

September 3, 2024

Alberta Utilities Commission
1400, 600 3rd Avenue SW
Calgary, AB T2P0G5
Sent via: engage@auc.ab.ca

To: Laura Johnson, Program Manager, Regulatory

Re: Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) Review of Rule 007: Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the AUC review of Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines* and related Bulletin 2024-08 *AUC consultation on Rule 007 and enhanced interim information requirements*.

In this letter, ATCO Renewables Ltd. (“ATCO Renewables”) provides feedback on the topics posted to the AUC Engage website. Appendix A is also provided to share additional feedback on approval renewal requirements and approval transfers. Feedback already provided by ATCO Renewables regarding renewable energy policy on agricultural land through the Alberta Agriculture and Irrigation online survey is not repeated here.

Draft Municipal Engagement Form

While this form could be used in support of the planning process for a project on a voluntary basis, it should not be a mandatory component. The information required by the form is already generally covered by the existing Participant Involvement Program (PIP) process under Rule 007 and as part of the Development Permit process for a given municipality.

Methodology for Visual Impact Assessments

The methodology for Visual Impact Assessments provided in the Module A Report appears generally reasonable. A consistent method to assess the impact to any valued viewsapes, which removes subjectivity from the evaluation will be important for process certainty. However, ATCO Renewables reiterates that impacts to viewsapes for any power plant, regardless of type, depend on the number of visual receptors in a power plant’s viewshed and the relative visibility of power plant infrastructure from these visual receptors.

Appropriate Value for Field of View in Glare Assessment for Solar Power Plant Applications

ATCO Renewables generally agrees with the recommendation provided by the AUC for field of view in glare assessment for solar power plant applications.

Setbacks for Renewable Energy Facilities

ATCO Renewables submits that establishment of setbacks for renewable energy facilities is redundant and unnecessary. Setbacks for renewable energy facilities are already established through:

- Rule 012 in respect of noise control;
- Rule 007 for existing glare and flicker considerations; as well as
- in the rules of, or permits granted by, municipalities and counties.

Furthermore, the infrastructure types identified by the AUC also have existing minimum setbacks through their own regulatory requirements.

Setbacks should be based on measurable impacts, identified through the results of technical assessments and studies, and flexibility should be retained to tailor setbacks based on projects and their locations. By establishing setbacks incremental to those that already exist today, and generalizing the impacts of all renewable energy facilities, the Commission risks adding unnecessary complexity and redundancy with existing rules and processes.

Thank you,



Jennifer Rumas
Director, Regulatory, Sustainability & Government Affairs
ATCO Renewables Ltd.

APPENDIX A

Approval renewal requirements

ATCO Renewables supports longer periods for construction completion in initial approvals to reduce administrative burden related to approval extension requests.

ATCO Renewables also supports the Commission's current approach to justification of granting time extensions. Projects can be delayed for various reasons, including hard to predict events (such as COVID-19). Prescribing a list of acceptable justifications will reduce the flexibility required to respond to unique or justifiable circumstances that warrant time extensions.

Approval transfers

Criteria for transfers may differ for projects between pre-construction, construction, and operational phases and should focus on the new owner's and/or operator's ability to meet the conditions found within the applicable AUC approvals at the time of the requested transfer. When assessing approval transfers, the Commission can also examine the structure of the security in determining if there is expected to be sufficient funds at a project's end of life.