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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development
Report: #2026-INFO-008
Date: February 27, 2026

Subject:

The Toronto Third Line Transmission Project

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 This report updates Regional Council on Durham Region's support for the Toronto Third Line Transmission Project.

2. Background

2.1 On January 7, 2026, Ontario's Minister of Energy [approved](#) the Toronto Third Line Transmission Project ('Toronto Third Line'): a 65-kilometre underwater high-voltage direct current (HVDC) transmission line connecting downtown Toronto and Bowmanville through Lake Ontario. It will be Ontario's first underwater high-voltage transmission line and first major domestic HVDC project. The line will deliver up to 900 megawatts (MW) of electricity (roughly equivalent to powering 900,000 new homes) to Toronto to bolster grid capacity and meet fast-growing electricity demand well beyond 2044 without further major reinforcements.

2.2 The Ontario Ministry of Energy and Mines posted a proposal (ERO #[026-0019](#)) to bring forward an order in council and issue a Minister's directive under the *Electricity Act* requiring the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) run a competitive procurement for a transmitter. The IESO aims to select a transmitter within

18 months of receiving the directive. Public comments remain open until February 21, 2026.

- 2.3 The project requires an Environmental Assessment (EA) and regulatory approvals before construction. A target in-service date is 2037 or sooner. The project is expected to cost about \$1.5 billion and significantly enhance system resilience and reliability for Toronto by reducing exposure to extreme weather.

Figure 1: Underwater cable route from Bowmanville to Port Lands in Toronto.

Source: [Toronto Integrated Regional Resource Plan](#), IESO, October 31, 2025.



3. Previous Reports and Decisions

- 3.1 Report [#2025-COW-18](#), MSIFN-Durham Bilateral Agreement – Government-to-Government Collaboration between the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation (MSIFN) and the Region of Durham
- 3.2 Report [#2025-EDT-14](#), Invest Durham Investment Attraction Plan 2025 – 2028
- 3.3 Report [#2025-CG-11](#), Update on Ontario’s Integrated Energy Plan and Related Policy, Planning and Procurement Initiatives
- 3.4 Report [#2024-INFO-25](#), Update on provincial energy sector activities

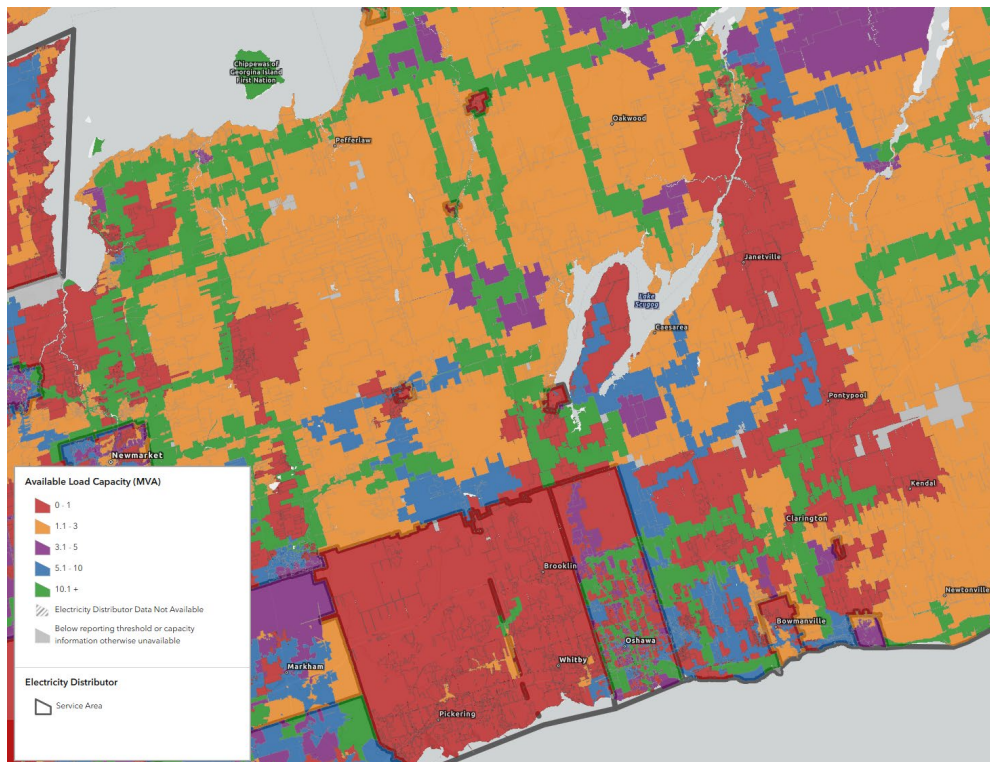
- 3.5 Report [#2023-INFO-86](#), Provincial energy sector activities and reports toward a long-term energy planning framework and Ontario's Plan for a Clean Energy Future
- 3.6 Report [#2021-COW-7](#), Regional Submission to the Review of Ontario's Long Term Energy Planning Framework (ERO #019-3007)
- 3.7 Report [#2019-A-018](#), Approval in Principle of the Durham Community Energy Plan (DCEP)

