



Application review and hearing process

Presentation for Town of Olds – April 27, 2026

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Today's agenda

1. About the Alberta Utilities Commission
2. AUC application and hearing process
3. Participant involvement program
4. Rule 007 requirements





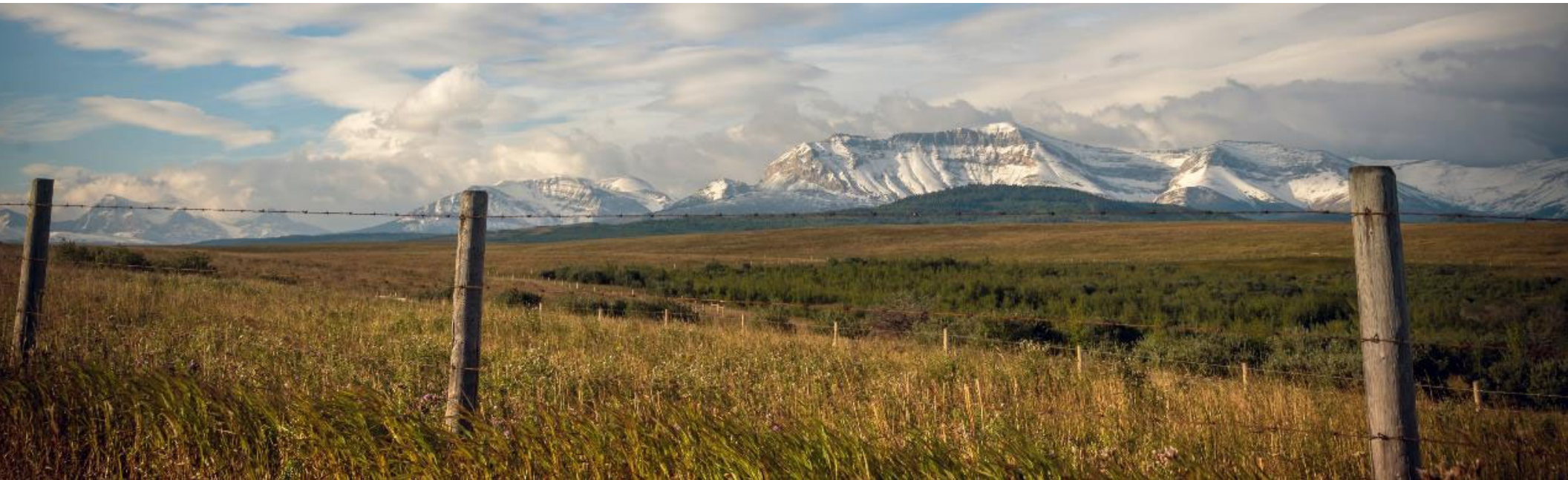
Disclaimer



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The Commission speaks through its formal decisions and so the information contained in this presentation or otherwise cannot constitute legal or professional advice.





