

July 12, 2022

Greetings:

I am writing to let you know that the Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities has been amended as part of the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' work on Environmental Assessment modernization.

Over the past three years, we have been working to build a strong environmental assessment program that considers the input of local communities and focuses on projects that have the highest potential to impact the environment. This includes making changes to the class environmental assessments to ensure strong environmental oversight while reducing delays on infrastructure projects that matter most to Ontario communities.

In summer 2020, we proposed changes to eight class environmental assessments, including the Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities. The intent of the proposed changes was to provide process improvements to enhance clarity and increase the efficiency and timeliness of the assessment for proposed projects that are subject to the Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities.

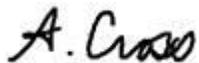
I wanted to thank all who have offered feedback on these changes, by submitting comments, participating in webinars and correspondence. We have considered all comments received during consultation, in addition to our own analysis and have made a decision on the changes to the Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities. Detailed information on the approved changes can be found at <https://ero.ontario.ca/notice/019-5346>.

The changes provide routine and low-risk refurbishments to existing transmission lines and temporary transmission line projects, such as the replacement of damaged and aging wood poles, the opportunity for exemption from requiring an environmental assessment provided that an archaeological screening process is successfully completed. Changes also clarify that responding to an emergency is exempt from the requirements of an environmental assessment, consistent with other class environmental assessments. These changes will help get these projects started sooner so communities can benefit from reliable and cost-effective electricity services. We have also made administrative updates, such as incorporating recent legislative changes and clarifying terminology. The changes are effective immediately.

The updated process for the Class Environmental Assessment for Minor Transmission Facilities provides an appropriate mechanism for addressing impacts. Projects defined within a class environmental assessment require no further environmental approval under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, provided the proponent proceeds in accordance with the class environmental assessment process. The class environmental assessment process includes requirements for consultation, including consultation with Indigenous communities, consideration of potential environmental impacts and mitigation of any such impacts before a project proceeds. The proposed projects under a class environmental assessment are considered to be routine activities which have predictable environmental effects that can be readily managed and mitigated.

If you have any questions, please contact the Environmental Assessment Modernization Team at EAModernization.MECP@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A. Cross". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Annamaria Cross
Director, Environmental Assessment Modernization Branch
Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks