



## **MEDIA RELEASE**

For Immediate Release

### **AESO to file for transmission development to connect wind in southern Alberta**

CALGARY, Alberta (December 16, 2008) – The Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO), as planner of Alberta’s electric transmission system (or “grid”), will recommend the construction of a 240 kilovolt (kV) Loop system to connect up to 2,700 megawatts (MW) of wind power proposed throughout southern Alberta over the next ten years. The AESO will file its assessment and recommendation with the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) by the end of this year.

Over the past year, the AESO conducted technical and economic studies, met with stakeholders and hosted public information sessions to assess the need for transmission reinforcement in southern Alberta, and to develop a recommendation for meeting this need.

The recommended 240 kV Loop system will gather wind power produced at wind farms spread over a wide geographic area throughout southern Alberta, and channel this electricity into the grid.

To more effectively pace the transmission development necessary to integrate wind projects, the AESO is proposing this transmission development occur in stages, rather than building all of the transmission at once.

“It’s critical the transmission system has a flexible plan for development,” says Neil Millar, Vice-President Transmission, AESO. “By applying to the AUC for all the development but actually building it in stages as it’s needed, we are in a better position to respond to the development pattern of wind in Alberta. A staged plan that balances the need for reinforcements as wind generation develops also enables prudent management of the cost of transmission development.”

The AESO is presenting this information as notice in part to meet its regulatory requirements and to update southern Alberta residents on its transmission plans.

The AESO estimates the first stage of the transmission development will cost approximately \$750 million and incorporate as much as 1,200 MW of additional wind power. Currently, 497 MW of wind power is installed on the transmission system.

The two latter stages of development will be triggered by wind proposals as they mature through the AESO’s milestone process and the AESO estimates that these stages will cost an additional \$800 million and \$280 million respectively.

The AESO will file its application, formally known as a Needs Identification Document, with the AUC by December 31<sup>st</sup> of this year. The application is available for viewing at <http://www.aeso.ca/transmission/16386.html>.

Once the AUC approves the AESO's application, the AESO will assign system reinforcements and each new interconnection to Transmission Facility Owner AltaLink, to identify line routes in the area indicated above. Before AltaLink can begin constructing these facilities, it must submit a Facilities Application to the AUC for approval. Further consultation with stakeholders, particularly on routing of transmission lines, will form a critical component of this application process.

*As an independent system operator, the AESO leads the safe, reliable and economic planning and operation of Alberta's interconnected power system. The AESO also facilitates Alberta's fair, efficient and openly competitive wholesale electricity market, which has about 200 participants and approximately \$8 billion in annual energy transactions.*

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