

August 24, 2023

## AUC Announces Approach to Renewable Energy Project Application Processing During Approval Pause

*The AUC will continue to process new and existing applications for renewable energy projects up to the approval stage while conducting an inquiry into renewable energy generation*

On August 3, the Government of Alberta directed the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC) to [pause approvals of new renewable electricity generation projects](#) over one megawatt until February 29, 2024 and conduct an inquiry into 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.

On August 22, the AUC [announced their approach](#) to addressing existing and new renewable energy applications during the approval pause. The AUC will proceed with an "approval hold only" approach. Applicants will be required to follow the process outlined in [AUC Rule 007](#), but the AUC will supplement Rule 007 with new, interim information requirements related to issues such as agricultural land, views, and reclamation security. While this approach is likely to minimize industry impacts linked to the approval pause, it will be important that any interim measures introduced by the AUC not be used as baselines or precedents for options discussed within the inquiry process.

At this point, the AUC has not provided the RMA with details as to how they will engage with municipalities as part of the inquiry. However, AUC has connected with the RMA to emphasize that they view the RMA and its members as key stakeholders in the inquiry and expect to provide details as to how input will be gathered in the coming weeks.

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](#).

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](mailto:karrina@RMAAlberta.com)

**Wyatt Skovron**

*Manager of Policy & Advocacy*

780.955.4096

[wyatt@RMAAlberta.com](mailto:wyatt@RMAAlberta.com)