

**Ministry of Energy
and Electrification**

Office of the Minister

77 Grenville Street, 10th Floor
Toronto ON M7A 2C1
Tel.: 416-327-6758

**Ministère de l'Énergie
et de l'Électrification**

Bureau du ministre

77, rue Grenville, 10^e étage
Toronto ON M7A 2C1
Tél. : 416-327-6758



MC-994-2024-1080

December 19, 2024

Mark White
Chair of Board of Directors
Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge St, 27 Floor
PO Box 2319
Toronto ON M4P 1E4

Dear Mr. White:

Electricity demand in northeastern Ontario is projected to grow rapidly over the next decade due to community growth, electrification initiatives, and economic development, including advanced manufacturing and mining for critical minerals. This has underscored the need to mitigate against regulatory delays in the approval processes for critical electricity transmission projects. As we have outlined in our *Powering Ontario's Growth* plan (July 2023), expanding the transmission system is critical to maintaining Ontario's clean energy advantage.

The Independent Electricity System Operator issued a bulk planning report entitled "Need for Northeast Bulk System Reinforcements" in October 2022. This study recommended that a new transmission line in northeast Ontario should come into service no later than 2030: a new 230 kilovolt (kV), approximately 260-kilometre transmission line (built to 500 kV standards) running between Wawa Transformer Station (south of Wawa) and Porcupine Transformer Station (Timmins area).

I am writing today to inform you that under the authority of section 96.1(1) of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* (the Act), the Lieutenant Governor in Council made an order declaring that the construction, expansion or reinforcement of this transmission line is needed as a priority project. The Order in Council, which is now effective, is attached to this letter.

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Furthermore, under the authority of section 28.6.1 of the Act, I am, with the approval of the Lieutenant Governor in Council pursuant to Order in Council No. OC-1555-2024, issuing a directive to the Ontario Energy Board (OEB) to require the OEB to amend Hydro One Networks Inc. (Hydro One)'s electricity transmission licence to include a requirement that it proceed to develop and seek all necessary approvals for this priority project. The intention of directing the OEB to amend Hydro One's licence is to further support efforts for the timely and cost-effective development of the transmission line.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "S. Lecce", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen Lecce
Minister