



February 20, 2026

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**The Regional
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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