

August 3, 2023

New Renewable Energy Project Approvals Paused for Review

The Government of Alberta has directed the Alberta Utilities Commission to pause the approvals of any new renewable energy projects pending a review of the policies and procedures.

Beginning on August 3, the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) will [pause approvals of new renewable electricity generation projects](#) over one megawatt until February 29, 2024 and will review the policies and procedures for the development of renewable electricity generation. The review will include:

- ◆ The use of agricultural land and public land for wind and solar projects and land reclamation.
- ◆ The role of municipal governments in land selection for project development and review.
- ◆ Development of power plants on specific types or classes of agricultural and environmental land.
- ◆ The impact of power plant development on Alberta's pristine views.
- ◆ Mandatory reclamation security requirements for power plants.
- ◆ Development of power plans on lands held by the Crown.
- ◆ The impact of the increasing growth of renewables on Alberta's generation supply mix and electricity system reliability.

The RMA has been advocating for changes in regulation and approval processes with the AUC and initiated several projects related to the approval processes currently in place. The RMA currently has a [member committee on quasi-judicial agencies](#) that is gathering information on the experiences of members in interacting with quasi-judicial agencies such as the AUC in relation to project approvals. The RMA is also working with Brownlee LLP to develop a formal set of recommendations based on current legislation and is actively working on several resolutions including [resolution 21-22F: Loss of Agricultural Land to Renewable Energy Projects](#) and [resolution 9-22F: Renewable Energy Project Reclamation Requirements](#). This announcement aligns with the work that the RMA quasi-judicial member committee has done, specifically with advocating for enhanced municipal input into approval processes and recognition of the local impacts of provincially-regulated developments.

It will be vital that any changes to policies and procedures reflect the importance of rural municipalities and acknowledge the local perspectives to create a balanced approach. The RMA will continue to engage with the Government of Alberta throughout this process and ensure that a rural perspective is included in the review.

The renewable energy industry is crucial to the future of rural municipalities and the province as a whole. The RMA looks forward to working with the Government of Alberta, AUC, industry, and other stakeholders to ensure Alberta continues to be a premier destination for renewable energy investment.

Karrina Jung
Policy Advisor
780.955.4085
karrina@RMAAlberta.com

Wyatt Skovron

Manager of Policy & Advocacy

780.955.4096

wyatt@RMAAlberta.com