



ATCO Electric Ltd.

Loyalist Fibre Optic Connection Project

September 11, 2023

Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 28408-D01-2023

ATCO Electric Ltd.

Loyalist Fibre Optic Connection Project

Proceeding 28408

Application 28408-A001

September 11, 2023

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The Commission may, no later than 60 days from the date of this decision and without notice, correct typographical, spelling and calculation errors and other similar types of errors and post the corrected decision on its website.

1 Decision summary

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission approves an application from ATCO Electric Ltd. to construct and operate the Loyalist Fibre Optic Connection Project. The project consists of the construction of a fibre optic telecommunications cable designated as ELADFO022.

2 Introduction

2. ATCO Electric applied to construct and operate approximately 640 metres of underground fibre optic cable, designated as ELADFO022, from ATCO Electric's existing Loyalist 903S Substation to ATCO Electric's existing optical protection ground wire on Transmission Line 9L46. The project is located approximately five kilometres southwest of Monitor, Alberta.

3. The proposed project is needed to replace end-of-life telecommunications radio equipment that is no longer supported by the manufacturer. ATCO Electric proposed to install an underground fibre optic cable to maintain connection between the substation and the electrical system communication network.

4. Construction of the project is scheduled to commence in fall 2023 and the targeted in-service date is November 30, 2023.

3 Findings

5. For the reasons outlined below, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed project is in the public interest having regard to the social, economic, and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment.

6. The Commission has determined that the information requirements specified in Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines* have been met.

7. ATCO Electric notified and consulted with landholders, agencies, industry, and other potentially affected parties directly adjacent to the proposed route right-of-way (ROW). ATCO Electric's consultation program did not include Indigenous consultation as there is no known potential impact on Aboriginal rights and traditional uses. ATCO Electric did not receive any objections from stakeholders. The Commission accepts ATCO Electric's assertion that there will be no impacts on directly adjacent stakeholders, given that the project would be located underground and the proposed ROW overlaps an existing ROW for a parallel transmission line.

The Commission finds that the participant involvement program for the proposed project meets the requirements of Rule 007.

8. The Commission agrees that the construction's effect on wildlife is expected to be minimal since the project site is situated in close proximity to an existing roadway and no vegetation clearance is required. ATCO Electric has affirmed that it will conduct a pre-construction survey of the wildlife in the area and build and maintain the proposed infrastructure while complying with all relevant environmental rules and regulations, as well as the conditions specified in the ROW agreements and easements.

9. ATCO Electric prepared an environmental protection plan and committed to implementing all mitigation measures outlined in the plan. The Commission finds that the project's environmental impact will be minimal. The proposed facilities will be located underground and the proposed route is the most direct route from the substation to existing Transmission Line 9L46 while overlapping an existing transmission line ROW and paralleling an adjacent roadway.

10. Based on the foregoing, the Commission considers the application to be in the public interest in accordance with Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

4 Decision

11. The Commission approves Application 28408-A001, under sections 14 and 15 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, and grants ATCO Electric Ltd. the approval set out in Appendix 1 - Telecommunications Facilities Permit and Licence 28048-D02-2023, to construct and operate Fibre Optic Cable ELADFO022 (Appendix 1 will be distributed separately).

Dated on September 11, 2023.

Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Michael Arthur
Commission Member