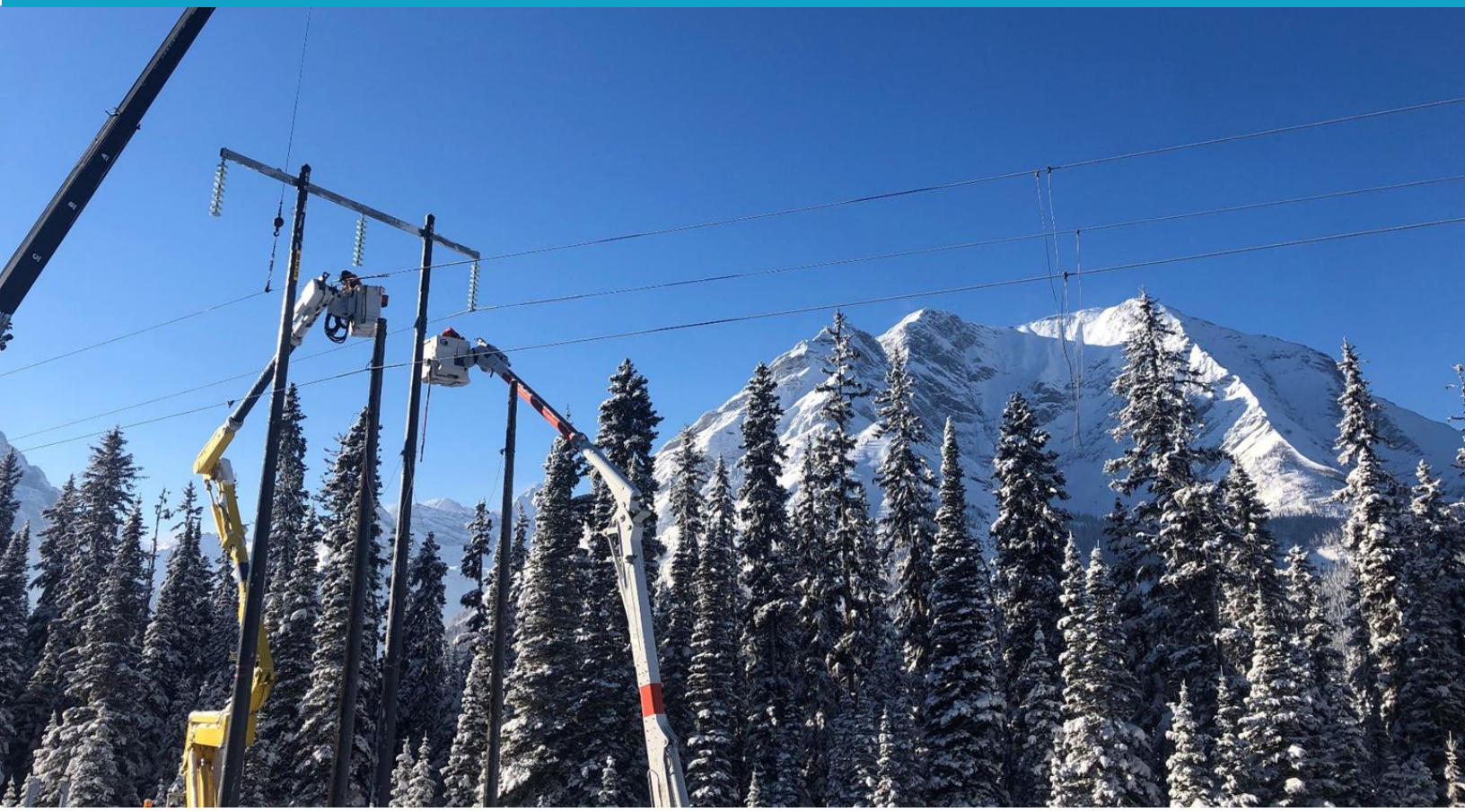
Elkford low-probability outage risk

Community consultation report | August 2026



Executive summary

BC Hydro has identified a low-likelihood transmission scenario that could temporarily interrupt electricity service to Elkford. It would require a rare combination of system conditions and an unexpected outage of transmission line 5L92 from Trail to Sparwood. Automatic protection would act to prevent a wider voltage collapse in the East Kootenay region. A long-term solution to add automatic switching equipment at industrial customers' sites is expected to be in place by 2031.