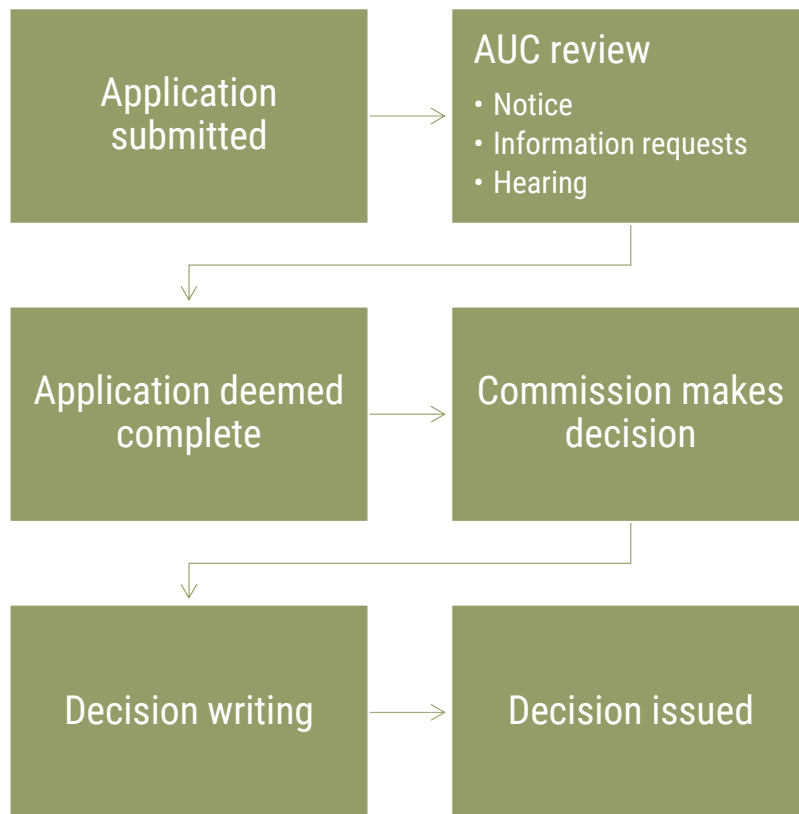
About the Alberta Utilities Commission



- Up to nine commission members, appointed by government.
- Responsible for, among other things, deciding applications, establishing and amending rules, hearing complaints.
- AUC staff assists the Commission (Includes engineers, accountants, economists, environmental specialists, lawyers, etc.).
- Our mission: Regulate the utilities sector, natural gas and electricity markets to protect social, economic and environmental interests of Alberta where competitive market forces do not.



AUC process: What happens after an application is submitted?



Commission panel (usually one to three Commission members) hear the application.

Members of an application team support the panel and can include:

- Lead application officer/regulatory analyst
- Commission counsel
- Technical support staff (noise, environment, engineering, economics, admin)
- Information services
- Communications



AUC application – Synapse Data Centre Power Plant



- Application was filed to the Commission on April 3, 2026 (Proceeding 30732).
- The Commission is currently reviewing the application documents and preparing information requests to the applicant.
- More than 80 statements of intent to participate have been filed with concerns about the project.
- A notice of hearing will be issued with details on:
 - Submission date to file a statement of intent to participate.
 - How to participate in the hearing process.
 - Hearing schedule.
 - Details about an AUC information session.
 - The project and its merits will not be discussed at this session.



Municipal consultation in AUC projects generally



Through the Module A report and consultation with municipalities, the AUC heard that Rule 007 information requirements should provide an opportunity for municipal feedback on proposed projects.

We now require:

- More detailed municipal land use information.
- Municipal engagement form.
 - Required on a best-efforts basis.
 - Intended to facilitate feedback from municipalities on compliance with their planning policies.



AUC hearing process

- The AUC is committed to ensuring that Albertans whose rights may be affected by an AUC decision about a facility or needs application have an opportunity to **have their concerns heard, understood and considered.**
- Public hearings are held before a Commission panel in a **fair and orderly forum similar to a court of law.** This process allows the AUC to make a fully informed decision.
- AUC [Rule 001](#): *Rules of Practice* provides directions for any type of proceeding considered by the Commission.
- Written or Oral (virtual vs. in-person).
- Virtual hearings are livestreamed on the [AUC YouTube](#) channel.



AUC hearing process



The Commission will establish a hearing process to consider the application.

The details of the hearing schedule will be set out in the notice of hearing.

Process steps

Information session

Deadline to file statement of intent to participate

Interveners' information requests (questions) to applicant deadline

Applicant's deadline to respond to information requests

Interveners' written evidence deadline

Information requests to interveners about intervener evidence

Interveners' deadline to respond to information requests

Applicant's reply evidence

Commencement of hearing





Standing

Standing is given to a person whose rights may be directly and adversely affected.

- Two-part test for determining standing:
 - Legal test: is the claim, right or interest being asserted by the person one known to law?
 - Factual test: Does the Commission have information which shows that the application before it may directly and adversely affect those rights?
- Standing is **generally** granted to residents within the notification radius from proposed power plant.
- Parties with standing are eligible for local intervener funding to assist with costs of participating in a hearing, including the costs associated with hiring a lawyer and expert witnesses.





