

March 23, 2022

Roundtable 2022: Charting the AUC's progress on regulatory burden reduction

To all registered stakeholders:

The Alberta Utilities Commission held its second roundtable on reducing regulatory burden on March 10, 2022. The roundtable focused on assertive case management, mediated and negotiated settlements and performance metrics for rate cases. The roundtable was convened as part of the AUC's ongoing efforts to continuously assess the effectiveness and efficiency of our regulatory processes. Stakeholder feedback on our progress is essential to ensuring the continued evolution of our processes in accordance with the AUC's public interest mandate.

I thank all stakeholders who filed submissions and participated in the roundtable. The submissions filed were frank and thoughtful and had two underlying themes: a continued support for the AUC's efficiency agenda, and recognition that there remains room for further refinement and improvement. These themes were repeated and reinforced at the roundtable.

I also acknowledge the concern expressed by some that the efficiency agenda could inhibit procedural fairness or the effectiveness of the AUC's processes. I want to assure all stakeholders that the AUC's processes will continue to provide the level of fairness the context requires.

However, neither procedural fairness nor the public interest dictate that our processes remain fixed. To achieve the AUC's policy goal of reducing regulatory burden and improving efficiency, past practices must be reviewed and, where appropriate, reformulated to ensure that the process is proportional to the issues being decided, fair to participants and effective for all.

The AUC appreciates your feedback and the continued endorsement of its efficiency objectives. Based on what we heard, there appears to be broad stakeholder support for the following measures:

- Amending Rule 018: *Rules on Negotiated Settlements* to make the negotiated settlement process for rates proceedings more accessible and less administratively burdensome.
- Exploring the use of initial case management meetings.
- Exploring the potential of pre-application settlement processes, including intervener funding availability.
- Consistently stipulating reasonable limits on process steps (e.g. information requests, negotiated settlement processes, argument, etc.).
- Requiring applicants to include a proposed hearing issues list and draft process schedule in their applications.

- Requiring interveners to include in their statement of intent to participate (SIP) specifics regarding: requested process steps and timing for those steps, the impact on them of specific matters in the application, and comments on the applicant's proposed hearing issues list in accordance with the new rates template.
- Implementing a preliminary process to confirm application completeness.
- Including an oral evidence placeholder in process schedules for complex proceedings.
- Ensuring that finalized issues lists clearly identify matters that require further examination and matters that do not require additional process.
- Supporting an expanded use of technical meetings, where appropriate, and a process to import information generated in the technical meeting onto the record of the proceeding.
- Permitting the use of a hybrid written/oral argument process where appropriate.

While some of these measures can be immediately implemented, others may require additional consultation. We will carefully reflect upon what we have heard and report back to you in greater detail about next steps.

I thank all stakeholders for your ongoing support and assistance as we continue to make improvements to our processes.

Yours truly,

Carolyn Dahl Rees
Chair, Alberta Utilities Commission