

Thinking big. Thinking bigger.

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Your editorial, *Hydro Power's Promise* (16 January 2020), states that Quebec "already has more hydro power than it can currently sell" and suggests that the new deal between Hydro Quebec and NB Power to increase transmission capacity between Quebec and New Brunswick will benefit the Maritime Provinces.

Maybe.

But Hydro Quebec has four very good reasons for wanting to increase its presence in the Maritimes.

First, Hydro Quebec's \$1.6 billion Northern Pass transmission line project to bring additional power to New York has been blocked because of objections from New Hampshire. Consequentially, Hydro Quebec is left with additional capacity looking for a market.

Second, the loss of Northern Pass puts a dent in Hydro Quebec's plan to double its profits over the next decade. Any electricity sales to the Maritimes will offset this to a degree.

Third, Hydro Quebec has not lost interest in accessing New England; by increasing capacity in New Brunswick, Hydro Quebec will have access to existing transmission lines between New Brunswick and New England. (Your editorial omitted one of the deal's objectives which is "to increase electricity exports to Atlantic Canada *and* the United States".)

Which brings us to the fourth reason. When Hydro Quebec gains access to the Maritimes, Newfoundland and Labrador will have difficulty justifying new transmission facilities to the Maritimes.

Quebec Premier Francois Legault might want to see the 2,250 MW Gull Island hydroelectric project proceed, perhaps as another source of dirt-cheap electricity stranded in Labrador, like Churchill Falls, that Hydro Quebec can sell at great profit. Even without Gull Island, Newfoundland and Labrador will be facing this problem in 2041, when the current Churchill Falls-Hydro Quebec contract ends.

Your editorial also states that Premier Legault offered a "big helping hand" to the Atlantic premiers who were "thinking big" during their meeting. Perhaps, but Quebec's premier was thinking bigger.

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