

Clean Version of Proposed Changes

1.0 Introduction

The *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA) provides for the “protection, conservation, and wise management” of the environment in Ontario. Part II.1 of the EAA sets out requirements for the approval of a class environmental assessment (Class EA). An approved Class EA permits the group of projects (undertakings) in the class to proceed without the need for an assessment under Part II of the EAA, provided they proceed in accordance with the Class EA.

The purpose of the **Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities** (also referred to as “Class EA Document”) is to provide information that will enable the Minister of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (Minister) to approve, following a single review, certain types of frequently occurring transmission projects. The Class EA was developed taking into consideration the **Guide to Environmental Assessment Requirements for Electricity Projects** (2011), **O. Reg. 116/01**, **O. Reg. 231/08** and the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks’ (MECP) **Code of Practice: Preparing, Reviewing and Using Class Environmental Assessments in Ontario**. The projects utilizing the Class EA will have predictable environmental effects that can likely be mitigated, and can be planned and constructed in accordance with a common process.

This Class EA Document is consistent with the mandate and accountabilities of Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One) and other licensed transmitters, local distribution companies (LDCs), industrial customers, etc., who may plan, design and construct transmission facilities and be responsible for their subsequent operation, maintenance, and retirement.

Although Hydro One is the applicant for approval of this Class EA Document, the Class EA Document is available for use by other public and private transmission project proponents. All proponents are responsible for ensuring that they fulfill all EAA requirements for their projects.

Application of this Class EA

As previously noted, this Class EA Document applies to Category B transmission projects that are not associated with Category B generation facilities (see **Class Environmental Assessment History** of this document and/or **Guide to Environmental Assessment Requirements for Electricity Projects** [2011]). This Class EA Document also applies to certain power supply infrastructure projects for the electrification of commuter rail corridors that are designated as subject to the EAA in **O. Reg. 231/08**, if the proponent provides written notice to the

appropriate MECP officials under subsection 2(6) of **O. Reg. 231/08** that it will instead proceed with the project in accordance with this Class EA Document.

In general, this Class EA applies to transmission lines (including structures) and stations (including telecommunication stations) and their equipment and components as described in **Section 6.0**. It covers the planning, design and construction of the assets as well as their subsequent operation, maintenance and retirement.

Consistent with its name, this Class EA applies only to transmission facilities, which consists of assets having a nominal voltage of 115 kV or greater. As such, assets with lower voltages (i.e., distribution assets) are not subject to this Class EA.

This Class EA applies to undertakings that may reside under the following four types:

- 1) An Exempt Undertaking (as outlined in **Section 1.3**);
- 2) A Response to Emergency Situations with Notification Requirements to Address Imminent Risk (as outlined in **Section 5.4**);
- 3) The Class EA Screening Process (as outlined in **Section 3.3.3**); or
- 4) The Full Class EA (as outlined in **Section 3.0**).

“Class” of Undertakings Subject to this Class EA

The “Class” of undertakings subject to this Class EA comprises the following:

Transmission Lines (including structures), that can be overhead, underground or submarine, and are:

- 115 kV and > 2 km; or
- 115 kV and < 500 kV and > 2 km and < 50 km.

This includes new lines, temporary lines, refurbishments of lines, and any other activities involving lines within the parameters prescribed.

Temporary lines are defined as transmission lines constructed to maintain the supply of electricity (transmission) during planned outages. Refurbishments are defined as the addition, replacement or upgrade of components of an existing transmission line.

An environmental assessment for any Transmission Line undertaking described above covers the planning, design and construction of the asset and its subsequent operation, maintenance, and retirement.

Transmission Stations, including transformer, switching, regulating or other stations that are:

- ≥ 115 kV and ≤ 500 kV; or
- A telecommunication station.

This includes new stations, expansion of stations, refurbishments of stations, and any other station activity within the parameters prescribed.

Expansions are defined as the enlargement of a transmission station beyond its existing footprint. Refurbishments are defined as the addition, replacement or upgrade of equipment or components within an existing transmission station.

An environmental assessment for any Transmission Station undertaking described above covers the planning, design and construction of the asset and its subsequent operation, maintenance, and retirement.

For any undertaking(s) outside of the parameters prescribed above, proponents should refer to Ontario Regulation 116/01 and the Guide to Environmental Assessment Requirements for Electricity Projects to determine whether the undertaking planned triggers an Individual Environmental Assessment.

Exempt Undertakings

The list below identifies undertakings that are made exempt through this Class EA due to their minimal potential for environmental effects. For undertaking(s) not exempt, the Class EA process is followed.

Transmission Lines

- Temporary transmission lines (any length) resulting in no increase in voltage or ROW greater than 2 km¹.
- Refurbishments (i.e., additions, replacements or upgrades to an existing line) resulting in no increase in voltage or ROW greater than 2 km¹, and:
 - Addition or replacement of up to 25 structures per project/program **beyond** the number of structures deemed to form 2 km of line of the same circuit;

¹ Total length extended from either or both end(s) of a ROW, or the sum of any line segments from the same circuit that require widening of the ROW (based on voltage requirements) due to structure (re)positioning (Note: this does not mean widening of a ROW by 2 km).

- Maintenance work on transmission line components, including, but not limited to: tower members, foundations, insulators, aviation lights, shieldwires, guyed structures (re-torquing and tensioning), etc.
- Re-energization of an existing idle transmission line to its previous voltage.
- Retirement or removal of any transmission line or its components (e.g., idle line removal).
- Response to Emergency Situations **not** requiring notification as outlined in Section 5.4.

Transmission Stations

- Refurbishments (i.e., additions, replacements or upgrades) within an existing transmission station.
- Expansion of a transmission station not requiring acquisition of property.
- Maintenance work on equipment or components within an existing transmission station. This includes, but is not limited to: transformers, control, metering and relay equipment, and other components comprising high and low voltage areas, etc.
- Retirement or removal of any transmission station or its components.
- Response to Emergency Situations **not** requiring notification as outlined in Section 5.4.

There are other activities not subject to this Class EA that proponents may be required to do; including any work governed by other legislation or regulation. The approval of a project under the EAA does not exempt a project from other approvals and permits. Proponents are responsible to identify and obtain any legislative or regulatory permit or other approval needed for a project. Where possible, the proponent is encouraged to coordinate approval processes.

Note: Secondary land uses on provincial crown-owned corridors are not subject to the Class EA Document.