Bulletin 2012-10

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Lower Athabasca Regional Plan

The Lower Athabasca Regional Plan (LARP) is the first of seven regional plans to be created under the Alberta Land Stewardship Act. The LARP was approved on August 22, 2012, and came into force on September 1, 2012. The LARP applies to a large area in north-eastern Alberta as shown in the attached map, or on the government’s website at:

https://www.landuse.alberta.ca/RegionalPlans/LowerAthabascaRegion/Pages/default.aspx

Under Section 8.1 of the Alberta Utilities Commission Act, the Commission must act in accordance with the plan, and cannot issue permits, licences and other approvals for activities in the region until they have been reviewed for compliance with the LARP.

As of September 1, 2012, applications to the AUC with respect to facilities within the LARP area must include information addressing compliance with the three environmental management frameworks developed for the LARP, namely, air quality, surface-water quality, and groundwater. To this end, the Commission requires applicants for transmission lines, power plants, industrial system designations and gas utility pipelines within the Lower Athabasca region to include the following additional information related to LARP compliance:

1) A description of how the proposed project is compliant with the land-use planning detailed in the LARP.

2) Whether the proposed project is to be in a new conservation area or provincial recreation area established in the LARP.
   a) If yes, whether the project is incidental to existing approved facilities.

3) If the proposed project produces air emissions, substantiated analysis to whether the project would cause ambient air quality conditions to exceed the triggers or limits detailed in the air quality management framework of the LARP.

4) If the proposed project uses surface water, substantiated analysis as to whether the project would cause ambient surface water conditions to exceed the triggers or limits detailed in the surface water quality management framework of the LARP.

5) If the proposed project uses groundwater, substantiated analysis as to whether the project would cause groundwater conditions to exceed the interim quality triggers detailed in the groundwater management framework of the LARP.
These new information requirements will be incorporated in the next version of AUC Rule 007: Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, and Industrial System Designations and AUC Rule 020: Rules Respecting Gas Utility Pipelines. In this regard, the Commission will also consider your feedback with respect to the implementation of the Lower Athabasca Regional Plan, including the above-mentioned information requirements, in the context of its rule review.

For any active applications within the LARP area the AUC has already requested, or, will continue to request, the above additional information until such time that AUC Rule 007 and AUC Rule 020 have been revised.

Robert D. Heggie
Chief Executive

Attachment
Appendix 1 – Lower Athabasca Regional Plan Map