from the Minister and abiding by the conditions of your authorization when it is not possible to avoid and mitigate project effects on fish and fish habitat; ensuring compliance with all statutory instruments, including federal, provincial, or municipal legislations/requirements. In cases where effects to fish and fish habitat cannot be avoided, and the project does not fall within waterbodies where a Fish and Fish Habitat Protection Program (FFHPP) review isn't required or the scope of the project is not covered under [standards and codes of practice](#), you are asked to submit a [Request for Review](#) to the NL Region-FFHPP at FPP-NL@dfo-mpo.gc.ca.

7. DECOMMISSIONING and REHABILITATION:

Describe all aspects of the decommissioning and rehabilitation plans for the project, assuming the eventual need to eliminate the entire project footprint from the landscape.

This section must describe, but may not be limited to, the following:

1. Details of rehabilitation activities, including efforts to reduce the introduction of invasive species;
2. This project may see an increase in traffic that may lead to disturbances of wildlife including shifts in where they live, disturbances for hunters accessing hunting areas and finding animals in these traditional hunting areas, and other disturbances for outfitters. This has the potential to significantly impact their business. The EPR should outline a decommissioning plan that mitigates negative impact to the outfitting sector.

8. PROJECT- RELATED DOCUMENTS:

Provide a bibliography of all project-related documents already generated by or for the proponent (e.g., feasibility study, engineering reports, etc.).

9. PUBLIC INFORMATION MEETING:

A Public Information Session shall be held at a place adjacent to or in the geographical area of the undertaking, or as the minister may determine, in order to:

1. provide information concerning the undertaking to the people whose environment may be affected by the undertaking;
2. record and respond to the concerns of the local community regarding the environmental of the undertaking; and,
3. present the information gathered to fulfill the requirements of Section 5 of these guidelines.

You are required to notify the Minister and the public of the scheduled meeting **not fewer than 7 days** before that meeting. Public concerns shall be addressed in a separate section of the EPR.

Protocol for these public sessions will comply with Section 10 of the Environmental Assessment Regulations, 2003. Public notification specifications are outlined in Appendix A.

10. APPROVAL OF THE UNDERTAKING:

List the main permits, licences, approvals, and other forms of authorization required for the undertaking, together with the names of the authorities responsible for issuing them (e.g., federal government department, provincial government department, municipal council, etc.)

You are required to provide one paper copy and an electronic version of the EPR, for posting to the Environmental Assessment website, together with a covering letter to the following address:

Minister
Environment and Climate Change
P.O. Box 8700
St. John's NL A1B 4J6

11. FEE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Undertakings with an estimated capital cost greater than \$5 million are subject to the Department's fees for environmental assessment found at <https://www.gov.nl.ca/ecc/env-assessment/fees/>. You are to email an estimate of the capital cost of the undertaking using current standard estimating practices and construction costs, to the following email address:

Director of Environmental Assessment
EAProjectComments@gov.nl.ca

APPENDIX A

Public Notices

Under the provisions of the Environmental Assessment Regulations 2003, Section 10, and where the approved Guidelines require a public information session(s), the following specified public notification requirements must be met by the proponent prior to each meeting:

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public Information Session on the Proposed

Name of undertaking
Location of undertaking

shall be held at
Date and Time
Location

This session shall be conducted by the proponent,
(Proponent name and contact phone number or email address),
as part of the environmental assessment for this project.

The purpose of this session is to describe all aspects of the proposed project and the activities associated with it, and to provide an opportunity for interested persons to request information or state their concerns.

ALL ARE WELCOME

MINIMUM INFORMATION CONTENT OF PUBLIC ADVERTISEMENT

- Minimum newspaper ad size: 2 column widths. Minimum posted ad size: 7" x 5"
- Minimum newspaper ad coverage: Weekend preceding meeting and 3 consecutive days prior to meeting date; to be run in newspaper locally distributed within meeting area or newspaper with closest local distribution area.
- Minimum posted ad coverage: Local Town or City website (if permitted), proponent's web site (if applicable), and local community channel (if applicable), to be posted continually for 1 full week prior to meeting date.