

Edic to Fraser Quick Fact Sheet

PROCEEDING-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

Q: What exactly is this project about?

A: The Edic to Fraser transmission line route was proposed by North America Transmission (NAT) in response to a request for proposals (RFP) put forth by the New York State Public Service Commission. These *AC Transmission Upgrades Proceedings* were designed to relieve congestion in two identified corridors. As part of Governor Cuomo's *Energy Highway Initiative*, these proceedings are intended to provide an additional 1,000 mega-watts (MW) of electrical transmission capacity from upstate New York to downstate users to relieve historic energy congestion along these two corridors in what is known as the "Central-East Constraint."¹

Q: How does this whole proceeding work?

A: When this proceeding was conceived in 2012, it was designed to be comparative in nature. This essentially means that a request for proposals goes out and developers submit their proposals to meet all or part of the 1,000 MW of desired transmission capacity upgrades. Then the PSC reviews the proposals it receives. Eventually the PSC will pick the project or combination of projects that best meets their pre-established criteria to move forward.

Q: What exactly are the criteria that PSC will be using to evaluate these proposals?

A: (1) the amount of increased transfer capability (electricity moving through the system) that each proposal offers; (2) the cost of the proposal(s) to ratepayers; (3) electric system impacts, emissions reductions, and production cost impacts, measured in terms of overall changes to the generation dispatch²; (4) the extent of any additional rights-of-way (ROW); (5) the application of innovative technologies to enhance transfer capability or reduce the physical footprint of the project; and (6) an initial assessment of environmental compatibility, including visual impacts.

Q: What is the timeline for the whole review process to take place?

A: Due to the magnitude of the *AC Transmission Upgrades Proceedings*, the timeline for review is tentative. However, as of December 30, 2014, it is as follows: Comments on the Part A proposals from developers are due to the PSC on March 30, 2015. PSC staff will render a motion selecting one or more projects to move forward on June 10, 2015. A joint technical conference will be held to re-examine the need³ for this project from June 17 to June 18, 2015. PSC commissioners will make a final decision as to how to move forward in September, 2015.

¹ The Central East Constraint refers to the FERC region extending along the Hudson Valley to Central New York. Transmission constraint refers to any part of a transmission system that physically limits power flow. It could also be thought of as a lack of transmission capacity to get energy from point A to point B.

² Generation dispatch refers to changes in the optimal number of generation facilities that can meet demand that incur the lowest possible cost.

³ A significant portion of the 2300 public comments made on the proceedings questioned if the process could be quantitatively proven to be necessary. In response, the PSC invited the public to participate in a transparent discussion on the need for the project.

Q: How will this line be situated in relation to the Marcy South power line?

A: As proposed, the Edic to Fraser AC transmission line is slated to be built adjacent to the existing Marcy South ROW for more than 90 percent of its length (including 40 miles in Otsego County). It is important to note that the proposed Edic to Fraser ROW will be 80 feet wide—down from 150 feet in NAT’s October, 2013 submittal. The route will travel through the following towns: Richfield, Exeter, Burlington, New Lisbon, Laurens, Otego and Oneonta.

Q: Is it certain that the Edic to Fraser project will even be chosen?

A: No, this proceeding is still in the very early stages. NAT just submitted a modified proposal and is awaiting a full PSC review. Another way of thinking about the Edic to Fraser project proposal is that NAT is expressing to the PSC: “we are interested in providing this energy, here’s how we meet what you’re looking for and, if we were to be selected, here’s what we would do.” Ultimately, NAT’s proposal will be assessed in relation to the other proposals the PSC receives and the PSC’s final decision will be based on what project or combination of projects PSC deems best.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT QUESTIONS

Q: What are the potential environmental impacts of this project?

A: Given the very initial nature of this proceeding, it is impossible to know the nature or extent of the potential environmental impacts associated with this project. NAT’s initial proposal contained their best estimates of potential environmental impacts based on desktop research and preliminary data, discussed their initial assessments of possible construction, operation, and maintenance related impacts, and presented some proposed mitigation measures.