To better understand how this low-likelihood outage risk could impact the community of Elkford, BC Hydro carried out community engagement in July and August 2026 through a council presentation, an open house in Elkford, and online and handout public comment forms. This engagement is also a requirement of B.C.'s Mandatory Reliability Standard TPL-001-4, Attachment 1.

During this consultation period, we heard from Elkford residents and community leaders that the frequency of outages is more relevant than the cause of an individual outage. The community told us long winter outages are the most impactful, and we should prioritize service to residential customers over industrial customers. This feedback will also help us as we carry out broader reliability improvements in the Elk Valley.

BC Hydro
Power smart

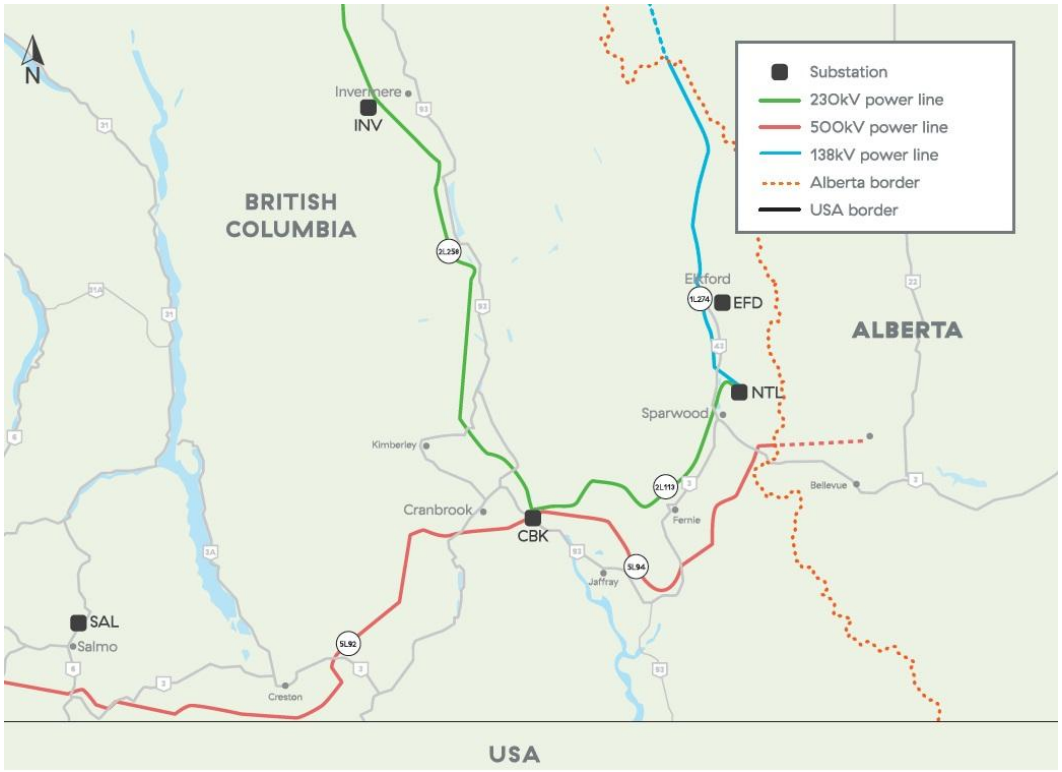
Background

We've identified a low-likelihood transmission outage risk to the District of Elkford.

We estimate this rare outage could happen **once every 36 to 82 years**. It could be as quick as a few minutes and is likely to be **less than two hours**.

There's potential for an outage under these conditions:

- Demand for electricity is high
- A contingency (e.g., an outage from a major incident) occurs on the main 500kV transmission line from the West Kootenay
- Power is being exported to Alberta



Standards put in place by the B.C. Utilities Commission require BC Hydro to notify communities when this risk exists, even though the chance of the outage happening is so small.

