

To: Alberta Utilities Commission

Re: Bulletin 2025-02 / 2025-03-24 -
Changes proposed to Rule 007: Facility Applications – Blackline Update

I would like to thank the AUC on their efforts in updating rule 007 now and into the future, but the AUC still has work on areas they have failed to bring into the now and future. Please let me begin with what is still needed despite the feedback in round one and what should have been done and changed. I do support in what Mr Mark Wight has stated on the follow-up feedback for the rule 007 update. But I will explain further in areas that still are lack and need updating, while we are doing the rule 007 update now then waiting until an unknown further date, (another update to 007 in the future), to cover what we can now, when we have a prime opportunity to assist in meaningful change forward.

Wind:

There is more and more evidence is coming out to the wide range of impacts for local residents, the notification area should be 3200m, this is due to the far reaching impacts that these installations can have, with ever taller heights these projects are being proposed. With ever increasing heights of these turbines, the further the impact area is, and should be considered, thus the 3200m for PIP involvement area. Only doing the bare minimal isn't a full and meaningful PIP program, when impacted individuals are left out, but must deal with the future adverse effects with no say. This is also true with the rural backlash with the AUC and the lack of providing a meaningful PIP's when such projects are being proposed before the AUC and the impacted area.

Solar:

What I have been seeing before the AUC on many projects with the “ agriculture first” approach, is the lack of data and proven fact that said agriculture approach will work for that said area, site, and or location. Not all areas will have the same growing opportunity as another areas of the province. I have a garden and also have a community garden I share and work with another family. What we can not grow together, I grow on my own for that said area isn't working in growing. What the AUC should consider is proof and not just theory of said growing what is being proposed. What should be required is actual proof it will work. This would also streamline the AUC for a real proven approach will work for a test location on that site was done. For this would be a truly agriculture first approach with it being proven. Because as it stands, everything before the AUC is just theory, (berries, etc..), in what can and can not grow. And when it doesn't work, what fall back is going to be used? Who is held accountable for a failed “Agrivoltaic” plan? What enforcement does the AUC have to make sure that what was said will be done? If it doesn't work and just shrugged off, then it isn't meeting the agriculture first and a total degradation of that land from class 2 and 3 to just industrial land with no agriculture first being met, which isn't following what the province has stated to the AUC, and the AUC not meeting this mandate from the province. This will further the rural backlash from the rural municipalities and their residents. What enforcement is their? Rule 007 needs set requirements for meeting what is being proposed and enforcement to make sure. If the said proposal isn't being met, what is the enforcement to make sure that something agriculture is being meet and not a total loss.

BESS:

The 800m notification setback is not data driven, nor supported by current data that's out in the public. What is supportive of bigger radius for notification, is the Moss Landing BESS fire. We have data from that impacted area that is a minimum of (2miles), 3200m area. I know the AUC might not take too kindly to that radius, thus the proposed 1600m, which was given with all data supporting said first public outreach to the rule 007 update in my submission and others. YET, the AUC made no changes given all the data that's before us with Moss Landing and other BESS related thermal runaway events. What the AUC is doing, is leaving out impacted individuals who will feel the stresses of said emergency with no help, no voice, the AUC leaving them out, when the data and being told these do have a wider impacted area and risks. The AUC needs to get this right the first time before someone gets hurt or the worse happens, death. When the AUC had the opportunity to make meaningful change which meets in the middle, 1600m notification radius, its fair and puts a meaningful change that the public can see and may have more trust in the AUC process. Is the AUC wanting to be behind the science and the data when it comes to this new technology, and then playing catch up when something goes wrong, for its a matter of time, and then the AUC has egg on the commission's face for they, the AUC, had an opportunity to make meaningful change and didn't. The AUC could have taken a public safety approach first with putting in the 1600m notification radius based on the data, as apart of the public interest part of the AUC mandate.

<https://www.nbcbayarea.com/investigations/air-quality-data-moss-landing-battery-facility-fire/3828127/>

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2025-01-29/heavy-metals-found-in-monterey-estuary-after-moss-landing-lithium-battery-fire>

Given the data above, I support the Alberta Wilderness Associations views of better water protection for BESS projects. This is especially true when BESS projects want to go beside wetlands, lakes, known underground aquifers, and rivers and streams. They have the potential to contaminate and we need to protect them from harm. Additionally, BESS projects should provide emergency clean up from a fire, which causes contamination outside the project location, this is especially true with being beside wetlands, lakes, underground aquifers, and rivers and streams or environmentally sensitive biodiversity areas like Important Bird Areas/ Key Biodiversity Areas. This lack of foresight given the data, opens these area to significant environmental harm and disaster, which is not in the public's best interest and would put unwanted cost of clean up on the tax payer, which is also not in the public's best intenses.

Closing:

With each and every project; wind, solar, BESS, Natural Gas, geothermal, etc..., all have site specific risks, impacted area, and impacts on wildlife, wetlands, local residents including municipalities. Having everything all under the same 800m notification radius is very bias and pro development, leaving many who can and might be impacted out of a proper consultation with said development. Leaving a bad taste in individuals mouths with being left out and feeling disrespected by the AUC commission and fuelling the backlash they are receiving. If the AUC is genuinely wanting to make a meaningful change to rule 007 that is fair to all and not just bias to one side. The AUC should and I hope, take this into further consideration and put in project specific notification radius that improve stakeholder feedback and improve relations with the AUC. While minimizing the perceived notion of being bias of being highly pro development and not hearing effected stakeholders in their said

proceeding. What many individuals have provided to the AUC in the rule 007 update is highly data driven with facts, peer-reviewed data and supports these changes. The AUC being hesitant in providing meaningful change to rule 007, speaks volumes of their pro development and less of the public interest and effects, with the lack of any truly meaningful change of rule 007 for the benefit of all citizens in Alberta.

Thank you kindly,
Amy Marcotte