



EA Modernization Project Team  
Environmental Assessment Modernization Branch  
Ministry of Environment, Conservation & Parks  
135 St Clair Ave West, 4th Floor  
Toronto, ON M4V 1P5  
Canada

EA Modernization Project Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide commentary on the proposal to move to a project list approach under *the Environmental Assessment Act* (ERO 019-4219).

Hydro One Limited (“Hydro One”), through its wholly-owned subsidiaries, is Ontario’s largest electricity transmission provider, serving almost the entire Province. In 2022, Hydro One invested \$2.1 billion in its transmission and distribution networks and supported the economy through buying \$1.9 billion of goods and services.

Hydro One is uniquely positioned to facilitate the transition towards a low-carbon economy and help customers achieve their climate change goals. Through our transmission system we connect customers and communities to low-emissions energy resources and help enable economic development across the province of Ontario.

Hydro One aims to achieve world-class environmental performance and to contribute to a greener Ontario for future generations. We are committed to delivering electricity to our customers as well as building and managing our operations in an environmentally responsible and sustainable manner. We work cooperatively with Indigenous communities, governments, customers and public advocates to improve our environmental performance. This includes identifying and evaluating environmental risks and minimizing negative effects to the environment.

The modernization of Environmental Assessment in Ontario helps position Hydro One to deliver critical infrastructure projects that support the province’s energy transition, while allowing us to maintain our commitments to environmental protection and meaningful engagement, with Indigenous communities and the public.

### Moving to a Streamlined Approach Under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA)

Previously, the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) proposed that transmission lines greater than or equal to

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345kV and greater than or equal to 75 km in length, and transformer stations greater than 500kV, be listed as projects subject to the Comprehensive EA process. With the most recent proposed changes, all transmission projects not associated with certain generation facilities would be subject to a streamlined approach. Moving away from thresholds, as is proposed, allows the focus to be on environmental features, as opposed to voltage and length thresholds, when considering how to avoid, mitigate, or compensate environmental effects of a project.

For Hydro One, the Class EA for Minor Transmission Facilities has proven to be an effective, adaptable, robust and scalable process used for planning the vast majority of transmission infrastructure projects in Ontario for more than 40 years. Hydro One can apply the same process for evaluating alternatives (between a Comprehensive and Class EA) and have scaled the associated field studies and level of consultation within the Class EA framework as required to meet the needs of the project and its potential for environmental effects.

Within the Class EA process, Hydro One has been able to achieve deep and meaningful engagement given it does not limit timelines or the number of consultation events. As such, proponents can design and execute studies and engagement events proportional to project needs. These events can be on par with the level of engagement typical of a Comprehensive EA.

Further, the ability to voluntarily conduct a Comprehensive EA remains, and if this regulation is approved, the MECP will continue to have the authority to designate specific projects and make them subject to a Comprehensive EA.

### Indigenous Community Consultation

Hydro One is committed to building long-term and trust-based relationships with Indigenous communities in Ontario. Throughout the life cycle of our projects and operations, we are focused on ensuring early, meaningful and ongoing engagements in our business that starts well before and lasts beyond the EA process.

Hydro One recognizes the importance of ensuring any modification of the environmental assessment process ensures the protection of potential impacts related to Aboriginal and Treaty Rights. Subject to input from Indigenous communities, Hydro One believes there are mechanisms within the Class EA that allow for the Crown's Duty to Consult obligations to be addressed on transmission projects as

demonstrated recently through engagements on the Chatham-Lakeshore Transmission Line Project.

The Section 16 Order Request process remains for matters involving Indigenous and Treaty rights. This proposal will not affect Hydro One's commitments to working and meaningfully consulting with Indigenous communities.

Hydro One would like to thank the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks for the opportunity to comment on the proposed regulations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or representatives of Hydro One if you have any questions.

Regards,

Andrew Spencer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andrew Spencer".

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