We're planning to add equipment at the mines' connection points and to our Natal Substation in Sparwood. If there's a contingency, the new equipment would disconnect the mine loads automatically and avoid this type of outage to Elkford altogether. Planning for the project started this January and we expect to have it installed by 2031.

What we did

In July, we invited stakeholders and the community to learn about this project. A public comment period was open from July 13 to August 21, 2026.

Communication	
Notification	To ensure the community knew about our consultation opportunities, we invited participation by: ○ Direct emails to Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqɬi'it First Nation and key stakeholders (MLA Pete Davis, District of Elkford mayor and council, School District 5 and Interior Health) ○ A postcard mailout to 1,695 addresses in Elkford; ○ Radio, online news, and geotargeted Facebook advertising; and, ○ A dedicated website.
Information sharing	We developed display boards, a technical information sheet and a PowerPoint presentation to use during this consultation. The materials highlighted why the outage risk exists and short-term and long-term solutions. We also provided updates on general reliability improvements in Elkford, as well as detailing ways to provide feedback.

We offered stakeholders and the community several ways to share their feedback.

Engagement	
Council presentation	Members of the engagement team appeared as a delegation at a District of Elkford council meeting. A presentation explained why the outage risk exists, as well as short-term and long-term solutions. Mayor and council asked questions and shared comments about the outage risk.
In-person open house	Participants were invited to tour presentation boards that included: ○ an explanation of the outage risk scenario and the power system in the East Kootenay ○ the short-term solution to minimize the potential outage ○ the proposed long-term solution to avoid an outage during this scenario; and ○ other reliability improvements in Elkford. Transmission engineering team members and Community Relations were available to answer questions and note feedback. Participants were invited to complete written or online feedback forms.
Virtual open house	We developed a slide deck to present during this virtual event that covered the same content as the in-person open house presentation boards. The virtual open house was cancelled because there were no registered participants.
Feedback form	We created an online feedback form where respondents could share their feedback on the low-probability outage risk. The feedback form was open from July 13 to August 21, 2026. A QR code to the form was displayed at the open house and we also offered printed forms to open house participants.
Email	Stakeholders and community members were invited to contact us by email at **projects@bchydro.com**.

How we connected with participants

Community members shared their input with us through several channels.

How participants reached us		
In-person open house	**Feedback form**	**Online feedback**
		
July 20, 2026 4 p.m. – 7 p.m.	in-person and via email to **projects@bchydro.com**	July 13-August 21, 2026
16	**2**	**0**
attendees	feedback forms received	responses recorded

What we heard

Community input on the project was received at the open house and council meeting, as well as through feedback forms and email. Feedback fell into five different themes:

What participants told us – key themes	
Residential customers should be a priority	BC Hydro should avoid outages to residential customers first and foremost, even if it means an outage to industrial customers.
Frequency of outages is more relevant than cause	District of Elkford councillors said that hearing about an outage that could happen once in 36-82 years is a waste of time. They would rather hear about BC Hydro's steps to improve general reliability issues currently experienced by the Elkford community.
Winter outages are a safety concern	Elkford can be very cold in winter. Long outages at this time of year can be dangerous to residents and should be prevented as much as possible.
Elkford residents have no control over outage frequency	Although residents expect some outages given Elkford's remote location, the frequency of recent outages makes them feel powerless.
Outage communication is important	During unplanned outages, BC Hydro should use all available channels to update residents on restoration processes, including local Facebook groups.

Next steps

The responses we received from the community show that this low-likelihood outage risk in Elkford is not a significant concern to the community. Most of the feedback we received was about unrelated outages and reliability concerns in Elkford. As our reliability improvements in Elkford move forward, this feedback will be incorporated into our plans.

What we heard from the community and how the community connected with us will inform engagement planning for the long-term solution project, Natal Load Shed RAS Modification Project, which is expected to be complete by 2031.

Community engagement on the Elkford low-probability outage risk is a requirement of the Mandatory Reliability Standard TPL-001-4, Attachment 1. As we implement the long-term corrective project, we'll continue to respond to concerns from the community, consider community impacts and look for ways to minimize and mitigate those impacts.

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You can find the latest information about this initiative and our work in Elkford on our webpage: **bchydro.com/elkford**.