AUC
Alberta Utilities Commission

Rule 007 interim information requirements (updated August 26, 2025)

Applicants for new power plant applications (applications that are filed on or after August 26, 2025, as set out in Bulletin 2025-12), including wind, solar, thermal, hydroelectric and other power plants and new energy storage facility applications, will be required to satisfy the existing information requirements in Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines*, as well as the additional interim information requirements below. Where the interim requirements are applicable only to certain types of power plants or energy storage facilities, it is specified below.

The intent of these interim information requirements is to collect adequate evidence to satisfy the requirements within the Guidelines to evaluate agricultural land for renewable generation (Guidelines) and the *Electric Energy Land Use and Visual Assessment Regulation*.

Agricultural land

1. Using the current version of the Agricultural Regions of Alberta Soil Inventory Database (AGRASID), please describe the agricultural capability of soils intersecting the project footprint as provided in the spring-seeded small grains (SSSGRAIN) attribute of the Land Suitability Rating System (LSRS) table. Provide a table showing the amount of area for each LSRS class impacted by the project in hectares (e.g., 80 hectares of Class 2).

2. For the project footprint, identify whether:

    a) The project lands contain irrigation infrastructure.

    b) The project lands are within an irrigation district. If so, whether:

        - The project has been discussed with the applicable irrigation district.
        - Irrigation acres (either permanent, terminable or annual) are or have been assigned to the project lands.
        - An application for water rights or irrigation acres has been made for the project lands.

    c) The landowners have obtained a Private Irrigation Water Licence for irrigating the project lands.

3. List the professional qualifications of the author(s) who prepared or reviewed the above information regarding agricultural land.

4. Submit an agricultural impact assessment, as defined in the Guidelines to evaluate agricultural land for renewable generation, if any LSRS Class 1 or Class 2 land is reported within the project footprint, or if any Class 3 land is reported within the project footprint and the project is within a municipality identified in "Schedule 1 - Class 3 Land

Municipalities" in the *Electric Energy Land Use and Visual Assessment Regulation.*

To assess adherence to the Guidelines, the AUC requests the following information for inclusion in an agricultural impact assessment:

- If the current agricultural activities are not feasible, explain why. Provide a co-existence plan as described in the Guidelines.
- Provide the terms of reference for future reporting to the Commission as defined by the Guidelines.
- Describe how the agricultural impact assessment does not meet the Guidelines, if applicable, and provide reasons why.

To assess impacts to soils, the AUC requests the following information for inclusion in an agricultural impact assessment:

Soils component

a) Describe all soil series within the project area and report all potential impacts to:
   - Soil quality (i.e., compaction, rutting, salinity, sodicity, fertility, contamination, clubroot).
   - Soil quantity (i.e., wind erosion, water erosion).
   - Hydrology and hydrogeology (i.e., topography, soil drainage, depth to groundwater).

b) Describe how potential impacts to soil quality, quantity, hydrology and hydrogeology will be adequately mitigated during construction, operation and reclamation.

c) Describe all earthworks (e.g., stripping and grading) planned for the project, including the following information:
   - Methodology to anchor structures (e.g., screw piles, concrete footings).
   - The extent of stripping and grading, with an estimate of the area of agricultural land impacted.
   - Description of how these activities have been reduced in both extent and intensity (as practical) to protect the quality, quantity and hydrology of impacted soils.
   - Description of how and where stripped soils will be stockpiled and what steps will be taken to preserve the quality and quantity of stockpiled soils prior to project reclamation.
   - Description of how soils will be returned to preserve the quality, quantity and hydrology of the disturbed soils.

Municipal land use

1. Confirm whether the proposed power plant or energy storage facility complies with the applicable municipal planning documents including municipal development plans, area structure plans, land use bylaws and other municipal bylaws.

2. Identify any instances where the proposed power plant or energy storage facility does not comply with applicable municipal planning documents and provide a justification for any non-compliance.

3. Describe how the applicant engaged with potentially affected municipalities to modify the proposed power plant or energy storage facility or to mitigate any of its potential adverse impacts to the municipality, prior to filing the application.

Reclamation security

For thermal, hydroelectric and other power plants and new energy storage facility applications:

Describe the reclamation security program for the proposed power plant or energy storage facility, including details on:

- The standard to which the project site will be reclaimed to upon decommissioning.
- How the amount of the reclamation security will be calculated.
- The frequency with which the reclamation security amount will be updated or re-assessed.
- When the reclamation security will be in place to be drawn upon, if needed.
- What form the reclamation security will take (e.g., letter of credit, surety bond, other).
- The security beneficiaries to whom the reclamation security will be committed.
- How the beneficiary can access the security and any constraints on such access.
- A report prepared by a third party estimating the costs of reclaiming the proposed project. The report must include the estimated salvage value of project components.
- An explanation of why the chosen form of security was selected, having regard to its attributes and priority in bankruptcy, including how the secured party would be able to realize on the reclamation security should the project owner and operator be in default.

For wind and solar power plant applications:

Confirm whether the applicant will: (i) provide reclamation security to the Government of Alberta; (ii) provide reclamation security to hosting landowners; or (iii) a combination of both. If either (ii) or (iii) is chosen, provide sufficient information to confirm whether the applicant intends to follow the Reclamation security guidelines for wind and solar power plants and if not, explain any differences.

Visual impact assessments

For all types of power plants located within a buffer zone or a visual impact assessment zone, as defined in Schedule 2 and Schedule 3 of the regulation, applicants must submit a visual impact assessment. The visual impact assessment must include:

1. An evaluation of the anticipated visual impacts on the buffer zone or visual impact assessment zone.

2. Visual simulations from key vantage points illustrating the potential visual impact of the proposed power plant.
    - Key vantage points should include locations with valued viewscapes determined to have a major or major/moderate severity of impact raking in the visual impact assessment. If desired, visualizations may also be provided for other viewpoints in the project area so that a range of views at different distances and in different landscapes may be presented. Some of these additional visualizations can include viewpoints from nearby residences.
    - Visualizations must include an accurate representation of the viewscape:
        - Before project construction has commenced.
        - After project construction has been completed, but without any mitigation measures implemented.
        - After project construction has been completed, and any proposed mitigation measures have been implemented.
    - The visualizations should include an explanation of how they were prepared, how they are to be viewed, and what was done to ensure they were prepared accurately. A map must be provided that shows the location and direction of each visualization.

3. Proposed mitigation measures to minimize or offset any adverse visual effects on the buffer zone or visual impact assessment zone.
    - Describe the mitigation measures that will be implemented, including their location, predicted effectiveness during the project's full life cycle and whether the mitigation measures have been discussed with adjacent landowners. If vegetation screening is planned, please confirm that it has also been discussed with local fire authorities and the municipality.

Cumulative effects

1. Please confirm whether the applicant is aware of other existing developments in the project area that could cumulatively affect the rural setting/landscape due to their proximity and/or number.

2. Please discuss any potential positive or negative cumulative social, economic or environmental impacts or effects that may occur considering the proposed project, existing developments and any other currently planned developments. This discussion may include, but is not limited to, any economic spinoffs, community and employment benefits, visual impacts, proliferation, land fragmentation (including fragmentation of agricultural uses, wildlife habitat fragmentation, etc.), the impact of adherence to municipal planning documents, wildlife, species at risk, air quality impacts, recreational or tourism impacts, impacts to existing or anticipated resource development, wetlands, native grasslands, watersheds and water quality impacts, and surface management.

3. Please discuss the applicant's alignment, or efforts to align, with Alberta's Land-use Framework and the economic, orderly and efficient development of industrial facilities including efficient land use principles.