Q: When will the possible environmental impacts of this project be studied more closely?

A: Sometime after September, 2015. If selected to move forward, NAT has stated that they will then conduct a full environmental review, discuss potential impacts of the project, and provide substantive mitigation measures.

Q: What is OCCA’s role in evaluating the potential environmental impacts of this project?

A: OCCA has applied for and successfully received intervenor funding to review possible environmental impacts of the proposed Edic to Fraser project as currently proposed. OCCA has commissioned an environmental consulting firm, C&S Companies, and enlisted the services of attorney Douglas Zamelis, in addition to convening committees of countywide community organizations and municipal officials to review the project. OCCA will do everything in its power to ensure that it contributes to the record in an objective, unbiased, and rigorous manner in order to aid the PSC in its review.

Q: Who should call/e-mail OCCA? Should I call OCCA even if my property is not directly affected by the project?

A: OCCA strongly encourages property owners directly affected by the proposed route to contact OCCA Environmental Planner Danny Lapin at (607) 547-4488 or at planner@occainfo.org to voice concerns, ask questions, and learn more about the project. Also, property owners, concerned citizens, and other members of the public are encouraged to call/e-mail OCCA with questions, comments, or concerns pertaining to the proposed project.

Q: What kind of information is OCCA looking for?

A: OCCA is interested in gathering as much information as possible pertaining to potential environmental impacts that the proposed transmission line may have in order to inform a clear, accurate, and rigorous record. To a slightly lesser extent, OCCA is interested in gathering information relating to health-related impacts associated with EMF fields, noise, and other concerns. It is important to note that property tax related impacts would be best mentioned to the Otsego County Planning and Solid Waste Department (607) 547-4225 as they are more closely reviewing such impacts. OCCA also has a questionnaire that you can fill out and either e-mail or send to OCCA via regular mail.

Q: How tall will these new power lines be under the current proposal?

A: It varies between 100-200 feet tall. Depending on the terrain, most transmission structures will be 100-140 feet tall. It is estimated by NAT that the transmission structures will be approximately the same height as the existing Marcy South transmission line.

Q: As currently proposed, how big will the new right of way be?

A: As presented by NAT, the proposed route of the Edic to Fraser transmission line will be built adjacent to the existing Marcy South ROW. Initial design drawings indicate that the new ROW will be 80 feet wide.

HOW DO I COMMENT ON THE PROJECT?

Q: Can the public comment on this project?

A: Yes, simply navigate to <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?Mattercaseno=13-E-0488> and click on the “post comments” button located in the top-right section of your screen. If you have poor Internet service, you may mail comments to Kathleen Burgess, Secretary, NYS Public Service Commission, 3 Empire State Plaza, Albany, NY 12223-1350.

Q: How can I receive updates on the project?

A: All documents related to the project can be viewed at the website mentioned above and at <http://documents.dps.ny.gov/public/MatterManagement/CaseMaster.aspx?Mattercaseno=13-E-0454>. If you have poor Internet service, we encourage you to periodically contact OCCA’s Environmental Planner Danny Lapin at (607) 547-4488 or planner@occainfo.org. If you do call, please provide your name, address, and contact information for the record.

Q: How will the public be involved in this project?

A: OCCA strongly encourages stakeholders to contact us directly at (607) 547-4488 with questions, comments, or concerns relating to the project. Both the PSC and NAT are currently in the process of developing a public engagement strategy. NAT has indicated its willingness to engage the public – details are uncertain until the public engagement strategy is released.

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

Q: When will we know more about the project and how things are progressing?

A: NAT and the PSC should be providing OCCA and the Otsego County Planning and Solid Waste Department with a public engagement plan within the coming weeks. We encourage you to provide your contact information so that project updates can be sent to you by OCCA Environmental Planner Danny Lapin.