4. Benefits to Durham Region

Bulk System Capacity and Economic Development

- 4.1 The Toronto Third Line creates a new high-volume supply route to Toronto that reduces pressure on the existing 230 kV network at Cherrywood TS. This relief improves reliability and is expected to free up capacity to meet Durham's future residential, industrial and transit electrification needs. This project helps directly address transmission limits that have constrained development.
- 4.2 Durham's position as a nuclear energy hub allows the region to benefit from strengthened grid infrastructure and gain direct competitive advantages. Enhanced grid capacity could make Durham more attractive to employers and developers, ensuring reliable power for growth and electrification.
- 4.3 The project will also bring immediate economic value during construction, especially at the Bowmanville SS terminus and along the Lake Ontario route. The procurement includes incentives for Ontario-based manufacturing and services, which could complement Durham's clean energy economy (for example, local firms might contribute to cable manufacturing, engineering, etc., leveraging the Region's skilled workforce).

Figure 2: Centralized Capacity Information Map showing available load capacity.
 Source: [Ontario Energy Board](#).



Clean Energy Investment

- 4.4 The Toronto Third Line is fundamentally a clean energy infrastructure project that will help advance both climate and energy security objectives. The new line will reduce dependence on natural gas-fired generation during peak demand in the city. Over the long term, adding transmission capacity for locally produced clean power is critical for electrification.
- 4.5 This project directly supports the [Durham Community Energy Plan](#) (DCEP) and Regional Council's [climate emergency declaration](#) by helping deliver the infrastructure needed for long-term decarbonization. Investments in transmission capacity today are foundational to support the clean energy transition. The Toronto Third Line will help deliver the clean power needed to build new homes, support major transit electrification projects, increase adoption of electric passenger vehicles, and enable continued economic growth.

Indigenous Engagement and Partnership Opportunities

- 4.6 The province's proposed directive requires meaningful Indigenous consultation and encourages Indigenous partnership and economic participation. Only transmitters

with demonstrated experience working with Indigenous communities can bid and proposals will be evaluated on Indigenous engagement plans and economic participation (e.g., equity ownership, supply chain opportunities, job training and employment). Proponents must meet accountability requirements and fulfill the Crown's Duty to Consult during environmental approvals.

- 4.7 Durham Region's [2025 Bilateral Collaboration Agreement](#) with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation (MSIFN) emphasizes building respectful government-to-government relations and identifies shared priorities in economic development, infrastructure, and clean energy partnerships. MSIFN may pursue equity participation in the transmission line, construction or environmental monitoring contracts, or capacity funding for ongoing engagement through the province's procurement requirements. Durham's Indigenous Relations team will help support connections in line with the Bilateral Agreement's clean energy and economic development goals.
- 4.8 As part of the EA process, the Ministry has contacted potentially impacted Indigenous communities for feedback on the directive and rights impacts. The selected transmitter will continue consultation throughout the EA and permitting.

