

Valerie Kistner

Intervener Final Submission

1. As the last speaker at the hearings held recently in Penticton, you may recall that I touched on a number of concerns I had with the placement of the upgraded lines along the existing right-of-way. The primary concern of my presentation, however, was, and continues to be, health issues. And while I am well aware that the health findings have been inadequate, thus far, in providing conclusive evidence linking high voltage lines to health issues of many kinds I would like to further expound on the need to proceed with caution in choosing the final route for the proposed service upgrade.
2. In my presentation I indicated that I suffered from treatment resistant Major Depressive Disorder. However, having, at one point, lost my train of thought I failed in my efforts to convey the correlation as to why I have concerns about the upgrade through my property.
3. The human brain is an extremely complex structure, and it is fair to say that research into understanding these complexities is in only the infancy stages. That being said, it is clear to researchers that the brain functions by sending electrical impulses. It was this knowledge that led to the first use of Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT) in all of its reputedly horrific forms. The current premise of ECT is that the electric shocks will short-circuit the existing brain circuitry, necessitating the brain to rebuild those same circuits, hopefully, along a newer, healthier route. The procedure has been refined considerably through the years and is currently used successfully on a significant percentage of those patients who choose this procedure for the treatment of their depression.
4. My point is simple. If electrical stimulation can restructure the brains neuro-pathways, it is highly possible that the EMF's surrounding the High Voltage transmission lines could likewise interfere with these same neuro-pathways. And because I am exposed to these EMF's on an ongoing basis, it may be that my brain is constantly being short-circuited and is, thus, unable to heal itself in spite of the hordes of drug therapies I have been prescribed.
5. I am constantly bombarded with EMF's while living and working on our farm. I am, quite literally, shocked, repeatedly, when I climb a ladder to work on our barn and other outbuildings. And, on the afternoon that the hearing concluded, I held my hand up to our fuel tank and was able to see the sparks arcing across to my hand. To recommend a route on the basis that EMF's on the perimeter of the right-of-way will be less than they currently are is a seriously flawed argument.

6. As I mentioned during my statement, I may spend several hours a day directly underneath the lines – during birthing, doing health checks and medical treatments such as worming, trimming hooves, feeding, and while changing irrigation sprinklers. Most of the pens, shelters, and infrastructure such as water lines and water troughs were configured around the right-of-way prior to our purchasing the property perhaps since that area had to be maintained as an access route for Fortis and its predecessors. To do otherwise would have degraded the viability of the property.
7. The existing right-of-way approximately bisects my property on a diagonal. This presents two problems for us. First, to move our existing infrastructure so as to remove our prime work areas from the proximity of the transmission lines would create a considerable financial burden for us. And second, to locate the new transmission line to the east during its construction would position the line closer to my house, which is currently situated directly adjacent to the right-of-way.
8. Positioning the new transmission line to the west wouldn't be any better because it would position the line closer to a second home on the property. This second home provides necessary cash flow to make our mortgage payments since I have been unable to work for the past several years. And because I have been unable to work, should we try to sell and move, my qualifying income for debt servicing of any newly acquired mortgage would be nil. Further, the proposed transmission line upgrade combined with the slowing of the real estate market, makes my farm much less marketable.
9. The requirement to maintain a right-of-way for Fortis to access and service the transmission lines has led to a legacy of buildings and pens, the location of which may be impacting my mental health on a daily basis. From my perspective, the responsible thing for the commission to do would be to relocate the line to the proposed alternate route. It would increase my health and safety through eliminating my chronic exposure to the EMF's. Such action would also provide a socially responsible approach to securing the ongoing safety of the public through minimizing their exposure to EMF's, particularly since the Regional District of the Okanagan Similkameen (RDOS) has suggested imposing a "no-build" zone around the newly located infrastructure.

The following all reference paragraphs in the final submission of FortisBC.

10. P E-20 The argument that Fortis makes that all property owners have benefited by way of a lower purchase price due to the proximity of the transmission line is untenable particularly when they are prepared to quote Mr. Grifone's assertion, in his representation of Mr. Wiltse, that the land supply was defined as being "FINITE" (PE22). The principles of supply and demand are well understood principles of economics. Simply stated, where demand for a commodity exceeds its supply that commodity will rise in price.

