

Bulletin 2020-15

April 29, 2020

Reducing regulatory burden: checklist application pilot project for low-risk electric transmission and gas utility pipeline applications

The Alberta Utilities Commission is introducing a pilot project to assess the effectiveness of reduced application requirements for the following facility application types:

Electric transmission facilities

- Letters of enquiry for minor substation alterations.
- Letters of enquiry for minor transmission line alterations.
- Time extensions for transmission facilities.

Gas utility pipelines – Tier 1 applications

- Record amendments.
- Self-disclosures.
- Pipeline splits due to as-built review.
- Abandonment applications filed within 90 days of completing the abandonment operation.
- Low-pressure conversions.
- Maximum operating pressure changes.
- Surface pipeline removals.
- Pipeline splits and abandonments requested and paid for by a third party.

For the application types listed above, applicants are currently required to file an application and all supporting documents such as environmental evaluations, participant involvement program summaries, etc. Depending upon the application, this can include multiple documents.

In its Regulatory Burden Roundtable, the Commission heard that an expedited approach to low-risk applications by established applicants was in the public interest. Stakeholders emphasized that this type of trusted traveller approach to low-risk activities was effectively employed in other jurisdictions.

During the pilot project, applicants will only be required to file a single-page checklist confirming that the regulatory requirements for the application have been met and, in some cases, a draft of the amended approval or licence they are requesting. Applicants will not be required to file any other related supporting documents. Applicants will be required to keep on file the related supporting documents as they may be required to respond to an AUC audit request. The Commission intends to audit between 10 and 15 per cent of applications to assess compliance.

The goals of this pilot project are to reduce regulatory burden and maintain the effectiveness and credibility of the regulatory system. For the identified application types, the following steps will apply:

- Applicants will file completed checklists.
- The Commission will assess the eligibility for an application to be filed as a checklist application and will issue amended approvals (if necessary) within five business days of receiving a properly completed checklist application form.
- Incomplete or ineligible checklist applications will be processed in accordance with the facilities performance standards set out in [Bulletin 2019-15: New performance standards for processing facility applications](#).
- Applicants will be asked to file supplemental information for applications that are not eligible to be filed as checklist applications.
- The Commission will continue to ensure compliance with its requirements via audit procedures.

Next steps for applicants

The Commission has prepared forms for the checklist applications and accompanying instructional documents for completing the forms. Applicants can use the new checklist approach effective immediately.

The electric transmission facilities checklist application forms and instructional documents are available on the [Rule 007 Related information page](#) on the AUC website.

The gas utility pipelines checklist application form is available on the [Rule 020 Related information page](#) on the AUC website and instructional documents are found in Rule 020 itself.

Completed checklist application forms are to be uploaded to the AUC eFiling System as document type “Application” prior to registering the proceeding.

Assessment of effectiveness

The Commission will evaluate the effectiveness of this pilot project over the next 12 months. The Commission will also assess over that time whether to develop specified penalties for any non-compliance identified in post-approval audits.

Should you have questions or feedback on the pilot project, please contact JP Mousseau at jp.mousseau@auc.ab.ca or by phone at 403-592-4452 or Brian Shand at brian.shand@auc.ab.ca or by phone at 403-593-4434.

Douglas A. Larder, QC
General Counsel