



Equinix Canada Ltd.

25.75-Megawatt Emergency Standby Generators

June 3, 2022

Alberta Utilities Commission

Decision 27343-D01-2022

Equinix Canada Ltd.

25.75-Megawatt Emergency Standby Generators

Proceeding 27343

Application 27343-A001

June 3, 2022

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Alberta Utilities Commission

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The Commission may, no later than 60 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 approves an application from Equinix Canada Ltd. to construct, alter and operate emergency standby generators, located in the city of Calgary.

2 Application

2. Equinix Canada Ltd. filed an application with the Commission for approval of an exemption based on sections 11 and 13 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, which states:

Approval of power plant

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.

...

Exemptions

13(1) Sections 9 and 22 do not apply to a person generating or proposing to generate electric energy solely for the person's own use, unless the Commission otherwise directs.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), a person generating or proposing to generate electric energy solely for the person's own use shall, if required by the regulation to do so, immediately notify the Commission of the use or proposed use and provide any details of the generation and use that the Commission requires.

3. Equinix requested to add two 3.5-megawatt (MW) diesel generators to an existing data centre located at 5300 86th Avenue S.E., in the city of Calgary. The two standby generators would be synchronized to the ENMAX Power Corporation electrical distribution system when grid power is restored and during monthly load testing procedures. Equinix stated that in both instances, the electricity generated from all the generators in the facility is for its own use within its facility and will never be exported to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System.

4. The proposed generator additions are related to facilities previously approved by the Commission in Decision 27278-D01-2022,¹ approving an ownership transfer from Q9 Networks Inc. to Equinix Canada Ltd. In 2009, the Commission issued Power Plant Exemption U2009-338² to Q9 Networks to construct and operate three 2.3-MW emergency diesel generators.

¹ Decision 27278-D01-2022: Equinix Canada Ltd. – Ownership Transfer of Power Plant Exemption Approval, Proceeding 27278, Application 27278-A001, April 14, 2022.

² Power Plant Exemption U2009-338, Proceeding 17924, Application 1605216, September 3, 2009.

5. Equinix stated that the proposed generators would be installed in an existing building along with the existing generators and that the generators would only be used in scenarios when power was not available from the grid. After the addition of the two generators, the Equinix emergency generator facility would consist of three 2.25-MW generators, six 2-MW generators, and two 3.5-MW generators for a total capability of 25.75 MW.

6. Equinix submitted an air quality assessment which concluded that the generators would comply with the *Alberta Ambient Air Quality Objectives* and that there would be no adverse effect on the environment from routine generator testing at the facility.

7. Equinix provided a letter from ENMAX Power Corporation approving the interconnection of the existing 18.75-MW of generation, and a proposed seven megawatts of future backup generation at the facility.

8. Equinix stated that a public consultation process was not required because there are no residences within two kilometres of the Equinix facility. The nearest residences are located approximately 2.8 kilometres west of the facility, and the nearest business is the Glenmore Inn and Convention Centre, approximately 2.9 kilometres west of the facility. The area surrounding the facility is primarily industrial and light industrial use.

9. Equinix confirmed that there are currently three 2.25-MW generators and six 2-MW generators installed at the facility. Equinix stated that it could not find any Commission approval issued for the six 2-MW generators but confirmed that the noise impact assessment (NIA) and air quality assessment submitted in this application includes all of the generators currently installed at the facility and the two proposed generators.

10. In response to Commission information requests, Equinix confirmed the following:

- (a) Quantity and capacity of existing and future generators on site due to discrepancies in the power ratings listed in the application and noise impact assessment.
- (b) Equinix explained that an additional six generators were installed by Q9 Networks as part of site expansion and Equinix could not find any record that Q9 Networks sought approval for those generators from the Commission.
- (c) Equinix provided email confirmation from The City of Calgary that a development permit is not required.
- (d) Equinix clarified the locations of the existing generators and proposed generators.

11. In regard to the difference in power ratings of the generators between the application and NIA, Equinix stated that the discrepancies were typographical errors and did not impact the modelled or predicted levels in the NIA as the levels are based on measurements of existing equipment and actual proposed vendor noise specifications. Sound levels are predicted to comply with Rule 012: *Noise Control*.

12. Due to the nature of the application, a notice of application was not issued and a hearing was not required. The Commission considers 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*.

3 Findings

13. For the reasons outlined below, the Commission finds that the proposal is of a minor nature, no person is directly and adversely affected by the proposal, and no significant adverse environmental impact will be caused by the proposed alterations.

14. The Commission finds that the NIA meets the requirements of Rule 012. The study determined three boundary receptors based on cumulative impacts along a 1.5-kilometre criteria boundary from the project and adjacent ENMAX substations. The NIA concluded that the simultaneous operations of the standard project equipment, with the existing nine generators and two proposed generators, would comply with Rule 012.

15. The Commission finds that the generators will comply with the *Alberta Ambient Air Quality Objectives* and accepts that there would be no adverse effect on the environment from routine generator testing at the facility.

16. Given that the proposed generators will be installed adjacent to the existing building, will only be used as backup generators and there are no residences within two kilometres of the facility, the Commission accepts Equinix's conclusion that a public consultation process was not required.

17. Based upon the information provided, Equinix has demonstrated that the proposal is of a minor nature.

4 Decision

18. In accordance with the discretion provided in Section 13 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the previous exemption for own-use power plants is no longer available, as of April 25, 2022, as detailed in Bulletin 2022-04.³ Accordingly, a power plant approval will be issued for the Equinix emergency generator facility.

19. Pursuant to sections 11 and 19 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the Commission approves Application 27343-A001 and grants Equinix Canada Ltd. the approval set out in Appendix 1 – Power Plant Approval 27343-D02-2022, to construct, alter and operate the Equinix emergency generator facility.

20. The appendix will be distributed separately.

Dated on June 3, 2022.

Alberta Utilities Commission

(original signed by)

Matthew Oliver, CD
Commission Member

³ Bulletin 2022-04: Regulatory streamlining of all new power plants equal to or greater than one megawatt and less than 10 megawatts and exemption to file an application for own-use power plants eliminated, March 24, 2022.