Innisfail Solar Corporation

Innisfail Solar Project Time Extension and Community Generation Designation

May 21, 2020
Alberta Utilities Commission
Decision 25459-D01-2020
Innisfail Solar Corporation
Innisfail Solar Project Time Extension and Community Generation Designation Proceeding 25459
Application 25459-A001

May 21, 2020

Published by the:
Alberta Utilities Commission
Eau Claire Tower
1400, 600 Third Avenue S.W.
Calgary, Alberta T2P 0G5

Telephone: 310-4AUC (310-4282) in Alberta
1-833-511-4AUC (1-833-511-4282) outside Alberta
Email: info@auc.ab.ca
Website: www.auc.ab.ca

The Commission may, within 30 days of the date of this decision and without notice, correct typographical, spelling and calculation errors and other similar types of errors and post the corrected decision on its website.
1 Decision summary

1. In this decision, the Alberta Utilities Commission must decide whether to approve an application from Innisfail Solar Corporation for a time extension to complete construction of the Innisfail Solar Project and to qualify the power plant as a community generating unit. After consideration of the record of the proceeding, and for the reasons outlined in this decision, the Commission finds that approval of the time extension is in the public interest having regard to the social, economic, and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment. The Commission also qualifies the power plant as a community generating unit.

2 Introduction and background

2. Innisfail Solar Corporation (ISC), pursuant to Approval 24739-D02-2019 (Corrigenda), has approval to construct and operate a 22-megawatt solar photovoltaic power plant designated as the Innisfail Solar Project, located in the Innisfail area. The construction completion date was stipulated to be on or before March 31, 2020.

3. ISC filed an application with the AUC to extend the construction completion date of the power plant from March 31, 2020, to August 31, 2020. ISC also applied for the project to be designated as a community generating unit as defined in Section 3 of the Small Scale Generation Regulation. The application was registered on March 13, 2020, as Application 25459-A001.

4. The Commission is considering this application under Section 11 of the Hydro and Electric Energy Act, Section 17 of the Alberta Utilities Commission Act and the Small Scale Generation Regulation. In accordance with Section 17 of the Alberta Utilities Commission Act, the Commission must assess whether the time extension for the project is in the public interest.

5. Due to the nature of the application, a notice of application was not issued and, therefore, a hearing was not required as the Commission considered that its decision would not directly and adversely affect the rights of a person pursuant to Section 9 of the Alberta Utilities Commission Act.

3 Discussion

6. According to ISC’s original power plant application, the Innisfail Solar Project was scheduled to start construction in the spring of 2019. However, construction did not commence...
until September 2019 so, while construction activity is expected to be completed earlier, ISC has requested an extension of the construction completion date to August 31, 2020.

7. ISC confirmed that the project’s participant involvement program has been updated and it will notify the AUC if any issues or concerns are raised by stakeholders. ISC also confirmed that its renewable energy referral report remains valid and the project’s wildlife surveys remain current and do not require updating.

8. In support of its application to be qualified as a community generating unit in accordance with the Small Scale Generation Regulation, ISC provided confirmation of a community benefit fund agreement between itself and the Town of Innisfail. The community benefit fund agreement outlines the economic benefits of the project.²

9. FortisAlberta Inc. confirmed that it had approved the project as a small-scale generator under the Small Scale Generation Regulation. FortisAlberta submitted that the project is a source of renewable energy, would be connected to its distribution system to supply energy to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System and that the project’s nameplate capacity would not exceed the distribution system hosting capacity at the interconnection point.

10. ISC submitted that the estimated cost that it would be seeking from the distribution facility owner to cover the meter would be $30,000.

4 Findings

11. The Commission has reviewed the application and has determined that the technical, siting, emissions, environmental and noise aspects of the power plant have not changed. ISC’s participant involvement program has been updated and there are no outstanding public or industry objections or concerns.

12. The Commission finds that ISC has provided information respecting the need, the nature and the duration of the requested time extension. Based upon the information provided, the Commission finds that ISC has demonstrated that the requested time extension is of a minor nature.

13. Rule 033: Post-approval Monitoring Requirements for Wind and Solar Power Plants applies to all solar projects approved after September 1, 2019. Accordingly, ISC must comply with the requirements of Rule 033. Subsection 3(3) of Rule 033 requires that approval holders submit to Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and the Commission annual post-construction monitoring survey reports for the period recommended by AEP in the project’s referral report. The Commission notes that conditions 4 to 9 of Approval 24739-D02-2019 (Corrigenda) are covered by the requirements in the recently published Rule 033 and they can therefore be removed from the project’s approval. However, the following condition shall be added to the project’s approval:

   a. ISC shall submit a post-construction monitoring survey report to Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and the Commission within 13 months of the project becoming operational, and on or before the same date every subsequent year.

² Exhibit 25459-X0003, Appendix 2 - Community Benefit Fund MOU.
for which AEP requires surveys, pursuant to Subsection 3(3) of Rule 033: Post-approval Monitoring Requirements for Wind and Solar Power Plants.

14. The Commission finds that ISC’s application for the project’s designation as a community generating unit has satisfied the requirements of the Small Scale Generation Regulation. FortisAlberta has qualified the project as a small-scale generating unit and ISC has provided a signed community benefit fund agreement which outlines the economic benefits of the Innisfail Solar Project to the Town of Innisfail. The Commission therefore qualifies the project as a community generating unit under the Small Scale Generation Regulation.

15. The Commission finds that FortisAlberta, as the distribution facility owner, is entitled to recover the costs incurred to purchase the meter for the project (estimated to be $30,000), pursuant to Subsection 5(3)(a)(i) of the Small Scale Generation Regulation. Accordingly, the Commission imposes the following condition:

b. Once the distribution facility owner has purchased the meter for the community generating unit, ISC must provide confirmation of the actual cost to purchase the meter to the Commission.

16. 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.

5 Decision

17. Pursuant to sections 11 and 19 of the Hydro and Electric Energy Act, the Commission approves the application and grants Innisfail Solar Corporation the approval set out in Appendix 1 – Power Plant Approval 25459-D02-2020 – May 21, 2020, (Appendix 1 will be distributed separately).

18. Pursuant to Section 3 of the Small Scale Generation Regulation, the Commission qualifies the Innisfail Solar Project as a community generating unit.

Dated on May 21, 2020.

 Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Joanne Phillips
Commission Member
Appendix A – Summary of Commission directions and conditions with required deliverables

This section is intended to provide a summary of those directions and conditions that require follow-up with the Commission, for the convenience of readers. It is not intended to summarize all of the conditions imposed on the applicant. In the event of any difference between the directions and conditions in this section and those in the main body of the decision, the wording in the main body of the decision shall prevail. These directions and conditions will be tracked as conditions of Power Plant Approval 25459-D02-2020 using the AUC’s eFiling System.

a. ISC shall submit a post-construction monitoring survey report to Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) and the Commission within 13 months of the project becoming operational, and on or before the same date every subsequent year for which AEP requires surveys, pursuant to Subsection 3(3) of Rule 033: Post-approval Monitoring Requirements for Wind and Solar Power Plants.

b. Once the distribution facility owner has purchased the meter for the community generating unit, ISC must provide confirmation of the actual cost to purchase the meter to the Commission.