

March 3, 2016

Decision 21349-D01-2016

ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd. (South)
7210 – 42 Street N.W.
Edmonton, Alberta T6B 3H1

Attention: Matt Weran, E.I.T.
Project Engineer, Pipelines Engineering

**Split and Removal of an Abandoned Pipeline in Little Brule Creek
Licence 788
Proceeding 21349
Application 21349-A001**

Minor pipeline project application

1. ATCO Gas and Pipelines Ltd. (South) (ATCO), by Application 21349-A001 registered on February 17, 2016, filed an application with the Alberta Utilities Commission under Section 11 of the *Pipeline Act* and Section 4.1 of the *Gas Utilities Act* for the following at the Little Brule Creek pipeline crossing:

- splitting Line 100 into lines 100, 142 and 143
- removal of Line 142

2. The proposed work is related to the minor split and removal of abandoned pipeline, within the original right-of-way, previously constructed in accordance with approvals granted in Licence 788.

3. ATCO stated that the pipeline to be removed is located within Little Brule Creek and was previously abandoned in 2000. During a routine inspection in 2014, ATCO discovered an exposed section of the abandoned pipeline. A burst in a beaver dam upstream of the crossing may have caused higher flows in the area, potentially contributing to the exposure. ATCO proposed to remove the exposed abandoned pipeline segment, Line 142. The estimated cost of the removal is \$250,000. According to Section 20 of the *Pipeline Rules*, the depth of cover above a pipeline must be at least 0.8 metres. The Commission concurs with ATCO's assessment that the exposed section of pipe within the creek requires removal.

4. ATCO stated that this project does not require a historical resources impact assessment since the proposed work area is not referenced in the latest edition of Alberta Culture and Tourism's listing of historic resources.

5. Code of practice notifications for pipelines crossing a water body were submitted to the Alberta Energy Regulator on February 17, 2016, in accordance with the *Water Act*. ATCO stated that temporary field authorization pursuant to the *Public Lands Act* was acquired for the

workspace between and surrounding the banks of Little Brule Creek. Application to Navigable Waters (Transport Canada) under the *Navigable Waters Act* is not required as this crossing is not within a scheduled waterway. Little Brule Creek is designated as a Class C watercourse with a restricted activity period (RAP) of September 1 to June 30.¹ Removal of the exposed pipeline is proposed to begin in March of 2016, within the RAP, while the creek is still frozen. Based on a qualified aquatic environmental specialist assessment, it was recommended that the proposed construction could be completed at any time inside or outside the RAP with limited impacts, if any.

6. ATCO stated that the pipelines would be tested for liquids prior to removal and any liquids found would be removed and properly disposed of. The topsoil would be stripped and stored and all surface disturbances will be backfilled before the topsoil is returned.

7. ATCO stated that an environmental effects assessment has been prepared for this project as well as an environmental protection plan.² The Commission accepts ATCO's statement that all recommendations included in the environmental protection plan would be implemented.

8. ATCO stated that consultation with landowners, occupants and stakeholders for this work has been completed in accordance with Rule 020: *Rules Respecting Gas Utility Pipelines*. Since the site is fully within Crown land, a temporary field authorization was acquired for all workspace. Notification of landowners, occupants and stakeholders within 0.2 kilometres of the proposed pipeline removal has been completed.

9. ATCO has provided information respecting the need, nature and extent of the project. Since the project involves limited ground disturbance and is within the original right-of-way, the resultant environmental impact of the work has been assessed with no significant impact identified. The landowners and occupants of the affected lands did not object to the project.

10. Based upon the information provided, ATCO has demonstrated that the proposal is of a minor nature, no person other than the landowners and occupants of the land upon which the project takes place will likely be directly affected by the proposal, and no significant adverse environmental impact will be caused by the proposed project.

¹ Alberta *Water Act* Code of Practice for Watercourse Crossings states that no work is to occur within the watercourse in the restricted activity period unless assessed and recommended by a qualified aquatic environmental specialist resulting in no serious harm to fish. If the watercourse or side channel of watercourse is dry or frozen, the restricted activity period may not apply.

² Exhibit 21349-X0005, EPP.

11. The Commission approves the application. The amended licence is attached.

Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Brian Shand, P. Eng.
Director, Gas Facilities
On behalf of the Alberta Utilities Commission

Attachment