OCCA PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: January 27, 2015

OCCA seeks property-owner input in power line review

SPRINGFIELD – The Otsego County Conservation Association is seeking input from landowners whose property would be crossed by and/or adjacent to the proposed Edic to Fraser transmission line. If built, Edic to Fraser would parallel the existing Marcy South corridor for nearly its entire length here in Otsego County.

The Edic to Fraser proposal is one of a number of plans being considered by the New York State Public Service Commission as it seeks to address reported ongoing electric transmission congestion problems by delivering an additional 1,000 MW of electricity from upstate power sources to downstate consumers.

Proposals from four different developers were submitted to the PSC independently in September of 2014, each of which reflected a possible solution to congestion problems and a method to deliver the desired 1,000 MW of electricity downstate. At the request of the state, these companies were then given an opportunity to present new or modified proposals that would make greater use of existing transmission corridors and rights of way.

The PSC will choose from these alternatives, and can decide to use parts of different proposals provided that together they will move the required 1,000 MW of additional electricity. Among the selection criteria to be weighed by the PSC in its review of the alternating current (AC) transmission upgrade proposals are: 1) impact on environment and community; 2) cost to rate payers; and, 3) potential for implementation without excessive delay.

One of the projects currently under consideration – Edic to Fraser, from North America Transmission – would traverse four counties and 16 municipalities and would travel approximately 40 miles through Otsego County parallel to the existing Marcy South power line right of way. This proposed route includes parts of the towns of Richfield, Exeter, Burlington, New Lisbon, Laurens, Otego and Oneonta.

Funded in part by a \$65,000 award from the PSC, OCCA has contracted with C&S Companies and Springfield attorney Douglas H. Zamelis to conduct an environmental review of NAT's Edic to Fraser power line proposal. OCCA will also work with partner organizations, municipal officials, and the public to develop additional data and information pertaining to local environmental, agricultural, historic, and other resources in order to determine any potential impacts and effects this project may have.

“We invite property owners to contribute to OCCA’s review by sharing with us your personal knowledge of the important local resources along this proposed route,” said OCCA President Vicky M. Lentz. “Your input will help identify high-value areas, sensitive natural habitats, critical forest areas, and other concerns. Please contact us if you would like to learn more about this project, or if you have insight that would be useful in our review.”

The siting, construction, and operation of high-voltage electric power transmission lines and associated facilities such as substations and converter stations present the potential for numerous adverse environmental impacts – land-use changes; forest impacts; wetland and riparian impacts; hydrologic changes; soil erosion; impacts to biodiversity, wildlife, and avian populations; land, water and air pollution; changes in electromagnetic fields, increased noise, and more. If the Edic to Fraser project is selected by the PSC, NAT would then have to acquire the necessary right of way whether by voluntary agreement or eminent domain.

“We are working internally and with the public in order to contribute meaningfully to the complete record of the PSC’s formal review of both the Edic to Fraser transmission line proposal in particular and to the AC transmission upgrade proceeding in general,” explained OCCA Executive Director Darla M. Youngs. “Ultimately, our review will assist the PSC in determining the most appropriate route(s) and, if Edic to Fraser were to be chosen, could be instrumental in assessing, avoiding, reducing, and mitigating adverse impacts to resources and property owners.”

To share information about the proposed Edic to Fraser route, or to learn more about the project, call OCCA Environmental Planner Danny Lapin at (607) 547-4488 or e-mail planner@occainfo.org. The deadline for public comments to the PSC on all AC transmission upgrade proceeding proposals (Case 13-E-0488) is March 30.

Founded in 1968, Otsego County Conservation Association (OCCA) is a 501(c)3 membership group dedicated to promoting the appreciation and sustainable use of Otsego County’s natural resources through education, advocacy, resource management, research, and planning. For the last 47 years, OCCA has played a key role in initiating and carrying out programs designed to improve and/or protect Otsego County’s air, land, and water, representing more than 800+ members and volunteers.



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