5. Regional Infrastructure Considerations

- 5.1 The Region is responsible for critical infrastructure along the waterfront corridor which intersects with the proposed route for the Toronto Third Line. Such services and infrastructure include major water and wastewater infrastructure assets which include water intakes, outfalls, and treatment facilities. Given there is significant planned expansion works anticipated over the coming decades to accommodate regional population and business growth, aligning construction timelines for both municipal projects and the Toronto Third Line will be important.

6. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 6.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:
- a. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action
 - E2. Collaborate with partners on the low-carbon transition to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions across Durham Region.
 - E5. Respect the natural environment, including greenspaces, waterways, and agricultural lands.

b. Resilient Local Economies

- R1. Attract and retain quality employers that strengthen key economic sectors, including energy and technology.

c. Strong Relationships

- S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Durham Region's participation in the [IESO's 2025 GTA East Integrated Regional Resource Plan](#) (IRRP) consultations helped shape the direction of the Toronto Third Line. The project will enhance Durham's infrastructure, support growth across the broader GTA, and align with the Region's climate and economic priorities.

7.2 The Community Growth and Economic Development Department prepared a submission to the Environmental Registry ahead of the February 21, 2026, deadline and will remain engaged throughout the project's development.

7.3 Staff will continue to monitor the IESO's procurement process and will update Council when more detailed information on the project's design, routing, and construction timeline becomes available.

8. Attachment

Attachment #1: Durham Region Submission to ERO 026-0019, Advancing Critical Transmission Expansion in the Toronto Area

Prepared by: Caitlin Rochon, Manager, Corporate Initiatives.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Sandra Austin
Commissioner of Community Growth and
Economic Development



February 20, 2026

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Sandra Austin
Commissioner

Dear Ms. Pillon,

RE: ERO 026-0019, Advancing Critical Transmission Expansion in the Toronto Area

On behalf of the Regional Municipality of Durham (Region), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the proposed directive to the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) regarding the Toronto Third Line transmission project. The Region supports advancing this project which will play a critical role in meeting long-term electricity demand in Toronto and the broader GTA.

Durham Region, home to the Darlington Nuclear Generating Station and the proposed cable landing point for the new underwater transmission line, is uniquely positioned to support this project. The Toronto Third Line will alleviate strain on existing transmission corridors, freeing up bulk system capacity to support local growth and align with our [Strategic Plan](#) priorities related to infrastructure readiness, climate action, and economic resilience.

The Region of Durham has several existing and planned major water and wastewater infrastructure assets located along the waterfront corridor that intersects the proposed route, including critical water intakes, outfalls, and treatment facilities, as well as significant planned expansion works. To avoid impacts or delays, we ask that the Region be engaged early as the project advances into detailed planning and implementation stages.

We strongly support the proposed directive's emphasis on Indigenous engagement, economic participation and environmental accountability. In particular, we support requirements that:

- Ensure proponents have demonstrated experience with underwater transmission infrastructure and meaningful engagement with Indigenous communities;
- Prioritize Indigenous economic participation, including equity partnerships, employment, and supply chain opportunities;
- Hold proponents accountable for delivering on Indigenous and local economic commitments, adhering to project timelines, and containing costs; and
- Establish clear expectations for environmental approvals and the fulfillment of the Crown's Duty to Consult, including delegated procedural responsibilities.

These measures align with the Region's commitment to reconciliation, economic inclusion, and collaborative planning. Through our [Bilateral Agreement](#) with the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation (MSIFN) and First Nation-Municipal Community Economic Development Initiative (CEDI) partnership we continue to support meaningful Indigenous participation in energy infrastructure projects.

We also appreciate the Ministry's recognition of the need for strategic resilience in the electricity system. The underwater HVDC design offers long-term reliability, climate resilience, and the ability to integrate clean energy resources—key considerations as we work to meet our climate goals and support electrification across sectors.

The Region welcomes continued engagement as the project progresses through procurement, environmental assessment, and implementation, and we remain committed to collaborating with the Ministry, the IESO, and the selected proponent to ensure the project is delivered in a way that supports our communities, protects the natural environment, and advances our clean energy future.

Yours truly,

Sandra Austin
Commissioner of Community Growth and Economic Development