

February 17, 2010

Mr. Alan Ehrlich
Senior Environmental Assessment Officer
Mackenzie Valley Environmental Impact Review Board
200 Scotia Centre, Box 938
5102-50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT X1A 2N7

Re: Taltson Hydroelectric expansion/Reliance adjustment


Dear Sir,

I am writing to express concern about the proposed construction of a power line through the Fort Reliance area. As a professional pilot, I feel that the proposed route of the power line constitutes a hazard to navigation as it passes over the water from Maufelly point to Fairchild point, and thence across Fairchild point.

Fort Reliance is a designated seaplane aerodrome. This aerodrome is centred at 60 degrees, 42 minutes North by 109 degrees 7 minutes West, approximately adjacent to the southwestern tip of Fairchild point. Traditionally, seaplane operations take place in the narrow body of water north of this point, marked "seaplane anchorage" on the attached chart. It serves as a refueling point for commercial and private seaplanes during summer and winter months, as well as a destination for seaplanes servicing the fishing lodge located in the bay. Approaches are flown to this body of water through the channel between the two points, or between the hills to the Northwest, depicted by arrows on the attached chart. Generally, the surrounding topography channels wind into this body either from the Northeast or Southwest. The approach and departure paths are chosen based on wind, aircraft performance and weather. Generally, a seaplane departing the anchorage to the Northeast will turn left between the two hills in order to avoid rising terrain and to stay over water during the early phase of departure. Seaplanes approaching from the South or West will make their approach through the channel between the two points, as this offers a safer alternative to the turn required in order to approach from over Charlton Bay. Landings outside the channel are inadvisable due to sea state on these large bodies in any kind of wind.

This body of water presents several pre-existing challenges to seaplane pilots, including sea state and high terrain surrounding the area. The seaplane anchorage itself provides a relatively calm, deep body of water with suitable beaching and docking areas for aircraft and serves as an important refueling point for flights into and out of the Barrenlands. In instances of poor visibility or low ceilings, pilots in the area have adopted procedures to safely enter and exit this body of water, making use of the open areas between land masses. I feel that further encumbering these terrain features with a cable span across several of the open areas constitutes a hazard to navigation and will greatly limit the area's usefulness as a safe harbour.

Sincerely,


Keith Shergold

