



**AltaLink Management Ltd.**

**Brooks Solar Farm Connection**

**June 10, 2022**

**Alberta Utilities Commission**

Decision 27284-D01-2022

AltaLink Management Ltd.

Brooks Solar Farm Connection

Proceeding 27284

Applications 27284-A001 to 27284-A003

June 10, 2022

Published by the:

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 must decide whether to approve applications from AltaLink Management Ltd. for a new transmission line to connect Solar Krafte Utilities Inc.'s Brooks Solar Farm to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System. For the reasons outlined in this decision, the Commission finds that approval of the proposed development is in the public interest, having regard to the social, economic, and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment.

## **2 Applications**

2. Solar Krafte Utilities Inc. has approval from the Commission to construct and operate a 360-megawatt (MW) solar power plant, designated as the Brooks Solar Farm, in the county of Newell, Alberta (the solar power plant).<sup>1</sup> It also has approval to construct and operate the solar project substation, designated as Zachary 997S Substation.<sup>2</sup>

3. To connect the solar power plant to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System, Solar Krafte requested system access from the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO). In response to that request, the AESO filed a needs identification document (NID) application with the Commission proposing the construction of a transmission line to connect the Zachary 997S Substation to AltaLink Management Ltd.'s existing Cassils 324S Substation using a radial configuration. The Commission approved the NID application and issued Approval 27255-D01-2022.<sup>3</sup>

4. To meet the need identified by the AESO, AltaLink filed a facility application with the AUC for approval to construct and operate a 240-kilovolt (kV) transmission line, designated as Transmission Line 1136L, from Zachary 997S Substation to Cassils 324S Substation. The transmission line and associated 35-metre-wide right-of-way would be located on privately-owned land, part of which is leased by AltaLink. Construction of the approximately 200-metre-long line would require temporary workspace on the east side of the right-of-way and include installation of three H-frame single-circuit structures.

5. AltaLink also filed applications for approval to connect the transmission line to Solar Krafte's Zachary 997S Substation and to alter the Cassils 324S Substation to accommodate

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<sup>1</sup> Power Plant Approval 26435-D03-2022, Proceeding 26435, Application 26435-A001, May 25, 2022.

<sup>2</sup> Permit and Licence 26435-D02-2022, Proceeding 26435, Application 26435-A002, May 18, 2022.

<sup>3</sup> Needs Identification Document Approval 27255-D01-2022, Proceeding 27255, Application 27255-A001, March 29, 2022.

the connection. The alteration consists of adding one 240-kV circuit breaker within the existing fenceline of Cassils 324S Substation.

### 3 Findings

6. For the reasons outlined below, the Commission finds that approval of the applications is in the public interest having regard to the social, economic, and other effects of the project, including its effect on the environment.

7. The Commission has reviewed the applications and has determined that the information requirements specified in Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations, Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines* have been met. Also, the proposed development is consistent with the need approved in Approval 27255-D01-2022 and meets the requirements of the AESO's functional specification.

8. AltaLink conducted a participant involvement program to notify all stakeholders within 800 metres of the transmission line right-of-way and the Cassils 324S Substation fenceline about its project. AltaLink also consulted with all stakeholders within 100 metres. No concerns about the proposed development were raised as a result of AltaLink's participant involvement program. AltaLink stated that there are no Indigenous-owned lands within 800 metres of the project area and there are no impacts to Crown land. The Commission is satisfied that AltaLink's participant involvement program meets the requirements of Rule 007.

9. The project development area consists of tame grassland, two wetlands and developed land. AltaLink clarified that the wetlands, located within 100 metres of the project, have been identified as temporary graminoid (Class II) wetlands that have a low potential to support amphibian breeding, as well as subsequent life cycles, due to the lack of surface water. One wetland is located within the temporary workspace and is not expected to be disturbed by the construction activities. A small portion (0.0004 hectares) of the other wetland will be intersected by one of the proposed structure locations. AltaLink stated that specific mitigation measures for working in and around this wetland include installing wetland signage, constructing in dry and/or frozen conditions or using access mats, as well as implementing a site-specific erosion and sediment control plan and spill prevention and response plan. Also, AltaLink has stated that it will submit a notification under the Code of Practice for Powerline Works Impacting Wetlands under the *Water Act* a minimum of 14 days prior to construction.

10. AltaLink retained Stantec Consulting Ltd. to conduct an environmental evaluation for the project. The environmental evaluation concluded that with the implementation of standard industry practices and AltaLink's standard environmental procedures, along with project and species-specific mitigation, the vegetation, wetlands, and wildlife species and habitat in the area would not be significantly adversely impacted by the proposed project. Given that the transmission line is only 200 metres long and given the mitigation measures proposed,<sup>4</sup> the Commission accepts that the environmental effects of the proposed transmission line can be minimized and that there will be no significant adverse environmental effects from the project.

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<sup>4</sup> Appendixes G-2 and G-3 in Exhibit 27284-X0022.

11. 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*.

#### **4 Decision**

12. Pursuant to sections 14, 15, 18 and 19 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, the Commission approves the applications and grants AltaLink Management Ltd. the following approvals:

- Appendix 1 – Transmission Line Permit and Licence 27284-D02-2022, to construct and operate Transmission Line 1136L.
- Appendix 2 – Substation Permit and Licence 27284-D03-2022, to alter and operate Cassils 324S Substation.
- Appendix 3 – Connection Order 27284-D04-2022, to connect Transmission Line 1136L to Solar Krafte Utilities Inc.’s Zachary 997S Substation.

13. The appendixes will be distributed separately.

Dated on June 10, 2022.

#### **Alberta Utilities Commission**

*(original signed by)*

Vera Slawinski  
Commission Member