Participation in the hearing: groups

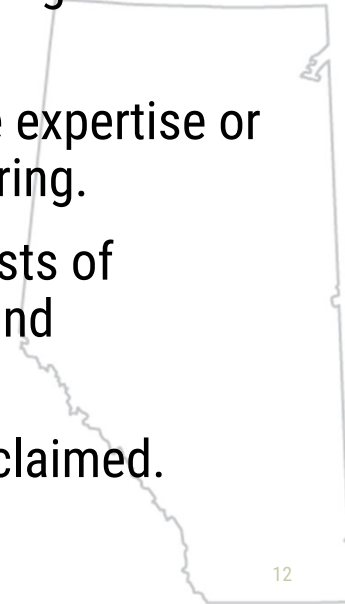
- Interveners with standing are encouraged to form groups if there are other interveners with similar interests.
- Group participation reduces duplication of submissions and costs and supports an efficient hearing process.





Local intervener funding

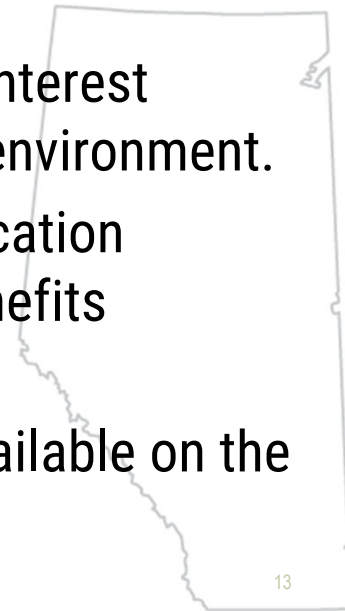
- A local intervener is a person or group with an interest in, and who occupies or is entitled to occupy, land that may be directly and adversely affected by an AUC decision.
- To make informed decisions in the public interest, it is integral that the AUC receives the best possible information and evidence from landowners and others participating in AUC hearings.
- However, the AUC recognizes that many hearing participants may not have the expertise or resources to prepare a complete submission or represent themselves at a hearing.
- Parties with standing may qualify for local intervener funding to assist with costs of participating in a hearing, including the costs associated with hiring a lawyer and consultants.
- The AUC has a cost scale set out in Rule 009 which details costs that may be claimed.





Decision

- The AUC has three options in making a decision on the application:
 - approve
 - approve with conditions
 - deny
- The AUC must consider whether approval of the project is in the public interest having regard to its social and economic effects, and its effects on the environment.
- The AUC considers that the public interest will be largely met if an application complies with existing regulatory standards, and the project's public benefits outweigh its negative impacts.
- The decision will be issued through the eFiling System and publicly available on the AUC website.





AUC Rule 007: Facility Applications



- Addresses applications For power plants, substations, transmission lines, hydro developments, energy storage facilities, industrial system designations, and gas utility pipelines.
- Requirements are discussed in each section and there are subsections for information needs which are numbered for easy reference (e.g. WP24, SP26, OP32).
- For power plants, the first consideration is the capacity of the facility:
 - <1MW: Rule 007 not applicable;
 - 1-10MW: checklist application; or,
 - >10MW: full Rule 007 application.
- The AUC must consider whether approval of a project is in the public interest.

Rule 007
Facility Applications

This rule as amended was approved by the Alberta Utilities Commission on September 25, 2025, and is effective on November 6, 2025.

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Participant involvement program



- Appendix A1 – Participant involvement program guidelines:
 - Planning a participant involvement program
 - Information to be provided
 - **Consultation and notification – who to include and detailed requirements**
 - General considerations for notification and consultation
- Appendix A1-B – Participant involvement program guidelines for Indigenous groups.

••• Notification and consultation requirements – who to include?

Personal consultation

- Goes beyond personal notification and refers to meaningfully engaging with individuals and groups about the project and includes listening and responding to any objections to the project, as set out in Appendix A1 and A1-B of this rule.

Personal notification

- Intended to provide notification of a project to specific and identifiable persons, entities and Indigenous groups. Proponents may consider utilizing telephone, mail or email to contact specific individuals, groups or organizations within the applicable notification radius. Notice of project-specific information to postal code addresses may also satisfy personal notification requirements.

Public notification

- Intended to provide notification of a project to a population that is unknown, ex. owners of unregistered aerodromes. Proponents may consider advertising in local newspapers or other targeted publications, holding an information session or public open house meeting.



Notification and consultation requirements – who to include?



