

Calgary seeks hearings on power line proposal

BY KIM GUTTORMSON, CALGARY HERALD SEPTEMBER 29, 2009



Mayor Dave Bronconnier will send a letter to the province asking for public hearings on a controversial power line project, after a unanimous council vote Monday.

Photograph by: John Lucas, The Journal, File, Edmonton Journal

CALGARY - Mayor Dave Bronconnier will send a letter to the province asking for public hearings on a controversial power line project, after a unanimous council vote Monday.

The letter will ask Premier Ed Stelmach and Energy Minister Mel Knight to hold hearings before the appropriate regulatory bodies on Bill 50, which would speed up the construction of two high-voltage transmission lines between Calgary and Edmonton by giving the government the authority to decide when such lines are required.

Under existing rules, the need for these massive energy projects is supposed to be scrutinized through a public regulatory hearing.

Bronconnier said a hearing is necessary before approving a project that will cost about \$15 billion and end up on consumer's electricity bills because all sides should be heard.

"There's a major implication for Calgary customers," he said. "Many other municipalities are starting to raise questions.

"It's appropriate to look at the need, done through the proper regulatory body. There is too much money here, too many questions being asked."

City-owned Enmax has been lobbying for the bill's demise, arguing there will be less demand for electricity from the north because of consumer trends and its plans to build three gas-fired power plants in the Calgary area.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, who introduced the motion asking for the letter, said citizens have a lot of

questions.

"A lot of people at the community level are very concerned about the long-term impact and consequences of Bill 50," the former Conservative candidate in the recent Calgary-Glenmore byelection said. "I've heard that loud and clear over the past few months."

kguttormson@theherald. canwest.com

© Copyright (c) The Calgary Herald