

Announcement

August 3, 2023

AUC to launch inquiry, implement pause on approvals for new renewable electricity generation

The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) will hold an inquiry into the ongoing economic, orderly and efficient development of electricity generation in Alberta. For a six-month period, while the inquiry is being conducted, approvals of power plants and hydro developments that produce renewable electricity that are greater than one megawatt will be paused.

The inquiry, at the direction of the Alberta government through an [order-in-council](#), is intended to support the economic, orderly and efficient development of electricity generation in Alberta.

In addition, the Alberta government passed the *Generation Approvals Pause Regulation* through an [order-in-council](#) that will require the AUC to pause approvals of new power plants and hydro developments that produce renewable electricity over one megawatt beginning immediately, until February 29, 2024.

The AUC has been directed to inquire into and report on the following:

- Considerations on development of power plants on specific types or classes of agricultural or environmental land.
- Considerations of the impact of power plant development on Alberta's pristine views.
- Considerations of implementing mandatory reclamation security requirements for power plants.
- Considerations for development of power plants on lands held by the Crown in Right of Alberta.
- Considerations of the impact the increasing growth of renewables has to both generation supply mix and electricity system reliability.

The AUC is seeking stakeholder feedback on implementing the approval pause for the application types identified in the table below. The AUC would like stakeholders to comment on the following options:

- **Complete abeyance:** The AUC does not accept new applications during the pause period and all existing excluded applications will be placed in abeyance during the pause period with the AUC taking no further steps to complete their record or issue decisions.

- **Partial abeyance:** The AUC does not accept new applications during the pause period. For all existing applications with an incomplete record, the AUC process will proceed to the point where the written evidence is complete, applications will then be placed in abeyance until the pause period expires. The AUC will not hold any public hearings for these applications during the pause period. Existing applications with a complete record will be placed in abeyance until the pause period expires.
- **Approval hold only:** The AUC continues to fully process new and existing excluded applications without issuing any approvals until after the pause period.

Stakeholders may also propose other options for implementation.

Stakeholders who wish to provide comments on their preferred option including their rationale in support of their choice must file their submissions **no later than August, 18, 2023**. All submissions should be directed to inquiries@auc.ab.ca. Submissions will be publicly available.

The AUC is reviewing the terms of reference for the inquiry and will be providing further details on next steps in due course.

For further information, please contact AUC General Counsel JP Mousseau at jp.mousseau@auc.ab.ca.

Carolyn Dahl Rees
Chair

Paused AUC applications:

Rule 007 reference	Application type	Paused
All fuel sources		
4.1.1	Micro-generation	No
4.1.2	Power plants less than one megawatt	No
4.1.3	Isolated generating unit	No
Wind		
4.2	Checklist application	Yes
4.3.2	New wind power plant applications	Yes
4.3.3	Amendment application	No
	Final Project update	No
	Letter of inquiry	No
5.1	Time extension	No
Solar		
4.2	Checklist application	Yes
4.4.2	New solar power plant applications	Yes
4.4.3	Amendment application	no
	Final project update	No
	Letter of inquiry	No
5.1	Time extension	No
Thermal		
4.2	Checklist application	No
4.5.2	Thermal power plant applications	No
4.5.3	Amendment	No
	Final project update	No
	Letter of inquiry	No
5.1	Time extension	No
Other power plants whose fuel source is a renewable energy resource (e.g. geothermal, sustainable biomass)		
4.2	Checklist application	Yes
4.6.2	Other power plant application	Yes
4.6.3	Amendment	No
	Final project update	No
	Letter of inquiry	No
5.1	Time extension	No

Rule 007 reference	Application type	Paused
Other power plants whose fuel source is not a renewable energy resource		
4.6.2	Other power plant application	No
4.6.3	Amendment	No
	Final project update	No
	Letter of inquiry	No
5.1	Time extension	No
Hydro projects		
4.7.1	Hydroelectric power plants and hydro developments	Yes
	Hydro amendments*	No
Battery Storage Facilities		
10.1	Application for battery storage facility	No
5.1	Time extensions	No

* Hydro amendment applications will not be paused; an error was made in the previous version of this announcement which has now been resolved.