



November 15, 2022

Barry Singleton, P.Eng.
Director
Western Energy Corridor Inc.
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Barry Singleton:

Thank you for the August 18 2022, letter from Western Energy Corridor Inc. (WEC) requesting a regional assessment under the *Impact Assessment Act* (the IAA) of a Western Energy Corridor between Alberta and Manitoba, including marine shipping in Hudson Bay, and for the supplementary information you submitted on August 22, 2022.

Upon receipt of your request, the Impact Assessment Agency of Canada undertook a detailed review, taking into account the considerations laid out in applicable guidelines related to regional assessment requests, to inform my decision. Following careful consideration and analysis of your request, I have decided not to conduct a regional assessment of a proposed Western Energy Corridor for the reasons described below.

This request for a regional assessment is essentially the same as WEC's previous (March 23, 2021) request for a regional assessment of this energy corridor. Although I acknowledge that your cover letter highlights several factors that you feel enhance the need for and importance of such an energy corridor, these are not applicable to the evaluation of the merits of a regional assessment request as outlined in the *Operational Guide: Requesting a Regional or Strategic Assessment under the Impact Assessment Act*.

Following consideration and analysis of your request, the information and analysis that informed my predecessor's June 21, 2022 decision, and input from federal and provincial authorities and potentially affected First Nations, the decision on WEC's previous (March 2021) request remains unchanged.

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As stated by my predecessor at that time, further discussions would be required between the federal government, implicated provincial governments, WEC, and other parties on the energy corridor concept that you have proposed. In my view, there would need to be considerable engagement as part of the planning and identification of any such energy corridor, to help ensure that the views and interests of Indigenous communities and stakeholders are meaningfully considered and reflected.

One of the key objectives of regional assessments under the IAA is to inform and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of future project-specific impact assessments. At this time, I am not aware of reasonably foreseeable future energy developments within the identified corridor that would be subject to federal impact assessment requirements, which such a regional assessment would help inform. I am also of the view that there are other existing regulatory frameworks and initiatives that are well placed to consider and address the potential (and often project- and location-specific) effects of large-scale linear developments such as that which might eventually be proposed within such a corridor. This includes robust project-specific impact assessments undertaken at the appropriate stage of project planning and design.

While I have decided not to proceed with such a regional assessment at this time for the reasons outlined above, there continues to be merit in identifying and exploring such corridors as a means of helping facilitate energy projects and other economic development activities in Canada. As noted above, this would require early and ongoing discussions between federal, provincial, and/or territorial governments, Indigenous groups, industry, and other stakeholders to identify possibilities, priorities, and benefits. I would therefore encourage your organization to continue to participate in such discussions and collaborations.

Documentation related to this regional assessment request, including your request and my response to it, will be posted on the Canadian Impact Assessment Registry at <https://iaac-aeic.gc.ca/050/evaluations/proj/83942>.

Thank you again for submitting this regional assessment request for my consideration.

Sincerely,

<original signed by>

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault, P.C., M.P. (he/him, il)