

# Island <sup>Reprint</sup> Tides

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## Powerline battle continues


The battle between the BC Transmission Corporation and SeaBreeze to transmit power to Vancouver Island continues at both the BC Utilities Commission hearings and in preliminary skirmishes prior to anticipated hearings at the National Energy Board.

At the BCUC hearings, the Commission has continued with a comparison of the BCTC Vancouver Island Transmission Reinforcement (VITR) proposal and the SeaBreeze Vancouver Island Cable (VIC) alternative, despite the fact that SeaBreeze withdrew its application. (SeaBreeze was faced with a proposed change in financing by BCTC which apparently would have rendered the SeaBreeze proposal financially uncompetitive.) The Commission continues to use the SeaBreeze proposal as a technical and financial alternative in order to assist its evaluation of the BCTC proposal.

BCTC's VITR proposal involves high voltage AC powerlines on the existing route across Galiano, Parker, and Salt Spring Islands, combined with submarine cables and underground cables through the Tsawwassen residential area. The SeaBreeze

proposal, on the other hand, anticipated 'HVDC light' technology underwater and underground along a route which would have avoided the Gulf Islands.

From recent testimony at the BCUC hearings, it would appear that the Commission may be seeking some way of combining BCTC financing with the alternative HVDC Light technology. Questioning on March 16 explored the origin of BCTC's claim that it would use 100% debt financing (an option not open to SeaBreeze), which would reduce financing costs compared to BC Hydro's historical 80/20 combination of debt and equity financing. The hearings are expected to wrap up soon.

Meanwhile, BCTC has submitted a list of questions to SeaBreeze regarding its claims for the benefits of a proposed international transmission line across the Strait of Juan de Fuca between Victoria and the Olympic Peninsula. Eventually, there should be hearings on this at the National Energy Board; it would also make use of HVDC Light technology. The Bonneville Power Administration (in the US) has also questioned some of the claims made by SeaBreeze for this link. 

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