



talk about transmission process overview

August 2010

Albertans have a say on where critical transmission lines and facilities are located.

Critical electrical transmission upgrades are needed if Alberta is to continue to grow and prosper. All Albertans have a stake in the outcome.

While the need for more power transmission has been identified in a number of areas, no decisions have been made on where critical transmission infrastructure will be located. Landowners' issues will be heard, taken into account and affected landowners will receive fair compensation.

The Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC), the provincial regulator, has a mandate to ensure every directly and adversely affected Albertan is informed of a transmission line or substation application, and has the opportunity to have their concerns heard, understood and considered in the review process.

If a transmission line or substation has been proposed to go on, across or near your property you can become involved in the AUC process. The AUC application process allows for a written or oral proceeding where individuals, representative groups and applicants are able to participate.

The AUC encourages public participation to help ensure that it is informed of the issues and renders decisions that serve the public interest. In facility applications, funding and assistance may be available for those who wish to participate in AUC proceedings.

Step 1: Consultation (as plans are developed)

Consultation is required so that concerns may be raised, properly addressed and if possible, resolved. Potentially-affected parties are strongly encouraged to participate in the initial public consultation, as early involvement in informal discussions with an applicant may lead to greater influence on project planning.

The Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO), the province's electricity system planner is required to carry out consultation during the preparation of their plans for transmission upgrades.

In 2007 and 2008, the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) carried out almost 300 consultations and meetings to obtain input from Albertans. There were 92 open houses held with more than 2,500 attendees. Over a million copies of the Powering Albertans magazine were distributed to all homes in Alberta. AESO attended 48 meetings with small groups and made 148 presentations to municipalities.

Transmission facility owners, the companies that build, own and operate transmission infrastructure must also carry out consultations before submitting an application to the AUC for a transmission project.

Consultation takes many forms including open houses, town halls, small and large group meetings and/or one-on-one sessions. In 2009, additional consultations and meetings were held by the AESO and transmission facility owners. More than 4,800 individuals have attended these 2009 consultations.

Step 2: Application to build made to the AUC

After the applicant has conducted its public consultation process, it should take into consideration what it learned during consultations and make any amendments it sees as necessary and reasonable to its proposal. The applicant then makes an application to the Alberta Utilities Commission.

Applicants must identify in their application any unresolved objections or concerns that they are aware of from the public consultation process.



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Step 3: Notice of an application / hearing process

Once a facility application is received by the AUC, Albertans who may be directly and adversely affected are notified by mail. Notice is also typically published in local newspapers.

The notice provides information about the public hearings including key dates, contacts and information on how Albertans may participate in the hearing process.

Step 4: Interested parties make submissions or objections

Individuals not automatically eligible to be a participant in a proceeding can submit a written submission to the AUC. The commission will consider your submission and decide whether you are a person who may be directly and adversely affected by the proposed project. If a party may be potentially directly and adversely affected by a proposed facility, they can apply to be reimbursed for reasonable costs incurred in support of their participation in a commission proceeding.

Step 5: Opportunity for consultation and negotiation

The commission supports ongoing efforts to reach a positive outcome for the applicant and all affected parties.

The commission encourages the applicant and those who have filed submissions to continue to attempt to resolve any outstanding issues.

Step 6: Public hearing

The public hearing process provides an opportunity for those who were unable to resolve their concerns with the applicant to express their views directly to a commission panel.

The commission publishes a notice of hearing in newspapers distributed in the local area, in major Alberta daily newspapers and online.

Copies of the notice are also mailed to the applicant and participants.

The notice of hearing will set out the deadlines for various steps in the process, including the process and timelines for filing written submissions and for preparing questions to be answered by the applicant or other participants.

An AUC public hearing operates similarly to a court proceeding and is a quasi-judicial process. The hearing is open to the general public.

Step 7: The Decision

After hearing a utility facilities application, the AUC has three options in reaching a decision: approve the application as applied for, approve it with conditions, or deny it. The AUC endeavors to release decisions within 90 days from the end of hearings.

Step 8: Right to appeal

A participant in a hearing who is unhappy with the decision of the commission may request that the commission review and vary its decision. A dissatisfied participant may also file a leave to appeal motion in the Court of Appeal of Alberta within 30 days from the date the decision is issued.

Step 9: Construction and operation

Any applicant that receives a licence or permit to build and operate a facility from the commission must adhere to any conditions that were set out in the commission's decision.

If you notice something during the construction or operational phases of a project that concerns you, bring this to the applicant's attention. If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, please bring your concerns to the attention of the AUC Complaints Group.