



**ATCO Electric Ltd.**

**Dog Rib Fibre Optic Connection Project**

**October 19, 2023**

**Alberta Utilities Commission**

Decision 28463-D01-2023

ATCO Electric Ltd.

Dog Rib Fibre Optic Connection Project

Proceeding 28463

Application 28463-A001

October 19, 2023

Published by the:

Alberta Utilities Commission

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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 Dog Rib Fibre Optic Connection Project. The project consists of the construction of a fibre optic telecommunications cable, designated as ELADFO021.

## **2 Introduction**

2. ATCO Electric applied to construct and operate approximately 185 metres of underground fibre optic cable, designated as ELADFO021, from ATCO Electric's existing Dog Rib 2082S Substation to ATCO Electric's existing optical protection ground wire on Transmission Line 9L162. The project is located approximately 23 kilometres northwest of Fort McMurray, 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 electric system's telecommunications network.

4. Construction of the project is scheduled to commence in late 2023 and the targeted in-service date is June 30, 2024.

## **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 interested parties directly affected and directly adjacent to the proposed route right-of-way. ATCO Electric's consultation program did not include Indigenous consultation as there is no known potential impact on Aboriginal rights and traditional uses. Further, the Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Consultation Office advised ATCO Electric that no consultation was required for this project. 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 within existing transmission line and access road rights-of-way. 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 or sensitive plant species during construction is expected to be minimal since the project is situated in an area of existing industrial land use and no new vegetation clearance is required. ATCO Electric has affirmed that it will build and maintain the proposed infrastructure while complying with all relevant environmental rules and regulations, as well as the conditions specified in the right-of-way agreements and easements. Further, ATCO Electric stated that the project right-of-way intersects one wetland, and it submitted the code of practice notification to Alberta Environment and Protected Areas for the proposed route. ATCO Electric committed that it will adhere to the mitigations within the notification.

9. ATCO Electric prepared an environmental protection plan, which describes the project-specific mitigation measures to be employed. ATCO Electric committed to implementing all mitigation measures outlined in the environmental protection plan. The Commission finds that the project's environmental impact will be minimal given that the proposed cable is only 185 metres long and will be installed underground, beneath pre-disturbed land, using bore/directional drilling.

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 28463-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 28463-D02-2023, to construct and operate Fibre Optic Cable ELADFO021 (Appendix 1 will be distributed separately).

Dated on October 19, 2023.

#### **Alberta Utilities Commission**

*(original signed by)*

Doug Hawkins  
Acting Commission Member