

News release

August 18, 2026

Alberta Utilities Commission denies Synapse Data Center Power Plant Project (Decision 30732-D01-2026)

The Alberta Utilities Commission has denied the application for the Synapse Data Center Power Plant Project in [Decision 30732-D01-2026](#).

Synapse Real Estate Corp. applied for approval to construct and operate a 1,400-megawatt (MW) combined-cycle natural gas-fired power plant with a significant amount of proposed backup diesel generation (1,800 MW). While natural gas power plants are common in Alberta, this project is unprecedented in the combination of its size and proximity to surrounding homes.

After weighing all the evidence, the Commission found that approval of the project is not in the public interest. The Commission finds that the project is too close to the surrounding community, and Synapse failed to demonstrate any compelling justification for selecting that location. The Commission finds that the site is simply not suitable for the proposed development. In making this finding, the Commission is not commenting on the suitability of a data centre in this location. The Commission does not approve or regulate data centres.

About the Alberta Utilities Commission

The AUC is an independent, quasi-judicial agency of the province of Alberta that is committed to delivering innovative and efficient regulatory solutions. The AUC regulates the utilities sector, natural gas and electricity markets to protect social, economic and environmental interests of Alberta where competitive market forces do not.

Media inquiries may be directed to media.relations@auc.ab.ca

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Background

- The project would have been right next to an existing community rather than in a distinct industrial area. While the land is zoned for light industrial, it is directly across from established residential neighbourhoods and is also near commercial uses, including shops, restaurants and hotels.
 - The project site boundary is approximately 30 metres from the edge of the first row of properties across a residential road.
 - There are 700 residences within 800 metres of the proposed project.
- The Commission considered all the evidence filed in the proceeding, including the project's potential economic benefits, the Town of Olds' support in principle, the applicant's consultation efforts, the concerns raised by participants, and the technical evidence regarding noise, air quality, emergency management and other project impacts.
- While the project has the potential to bring economic investment, employment opportunities and municipal tax revenue to the Town of Olds, the Commission's primary concern is the suitability of the proposed location:
 - The evidence demonstrates that the facility would be located directly across from homes, shops, restaurants and hotels and in close proximity to other community uses.
 - While the project may be technically capable of operating at this location, the Commission was not satisfied that the applicant has demonstrated that this location is an appropriate one.