

# Island <sup>Reprint</sup> Tides

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## VITR decision appealed

Citizens' groups and power transmission competitor SeaBreeze have lodged three appeals of the BC Utilities Commission's (BCUC) July 7 approval of the BC Transmission Corporation's (BCTC) application to replace the existing direct current overhead power transmission line to Vancouver Island with a new alternating current transmission line. The appeals were lodged with the BC Court of Appeals.

The BCTC proposal, termed the Vancouver Island Transmission Reinforcement Project (VITR), met with substantial opposition from TRAHVOL (Tsawwassen Residents Against High Voltage Overhead Lines) and IRAHVOL (Salt Spring-based, Island Residents Against High Voltage Overhead Lines), as well as from SeaBreeze Victoria Converter Corporation.

SeaBreeze had proposed a completely underground and underwater alternative using 'HVDC Light' technology (without fluctuating electromagnetic fields), as well as an alternative underwater line (the Juan de Fuca proposal) linking Vancouver Island to Washington State's Olympic Peninsula.

The TRAHVOL appeal takes issue with BCUC's apparent

definition of the 'public interest' as being the most cost-effective option for BCTC. The group argues that the BCUC panel gave little or no weight to health concerns regarding electromagnetic field (EMF) effects associated with overhead lines through the Tsawwassen residential area.

The IRAHVOL appeal also objects to BCUC's definition of the 'public interest' as strictly determined by dollars. However, even on that basis, it argues that BCUC failed to properly consider the possible monetary benefits of SeaBreeze's Juan de Fuca proposal. IRAHVOL also argues that BCUC erred in its conclusion that the overhead power lines would have no incremental impact on Gulf Islands property values, and also erred in holding that the existing right-of-way agreements would permit the construction of a new overhead power line.

In its argument, SeaBreeze also states that the BCUC panel had interpreted the 'public interest' too narrowly. SeaBreeze also claims the BCUC had incorrectly evaluated the costs and benefits of the Juan de Fuca proposal, particularly with respect to potential income to BCTC from power trading with the US. ☞

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Island Tides, Box 55, Pender Island, BC, Canada. Phone: 250-629-3660. Fax: 250-629-3838.  
Email: [islandtides@islandtides.com](mailto:islandtides@islandtides.com). Website: <http://www.islandtides.com>

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