



## **Alberta Electric System Operator**

### **Amend North-Central Needs Identification Document Approval**

**July 4, 2013**

**The Alberta Utilities Commission**

Decision 2013-249: Alberta Electric System Operator  
Amend North-Central Needs Identification Document Approval  
Application No. 1608130  
Proceeding ID No. 1701

July 4, 2013

Published by

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## **1 Introduction and background**

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or the Commission) must decide whether to approve an application by the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO) to amend the north-central needs identification document (NID) Approval No. [U2010-126](#).<sup>1</sup>

2. The amendments sought by the AESO were minor in nature and consisted of changes to the equipment in the Triangle 882S substation and the High Prairie 787S substation in the High Prairie area. No party specifically objected to the proposed amendments.

### The original NID application

3. The AESO filed a needs identification document application with the Commission on July 16, 2009, as Application No. 1605266 (original NID). The original NID addressed the need for reinforcement of the transmission system in the north-central region of Alberta. The north-central region is comprised of three transmission planning areas which include the towns of Slave Lake, High Prairie, Valleyview, Swan Hills and Whitecourt. The proposed enhancements and expansions addressed transmission capacity issues arising from increasing load in the region.

4. Prior to filing the original NID, the AESO sent project information by direct mail to 10,912 addresses, which included public stakeholders, area First Nations, and municipal and provincial representatives. The notice was also advertised in seven area newspapers. At the same time, the AESO met with representatives from the municipal districts of Lesser Slave River, Greenview and Big Lakes. The AESO met with representatives from the Town of Slave Lake, Slave Lake District Chamber of Commerce and the Lesser Slave River Indian Regional Council. The AESO did not receive any responses containing objections to the need for development.

5. The Commission issued a notice of hearing for the original application. The notice was mailed to approximately 9,000 Alberta residents through a postal code mail out that encompassed the areas identified by the AESO which could be affected by the original NID. The Commission also mailed 1,800 notices to registered land title holders and landowners within 800 metres of existing transmission lines and substations that could be affected by the proposed developments. The notice of hearing was also published in seven area newspapers between November 25, 2009, and December 2, 2009. The Commission held information sessions in Swan Hills and High Prairie, Alberta on December 9, 2009, and December 10, 2009, respectively. The Commission did not receive any responses containing objections to the need for development.

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<sup>1</sup> Needs Identification Document Approval No. U2010-126: Alberta Electric System Operator – North-Central Alberta Transmission System Development, Application No. 1605266, Proceeding ID No. 271, May 6, 2013.

6. The Commission approved the original NID in Decision 2010-183<sup>2</sup> and granted Approval No. U2010-126, on May 6, 2010.

### The amended NID application

7. The AESO filed an application to amend the original NID approval on February 6, 2012, as Application No. 1608130 (the NID amendment application). As noted, the amendments sought by the AESO to the original NID were minor in nature and consisted of changes to the equipment in the Triangle 882S substation and the High Prairie 787S substation.

8. The Commission issued information requests to the AESO on February 17, 2012. The AESO responded to the Commission's information requests on March 1, 2012. On March 8, 2012 the AESO requested that the Commission consider the NID application and the facility application jointly pursuant to Section 15.4 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*. ATCO Electric Ltd. (ATCO) filed the associated facility application, Application No. 1609169, on December 31, 2012.

9. The Commission issued a second round of information requests to the AESO on March 8, 2013. The AESO responded on March 28, 2013, and amended its application to clarify that 144-kilovolt (kV) capacitor bank, which was approved to be installed at High Prairie 787S substation, would come complete with a circuit breaker in addition to the four 144-kV circuit breakers proposed in the application.

10. The Commission issued a notice of applications on March 5, 2013, with a deadline to file interventions to the AUC by April 3, 2013.

11. While some registered parties marked a box on their submission forms, stating that they wanted the Commission to hold a hearing with respect to the NID amendment application, no registered party specifically objected to that application and no registered party filed any evidence or made any submissions with respect to the NID amendment application.

12. The Commission issued a notice of hearing on May 22, 2013, scheduling a hearing for July 9, 2013, in High Prairie, Alberta.

## **2 Discussion**

13. The AESO requested approval to amend the equipment listed in Approval No. U2010-126, for High Prairie 787S substation and Triangle 882S substation.

14. The AESO requested to amend clause b. of the NID approval, which currently states:

install two new motor-operated disconnect switches at Triangle 882S substation: one to terminate the new 144-kV transmission line to High Prairie 787S substation (referred to in (a) above), and one to terminate the 144-kV transmission line 7L06.

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<sup>2</sup> Decision 2010-183: Alberta Electric Systems Operator and ATCO Electric Ltd – North-Central Alberta Transmission Development – Needs Identification - Fieldgate 824S Substation Alteration – Applications No. 1605266 and 1605438, Proceeding ID No. 271, May 6, 2010.

