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Life cycle of a pipeline

TC Energy has operated pipelines safely and reliably for over 65 years. Today, we operate more than 93,000 kilometres of natural gas pipelines that transport more than 25 per cent of the natural gas needed in North America every day.

TC Energy considers a number of factors when identifying facilities that that are no longer required for service (i.e., decommissioned or abandoned) such as the ability to meet customer requirements, integrity of the facility and operating costs.

All aspects of the life cycle of a pipeline – from design and construction, to operation and decommissioning and abandonment – are regulated by the CER. When TC Energy wants to decommission or abandon a facility, we submit an application or notification to the CER that provides information on topics like safety, environment, and stakeholders and Indigenous engagement. This work only begins after we receive regulatory approval, if required. Decommissioning and abandonment plans are guided by three key principles, consistent with the Canada Energy Regulator (CER) guidelines:

Safety – minimize risk to the public, employees and contractors

Environmental Protection – minimize long-term environmental effects

Cost Effectiveness – the safety and environmental protection objectives are met in a cost-effective manner

What is the difference between decommissioning and abandonment of a pipeline?

Many of our right-of-ways have more than one pipeline transporting natural gas. Decommissioning occurs when a pipeline located in the same right-of-way as another operational pipeline permanently stops operating while the other line continues to operate.

Abandonment occurs when a single pipeline or the last operational pipeline in a shared right-of-way permanently stops and no longer provides service.





TC Energy periodically provides information beginning at the early stages of project development, including prospecting, continuing throughout the life of assets. The information provided is intended to give people the opportunity for meaningful input and inform stakeholders of our proposed activities. Please be aware that as planning progresses, new information becomes available and details may change from the time of this printing. TC Energy follows the Official Languages Act and respects your choice to receive relevant information from us in English or in French. Please contact us if you prefer to receive French-language materials and updates.