<p>Thermal, hydro or other power plants, or pumped hydro energy storage 10 megawatts or greater, urban and rural.</p>	<p>Provide personal notification to occupants, residents, landowners, local authorities, First Nation reserves, and Metis Settlements within 2,000 metres measured from the edge of the proposed power plant project boundary.</p> <p>For major power plant applications, if there are populated areas just outside the 2,000-metre distance, applicants should consider including those areas in the personal notification.</p> <p>If the applicant considers that certain landowners that should be notified of the proposed project may be missed because they do not reside at the property, additional efforts to notify them should be considered.</p>	<p>Personal consultation with occupants, residents, landowners, local authorities, First Nation reserves, and Metis Settlements within 800 metres measured from the edge of the proposed power plant project boundary.</p>
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Common issues in power plant applications

- Environment and noise concerns.
- Property value and visual impacts.
- Health and safety concerns.
- Agricultural impacts.
- Adequacy of consultation.
- Emergency response plans.
- Routing alternatives (transmission lines and substations).





Emergency response – Rule 007 requirements



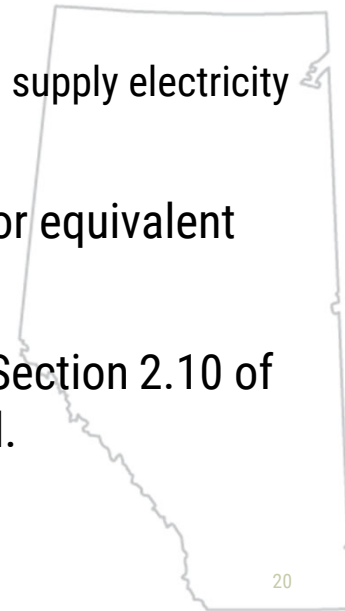
- Confirm the applicant has or will have a corporate or site-specific emergency response plan for the construction and operation of the proposed power plant.
- Provide a summary of the following:
 - The site-specific risks (construction phase and operations phase) that have been identified to date.
 - The emergency mitigation measures that have been identified.
 - The site monitoring and communication protocols that will be put into place.
- Confirm that local responders and authorities have been contacted or notified regarding the project emergency response plan.
- Describe any requirements or feedback received and describe how the applicant intends to address the requirements and feedback received.





Noise impacts – Rule 012 requirements

- Provide a **noise impact assessment (NIA)** in accordance with Rule 012: *Noise Control* that demonstrate compliance with applicable permissible sound levels.
- Include predicted noise impacts from both data centre and power plant in the cumulative sound effect assessment.
 - Assess a **worst-case scenario** where required backup generators operate simultaneously to supply electricity for normal data centre operations.
- **If mitigation is required**, confirm that all mitigation measures modelled in the NIA, or equivalent measures, will be implemented.
- Confirm compliance with the **construction noise mitigation measures** specified in Section 2.10 of Rule 012 or explain why implementation of any measures is not feasible or practical.





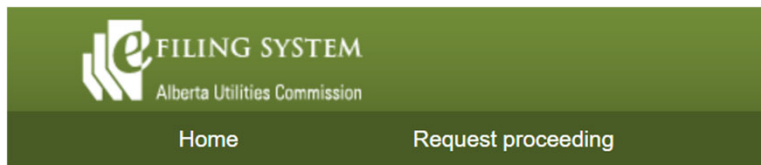
Rule 007 requirements

Other Rule 007 requirements for a thermal power plant:

- Natural gas piping information.
- Cumulative effects.
- Municipal land use information.
- Confirm the applicant has or will have a corporate or site-specific emergency response plan for the construction and operation of the proposed power plant.
- Environmental information.
- End-of-life management and reclamation security.



Information management – AUC's eFiling System



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There are no notifications available	

- The AUC uses its eFiling System to manage all aspects of an application.
- Public and accessible to everyone (once login ID created) and includes:
 - Searching the records of previous proceedings.
 - Observing active proceedings.

- [eFiling login page](#)
- [eFiling System User Guide](#)





Questions and contact info



For questions regarding the AUC's eFiling System/general inquiries:

- The Customer Inquiries group can be reached at info@auc.ab.ca or 310-4AUC.

For proceeding-specific questions:

- Please contact the lead application officer assigned to a proceeding.
- Contact info can be found on the main proceeding page in the eFiling System.





Thank you



info@auc.ab.ca



www.auc.ab.ca



310-4AUC