11. Given the constraints of the Agricultural Land Reserve and native land claims, undeveloped lakeview properties have, for many years, been in limited supply. Their development for market has generally been at a trickle – a rate slow enough to keep the supply:demand equation in the favour of the developer, and further predicated on the ability to obtain high enough prices to offset the development costs. The Heritage Hills development is a case in point. Its development of 200 lots has spanned more than 15 years. Hence, high prices have been imposed on these properties even though they may have been adjacent to or in proximity to transmission lines. It is only once the homes have been built that they become part of a larger supply and the proximity of the power lines negatively impacts their value.
12. P E-22 Fortis does not specify the area that the PIB lays claim to for timber rights. Provincial Government has the ability to negotiate which areas the band will receive. Further, the PIB is unlikely to want timber in areas that have no access corridors as developing such corridors becomes an additional harvesting cost.
13. P E-26 suggests that the evidence is uncontested that the Okanagan is expected to experience steady population growth over the long term. In support of this argument they quote Mr. Grifone representing Wiltse Holdings. However, the question posed to Mr. Grifone, and his response, have nothing whatsoever to do with projected growth:

Q: And isn't it the problem that wherever a line is built, with a 50 year life, people are going to be living there and no one ever wants it in their back yard right?

A: Correct
14. The concern about people living adjacent to the proposed alternate route will largely be addressed by RDOS through zoning by-laws.
15. P F-29 The entire upland route area is frequented by forestry workers, farmers, hunters, trappers, and outdoor enthusiasts. Farmers have fenced and cross-fenced the area in compliance with Ministry of Environment requirements pertaining to the issuance of grazing permits. Similarly trappers, hunters and forestry workers are constrained by provincial regulations. Outdoor enthusiasts, with their bikes, quads, and snowmobiles already have an extensive network of criss-crossing trails throughout the area so the suggestion that there are areas that are “relatively undisturbed” is, in fact, a relative term. Opening up of a new greenbelt along the transmission corridor should have little resulting impact for them.

16. With respect to the Direnzy Wildlife Management Area, a “management area” does not equate to an extreme need for protection efforts. In fact, the corridor can have a positive impact for Bighorn Sheep who seek open grasslands for grazing which are near to their escape corridors of rugged rock faces and cliffs. Further, Fortis already has numerous transmission lines through protected areas and should, therefore, be adept at protecting those areas. Finally, the national park currently under proposal for the South Okanagan and Similkameen has identified those areas most in need of protection and has included them within its proposed boundaries.
17. P F-30 Fortis argues that the existing corridor is less harmful to the environment. On the surface of course it is almost axiomatic. The existing corridor will disturb less new habitat. It will, however, disturb the existing wildlife that has moved into this corridor during its 40+ years of existence. And if you take their arguments, as presented in P E-26, the continued growth of the Okanagan will result in encroachment into these areas anyway. In fact, they are already suggesting such in P E-22 when they indicate that the PIB claims timber rights in the upland area.
18. P F-30 Fortis asserts that there is no fire damage on the uplands route and that the Carmi area has grown back in since the 1994 wildfire. First, the Carmi area is part of the proposed route. Second, to suggest that it has grown back into a forested area is preposterous. More realistically, it has a light covering of shrubs and grasses, and some new young trees. The existing corridor has more growth of mature trees, as could be expected over a 40 year time frame. So too can the proposed uplands corridor make an environmental “recovery” over its 50-year life.
19. P H-33 Fortis has indicated in their summation that they would need to proceed with the Alternate Route on the same schedule as the existing route at an additional cost of some \$20 million. Their rationale is that the upgrade must be fast-tracked in order to comply with North American grid standards, yet they have waited until 2007 to initiate this project even though
- 1) By that date they were already non-compliant with N-0 and N-1 standards (Paragraph A 3)
 - 2) They identified the need for this upgrade as early as 1992
20. It would seem that their focus has been more on sales and acquisitions (since 2002 there have been three changes in ownership - Aquila, Network One, and Fortis) benefiting the shareholders rather than on operational service objectives for the benefit of customers. Translation: Their failure to plan should not enable them to now wave the flag of imminent, dire need, and thus circumvent the concerns of the citizens affected by these upgrades. Growth in the Okanagan has been rapid dating back as far as 1992 when Pentiction

was voted by a renowned Canadian magazine as the best city to live in in Canada followed the next year by Kelowna. (It has only been since about 2003 that we have seen the horrendous increases in housing prices.)

21. If you remove the constraint of a common in-service date the cost difference is minimal.
22. P E-24 and I-34 To suggest a projected delay of two years or more is scare tactics and not substantiated in fact. To attribute blame for such to the PIB and ILMB is also faulty. Fortis could have been taking steps to mitigate these delays even as it was undertaking environmental assessments on the proposed alternate route. Further, The ILMB has not said that it opposes the alternate route, only that, understandably, from a perspective of future land use management plans, that it prefers the existing route.
23. Fortis has already indicated in P A-3 that the PIB is in agreement with the need to move forward. As well, given the flexibility of the government to substitute alternate timber rights, the PIB should be willing to negotiate with a maxim of quick resolution given that any hold-up of power upgrades could have deleterious effects on the PIB's own development plans.