

Bipole numbers askew

In her June 9 letter “Export sales will pay for Bipole III route,” Rosann Wowchuk repeats a per-family figure of \$13.68 per year, advanced by Manitoba Hydro CEO Bob Brennan for the cost differential between a west-side transmission line and one on the east.

Brennan’s figure considers only the difference in the construction cost of the line resulting from the considerably greater length of the west-side line (1,364 km) compared to one on the east (885 km). He uses an out-of-date figure of \$428 million that lowballs that cost difference instead of the more defensible \$512 million determined by the Bipole III Coalition (<http://bipoleiiiicoalition.ca>).

His figure does not take into account the \$320 million present value calculated by the Bipole III Coalition for the actual estimate of the 40 MW of additional power losses with a west-side line which have been identified by Brennan himself. Finally, it does not take into account the \$160-million cost, again identified by Brennan, of importing additional power in the event of a single catastrophic outage of Bipoles I and II.

If all of these factors are considered, the additional cost of a west-side line cited by the Bipole III Coalition is very nearly a billion dollars, not the \$428 million that Brennan uses.

Wowchuk is also Manitoba’s minister of finance. Instead of unquestioningly repeating this number, she, of all persons, should have doubts about a figure that is so different than other estimates of the cost differential.

Garland Laliberte
Dean Emeritus (Engineering),
University of Manitoba