



The Town of Okotoks

**Solar Generation Facility Upgrade at
Drake Landing Energy Centre**

September 28, 2011

The Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 2011-393: The Town of Okotoks

Solar Generation Facility Upgrade at Drake Landing Energy Centre

Application No. 1607174

Proceeding ID No. 1166

September 28, 2011

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The Alberta Utilities Commission

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1 Introduction

1. Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) filed Application No. 1607174 on April 6, 2011, on behalf of the Town of Okotoks (the town), with the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or the Commission). The application is for approval, pursuant to Section 11 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, to upgrade the existing solar generation facility by installing and operating 72 photovoltaic modules (the modules). The modules are additions to an existing 3.87-kilowatt (kW) array of photovoltaic modules at Drake Landing Energy Centre. SAIC also applied, pursuant to Section 18 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, for an order to connect the power plant to FortisAlberta Inc.'s (Fortis) facilities.
2. The additional modules would be mounted on the roof of the Drake Landing Energy Centre located in Section 22, Township 20, Range 29, west of the Fourth Meridian, the municipal address of which is 15 Drake Landing Common, Okotoks, Alberta.
3. The Commission issued information requests to SAIC and the town on April 28 and June 7, 2011. SAIC and the town responded to those information requests on May 27 and September 1, 2011, respectively.

2 Discussion

4. The proposed solar generation facility upgrade would consist of 72 Conergy P 235PA photovoltaic modules. Each module is capable of generating 235 watts direct current (DC) power. The new modules would be connected to the existing 3.87-kW photovoltaic array to form a power plant (the power plant) with 20.8-kW DC power generating capacity in total. The inverters, which convert DC to alternating current (AC), would be installed inside the Drake Landing Energy Centre building.
5. The town has a connection agreement with Fortis dated April 26, 2011, to connect the power plant to the Fortis electric distribution system. The town intends to use all the energy produced; however, if any excess power is generated, it would flow back into the grid via the Fortis electric distribution system.
6. The town stated that it did not conduct a participant involvement program for the solar generation facility upgrade since the proposed modules would be mounted below the level of the roof parapet and would not be visible from the highest windows in nearby buildings or houses surrounding the power plant.
7. There are no environmental impacts associated with the proposed solar generation facility upgrade as it is a roof mounted solar generation facility.

3 Findings

8. Section 11 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act* states:

11 No person shall construct or operate a power plant unless the Commission, by order, has approved the construction and operation of the power plant.

9. Section 18(1) of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act* states, in part:

18(1) The owner or operator of a power plant, transmission line or electric distribution system shall not connect that power plant, transmission line or electric distribution system, or cause or permit it to be connected,

(a) to any other power plant, transmission line or electric distribution system, unless the connection is in accordance with an order under this section ...

10. The Commission has reviewed the application and responses to the information requests posed to the applicant, and considers that the applicant has fulfilled the technical and environmental information requirements of sections 11 and 18 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act* with respect to the power plant.

11. The Commission notes that a participant involvement program has not been conducted and finds that the reasons given by the town are valid under the circumstances.

12. Based on the lack of impact to people living in the area and that no environmental impacts would be associated with the proposed solar generation facility upgrade, a notice of application was not issued and a hearing was not required, as the Commission considered that its decision or order would not directly and adversely affect the rights of a person pursuant to Section 9 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

13. The Commission notes the connection agreement between Fortis and the town, a copy of which was provided to the Commission in response to an information request.

14. The Commission finds the solar generation facility upgrade to be in the public interest pursuant to Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

4 Decision

15. The Commission approves the application as filed, pursuant to Section 11 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, and grants Power Plant Approval No. U2011-320 – September 28, 2011, to the Town of Okotoks to alter the power plant as set out in Appendix 1 (Appendix 1 will be distributed separately).

16. Pursuant to Section 18 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the Commission grants Connection Order No. U2011-321 – September 28, 2011, to the Town of Okotoks to connect the power plant to Fortis' facilities as set out in Appendix 2 (Appendix 2 will be distributed separately).

Dated on September 28, 2011.

The Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Neil Jamieson
Commission Member