15. Subsequent to the NID approval, ATCO completed the detailed engineering for the Triangle 882S substation and advised the AESO that manual disconnect switches, which would be functionally equivalent to the approved motor-operated switches, would result in reduced costs, while still meeting existing ATCO standards.

16. Accordingly, the AESO has requested that the words “motor-operated” be deleted from clause b. of the NID approval. The amended clause b. would read as follows:

install two new disconnect switches at Triangle 882S substation: one to terminate the new 144-kV transmission line to High Prairie 787S substation (referred to in (a) above), and one to terminate the 144-kV transmission line 7L06.

17. The AESO also requested to amend clause e. of the NID approval, which currently states:

upgrade High Prairie 787S substation to 144-kV standards including installing two 15/20/25-MVA, 144/25-kV LTC transformers, one 144-kV capacitor bank and salvaging two 72/25-kV transformers, two 25-kV regulators, and two 72-kV circuit breakers.

18. Subsequent to the NID approval, ATCO completed the detailed engineering for the High Prairie 787S substation and advised the AESO that using the three 144-kV circuit breaker configuration proposed in the original NID would require costly modifications to standard designs. ATCO suggested that a fourth 144-kV circuit breaker be used at the High Prairie 787S substation instead. The AESO also proposed that the 144-kV capacitor bank that was approved would come complete with an additional circuit breaker.

19. Accordingly, the AESO has requested approval for the addition of a fourth 144-kV circuit breaker in the High Prairie 787S substation and a fifth 144-kV circuit breaker that would be associated with the 144-kV capacitor bank. The amended clause e. would thus read as follows:

upgrade High Prairie 787S substation to 144-kV standards including installing two 15/20/25-MVA, 144/25-kV LTC transformers, four 144-kV circuit breakers, one 144-kV capacitor bank complete with a circuit breaker, and salvaging two 72/25-kV transformers, two 25-kV regulators, and two 72-kV circuit breakers.

20. On June 5, 2013, the AESO stated that the submissions from interveners related to the facility application were received and that no concerns have been expressed relating to the AESO’s proposed amendments. The AESO requested that the Commission approve the NID application prior to the hearing date. The AESO submitted that of the twelve parties granted standing in the proceeding, five participants included the AESO’s name or the AESO application number on their submission. The AESO also stated that four of the five of these submissions expressed concerns about impacts to farming operations due to construction and the location of the transmission facilities. The AESO stated that the fifth submission did not specify concerns. The AESO had attempted to contact this stakeholder to discuss the nature of the concerns and has been unable contact him. The AESO added that this stakeholder is more than 10 kilometres from the nearest substation where the proposed amendments would occur.

21. The AESO submitted that the proposed amendments are minor technical modifications that relate to existing facilities and they do not alter the location for any of the proposed transmission developments.

### 3 Findings

22. The Commission considered the NID amendment application, pursuant to Section 34(2) of the *Electric Utilities Act*.

**34(2)** On its own initiative or in response to views expressed by the Commission, the Independent System Operator may amend a needs identification document submitted to the Commission for approval.

23. Based on the application, the Commission is satisfied that the amendments will not result in any adverse environmental effects.

24. The Commission finds that the AESO conducted an extensive participant involvement program as part of the original NID application, which included the areas that may be affected by the currently proposed amendments. The program included mailing notices to all potentially affected landowners and advertising in newspapers throughout the region. Therefore, the Commission finds that additional consultation was not required for this NID amendment application. The Commission finds that ATCO's consultation for the associated facility applications included the proposed amendments.

25. The Commission recognizes that the five parties identified by the AESO as having referenced the AESO or the need application in their submission, all withdrew their submissions. The Commission finds that there are no outstanding public or industry concerns or objections.

26. The Commission finds that the NID amendment application meets the requirements of AUC Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines and Industrial System Designations*.

27. The Commission has reviewed the NID amendment application in light of the principles and matters it is required to consider pursuant to Section 38 of the *Transmission Regulation*. The Commission notes that no party objected to the original NID application and no party demonstrated that the AESO assessment of the need to expand and enhance the transmission system in the north-central region of Alberta was technically deficient, or that the approval of the original NID was not in the public interest. The Commission considers that the outcomes of the AESO's amendments to the original NID, as set out in the NID amendment application, do not materially change the assessment of need and notes that no person has objected to any of the amendments described in that application. Therefore, in accordance with subsection 38(e) of the *Transmission Regulation*, the Commission considers that the original NID, as amended, remains correct.

#### 4 Decision

28. Pursuant to Section 34 of the *Electric Utilities Act*, the Commission approves the NID for the project and grants the AESO the approval set out in Appendix 1 – Needs Identification Document – Approval No. 2013-317 – July 4, 2013 (Appendix 1 will be distributed separately).

Dated on July 4, 2013.

#### The Alberta Utilities Commission

*(original signed by)*

Willie Grieve, QC  
Chair