



**GTE Solar Inc.**

**Brooks Solar Power Plant**

**January 31, 2013**



**The Alberta Utilities Commission**

Decision 2013-027: GTE Solar Inc.

Brooks Solar Power Plant

Application No. 1608532

Proceeding ID No. 1938

January 31, 2013

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The Alberta Utilities Commission

Fifth Avenue Place, Fourth Floor, 425 First Street S.W.

Calgary, Alberta

T2P 3L8

Telephone: 403-592-8845

Fax: 403-592-4406

Website: [www.auc.ab.ca](http://www.auc.ab.ca)

## **1 Introduction**

1. GTE Solar Inc. (GTE) filed an application with the Alberta Utilities Commission (AUC or the Commission) on June 11, 2012 requesting approval to construct, connect and operate a solar power plant (power plant) in the Brooks area. The application was filed in accordance with sections 11 and 18 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*.
2. The proposed solar power plant would be located on a 78 acre parcel of land located in the southwest quarter of Section 3, Township 19, Range 14, west of the Fourth Meridian.
3. The power plant would consist of 57,600 solar panels with a total generating capacity of 15 megawatts (MW). The solar panels, when installed, would be up to six metres in height. A 2.1 metre fence would be installed on the property line to provide public safety and security. A combination of coniferous and deciduous trees will be placed in areas around the property to enhance the appearance of the site.
4. The proposed power plant would be located east of the town of Brooks on industrial zoned land with the Trans-Canada highway bordering the southwest side of the site. Other properties surrounding the site are farm and pasture land. There is one residence located north of the plant site.
5. The power plant would be connected to FortisAlberta Inc.'s (Fortis) distribution system in the southwest quarter of Section 3, Township 19, Range 14, west of the Fourth Meridian, immediately north of the power plant site. The existing distribution line would be rebuilt with larger conductors to accommodate the connection of the power plant. Fortis agreed to facilitate the connection.
6. As part of its public consultation, GTE held a meeting in January 2012 at the Lakeside Recreation Centre in Brooks. Notice of the meeting and project information were sent by mail to all residents, occupants and landowners within 800 metres of the site. The meeting notice was also placed in two local newspapers approximately one month before the public consultation meeting.
7. A development application was filed with the county of Newell. The county of Newell approved the application on July 19, 2012.
8. Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency assessed the project and determined that an environmental impact assessment was not required.

9. A *Historic Resources Act* clearance application was submitted on November 21, 2011. Alberta Culture advised that there are no historical resources on the site.
10. GTE provided a noise impact assessment in the application which indicated that the noise levels were predicted to be in compliance with AUC Rule 012: *Noise Control* (AUC Rule 012).
11. Notice of the application was issued on October 10, 2012. Two persons objected to the application and one party wrote expressing their support for the project. Following discussions with the applicant, one of the parties withdrew their objection. The remaining party objecting to the application submitted that the proposed power plant would affect property values should it be developed for residential use in the future. The Commission wrote to the intervener on December 12, 2012, asking them to confirm if their objection remained following the discussion with GTE and if they wanted the Commission to consider their objection in a hearing. The Commission did not receive a response by the December 21, 2012 deadline date, or later.

## 2 Findings

12. The Commission has reviewed the application and determined that the technical, siting, and environmental requirements of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act* and AUC Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, and Industrial System Designations* (AUC Rule 007) have been met.
13. The Commission finds that GTE's public involvement project was reasonable and consistent with the requirements of AUC Rule 007.
14. Because the Commission did not receive a response to its December 12, 2012 letter confirming the intervener's objection and their view on the need for a hearing, the Commission finds that it was not necessary to hold a public hearing.
15. The Commission considered the mitigation measures proposed by GTE to address the environmental issues associated with the project. The Commission is satisfied that the project would not cause any adverse environmental impact.
16. The Commission accepts the results of the noise impact assessment whereby the predicted noise levels are predicted to be in compliance with AUC Rule 012.
17. The Commission also notes that various government agencies were consulted in respect of the project and that no agencies raised any concerns with the project.
18. Based on the foregoing, the Commission considers the project to be in the public interest in accordance with Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

### 3 Decision

19. Pursuant to sections 11 and 18 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the Commission approves Application No. 1608532 and grants GTE the approvals set out in Appendix 1– Brooks solar power plant – Approval No. U2013-40, and Appendix 2 – Brooks solar power plant connection – Order No. U2013-41 (the appendices will be distributed separately).

Dated on January 31, 2013.

#### **The Alberta Utilities Commission**

*(original signed by)*

Anne Michaud  
Commission Member