



Suncor Energy (Syncrude) Operating Inc.

Mildred Lake East Mine Extension Project

May 20, 2025

Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 30002-D01-2025

Suncor Energy (Syncrude) Operating Inc.

Mildred Lake East Mine Extension Project

Proceeding 30002

Applications 30002-A001 and 30002-A002

May 20, 2025

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The Commission may, no later than 60 days from the date of this decision and without notice, correct typographical, spelling and calculation errors and other similar types of errors and post the corrected decision on its website.

1 Decision summary

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission approves applications from Suncor Energy (Syncrude) Operating Inc. (SESOI) to relocate and salvage approximately 10 kilometres of two existing single-circuit 260-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines, designated as 201-PLT260-1 and 201-PLT260-2, to accommodate the planned Mildred Lake east mine extension. After consideration of the record of the proceeding, and for the reasons outlined in this decision, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development is in the public interest, having regard to the social and economic effects of the project and its effect on the environment.

2 Introduction

2. SESOI, pursuant to licences 26614-D06-2021¹ and 26614-D07-2021,² is the owner and operator of 260-kilovolt (kV) transmission lines 201-PLT260-1 and 201-PLT260-2 from Mildred Lake Substation D05 to Aurora Substation G01 in the Fort McKay area.

3. SESOI filed applications with the AUC seeking approval to relocate the transmission lines pursuant to sections 14, 15 and 21 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*. The applications were registered as applications 30002-A001 and 30002-A002 on April 28, 2025.

4. The project will provide Syncrude Canada Ltd. (Syncrude) with a replacement bitumen supply that will sustain Syncrude's production capacity. The preliminary route assessment identified two route options. The first route option, referred to as the "East Route," was located to the east of the mine pit extension area near the Athabasca River. The second route option, referred to as the "West Route," runs parallel to the proposed Highway 63 right-of-way. The East Route was eliminated due to potential conflicts with mine development plans, as well as other potential environmental impacts. The West Route was selected as the preliminary route. In May 2024, early engagement was conducted with Alberta Transportation and Economic Corridors for the preliminary route and no concerns or modifications were required.

5. Construction of the Mildred Lake East Mine Extension Project is scheduled to commence in fall 2025, and the targeted in-service date is February 1, 2028. Decommissioning and salvage are scheduled to begin on February 1, 2028, and end on March 31, 2028. All project costs are being borne by SESOI. The construction of the relocated transmission lines and the salvage of existing lines are located wholly within the long-standing industrial system designation for the Mildred Lake industrial complex, including the mine and associated facilities. This designation

¹ Transmission Line Licence 26614-D06-2021, Proceeding 26614, Application 26614-A001, September 29, 2021.

² Transmission Line Licence 26614-D07-2021, Proceeding 26614, Application 26614-A001, September 29, 2021.

has been in place since 1998 and relates to a major oilsands mining operation north of Fort McMurray, Alberta.

6. Due to the nature of the applications, the Commission considered that its decision would not directly and adversely affect the rights of a person pursuant to Section 9(2) of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*, and so no notice of application was required.

3 Findings

7. For the reasons outlined below, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed project is in the public interest having regard to the social, economic and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment.

8. The Commission has determined that the information requirements specified in Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines* have been met.

9. The Commission finds that the participant involvement program for the proposed project meets the requirements of Rule 007. SESOI mailed a project-specific information package to all project stakeholders, including but not limited to, landowners and disposition owners on September 4, 2024. On February 25, 2025, a project update was sent to stakeholders. Consultation was undertaken with 15 disposition holders, government agencies and industry stakeholders as well as interested parties in the project. SESOI stated that there are no outstanding concerns associated with the 260-kV transmission lines scope of work. SESOI submitted that the project will not adversely impact Indigenous parties' rights or traditional uses because the proposed relocation is located within existing approved *Public Lands Act* dispositions, more than 800 metres from the Fort McKay First Nation Reserve, and more than 200 kilometres away from the closest Metis Settlement. SESOI stated that it will provide a courtesy notification to Fort McKay First Nation and Fort McKay Métis Nation prior to construction.

10. SESOI prepared a project-specific environmental evaluation including an environmental protection plan (EPP). This document shows that best management practices were followed for limiting environmental impacts by locating the project along existing linear impacts as much as reasonable. The EPP did not propose a reclamation plan for the project as the area is within the planned mine boundary.

11. The Commission agrees that no significant adverse environmental effects are expected since the project is entirely within Syncrude's existing Mildred Lake industrial complex, and the transmission line relocation is required because of the mine expansion.

12. Based on the foregoing, the Commission considers the applications to be in the public interest in accordance with Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

4 Decision

13. Pursuant to sections 14, 15 and 21 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the Commission approves the applications and grants Suncor Energy (Syncrude) Operating Inc. the following approvals set out in appendixes to this decision:

- Transmission Line Permit and Licence 30002-D02-2025 to alter and operate Transmission Line 201-PLT260-1 (Appendix 1).
- Transmission Line Permit and Licence 30002-D03-2025 to alter and operate Transmission Line 201-PLT260-2 (Appendix 2).

14. The appendixes will be distributed separately.

Dated on May 20, 2025.

Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Carolyn Dahl Rees
Chair