

Ministry of Energy and Mines

Office of the Minister

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

Ministère de l'Énergie et des Mines

Bureau du ministre

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



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January 28, 2026

Mr. Geoff Owen
Chair of the OEB Board of Directors
Ontario Energy Board
2300 Yonge St, 27 Floor
PO Box 2319
Toronto ON M4P 1E4

Dear Mr. Owen:

As you know, electricity demand in northern Ontario is projected to grow rapidly over the next decade due to economic development from mining for critical minerals, alongside increasing needs from the expansion of housing and electrification initiatives. Ontario's most recent Integrated Energy Plan, *Energy for Generations: Ontario's Integrated Plan to Power the Strongest Economy in the G7* (released on June 12, 2025) sets out the Government's commitment to alleviate bottlenecks in Ontario's electricity transmission system so power could be delivered where and when it is needed.

In January 2025, the Ontario government signed a Shared Prosperity Agreement (SPA) with Aroland First Nation in which it committed to advance route and design planning of the Greenstone Transmission Line, working with Aroland First Nation and a consortium of First Nations¹, partnered with a preferred transmitter.

- Based on further study by the IESO and consultation with Indigenous communities, the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) has defined the Greenstone Transmission Line as follows: A new single-circuit 230 kilovolt (kV) transmission line, designed to support a second circuit, that will run from existing 230 kV infrastructure (the East-West Tie) near Nipigon Bay to a new 230 kV station that connects with the existing 115 kV circuit near Longlac Transformer Station, and extending to or near to Aroland First Nation, terminating at a new Switching Station and associated station facilities.

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¹ At the time of issuing this letter, the First Nation Consortium consists of Aroland First Nation, Animiigoo Zaagi'igan Anishinaabek, Ginoogaming First Nation, Biinjitiwaabik Zaaging Anishinaabek, Bingwi Neyaashi Anishinaabek, Long Lake #58 First Nation and Red Rock Indian Band.

Prior to the signing of the SPA, in April 2024, the Ontario government announced the Reducing Diesel Reliance Initiative signalling Ontario's intention to work in partnership with remote First Nation communities that are diesel dependent for electricity purposes to explore alternative electricity generation options, including transmission development. To further support connecting remote First Nations to the electricity grid, in 2023, the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) started to explore electricity supply options for transmission connection and generation through the Northern Ontario Connection Study (NOCS). The IESO's December 2024 preliminary report back to the ministry on NOCS identified that in addition to improving the reliability of the transmission system for communities in the Greenstone and Aroland region, the Greenstone Transmission Line would provide the foundational transmission infrastructure needed to support possible future transmission upgrades to support diesel-dependent communities, mining activities, and clean generation in the NOCS study region.

I am writing today to inform you that, consistent with the commitments made in the Integrated Energy Plan and the SPA, 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 the Greenstone Transmission Line is needed as a priority project. While the Government's priority will always be to provide affordable and reliable energy to the people of Ontario, which requires supporting cost prudence for the buildout of new transmission projects, the Ontario government has taken several actions including implementing the *Buy Ontario Act, 2025*, to strengthen Ontario's economic security. To that end, I have asked Hydro One to continue using competitive procurements and encourage them to seek Ontario or Canadian suppliers, where there are reasonable opportunities to do so and where ratepayers are not unduly impacted.

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. 1662-2025, issuing a directive to the Ontario Energy Board (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 the Greenstone Transmission Line. The licence amendments required by the directive will further support the timely development of this transmission project. These Orders-in-Council and the accompanying Directive are now effective, and copies thereof are attached to this letter.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office should you have any questions.

Sincerely,



Stephen Lecce
Minister

c: Susanna Laaksonen-Craig, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy and Mines
Karen Moore, Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Energy and Mines
Carolyn Calwell, Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Energy Board
Lesley Gallinger, President and Chief Executive Officer, Independent Electricity System Operator
David Lebeter, President and Chief Executive Officer, Hydro One Networks Inc.
Lisa Pearson, Executive Vice President, Corporate Affairs, Hydro One Networks Inc