



**BER Wheatcrest Solar GP Inc. and  
AltaLink Management Ltd.**

**Wheatcrest Solar Facility Connection Project**

**November 18, 2022**

**Alberta Utilities Commission**

Decision 27543-D01-2022

BER Wheatcrest Solar GP Inc. and AltaLink Management Ltd.

Wheatcrest Solar Facility Connection Project

Proceeding 27543

Applications 27543-A001 to 27543-A005

November 18, 2022

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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 applications from BER Wheatcrest Solar GP Inc. (BER) and AltaLink Management Ltd. for the Wheatcrest Solar Facility connection project.

## **2      Introduction**

2.      BER has approval<sup>1</sup> from the Commission to construct and operate the 60-megawatt (MW) Wheatcrest Solar Facility power plant (the solar project), in the Lomond area.

3.      To connect the solar project to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System, BER requested system access from the Alberta Electric System Operator (AESO). The AESO approved the need for transmission development pursuant to ISO Rules Section 501.3 - *Abbreviated Needs Approval Process*, and directed BER and AltaLink to file facility applications with the AUC for the facilities to meet the need.

4.      As directed by the AESO, BER and AltaLink filed facility applications requesting approval from the Commission for the detailed design, specific location, routing and equipment. Details of each application and the Commission's reasons for approving them are provided in the sections that follow.

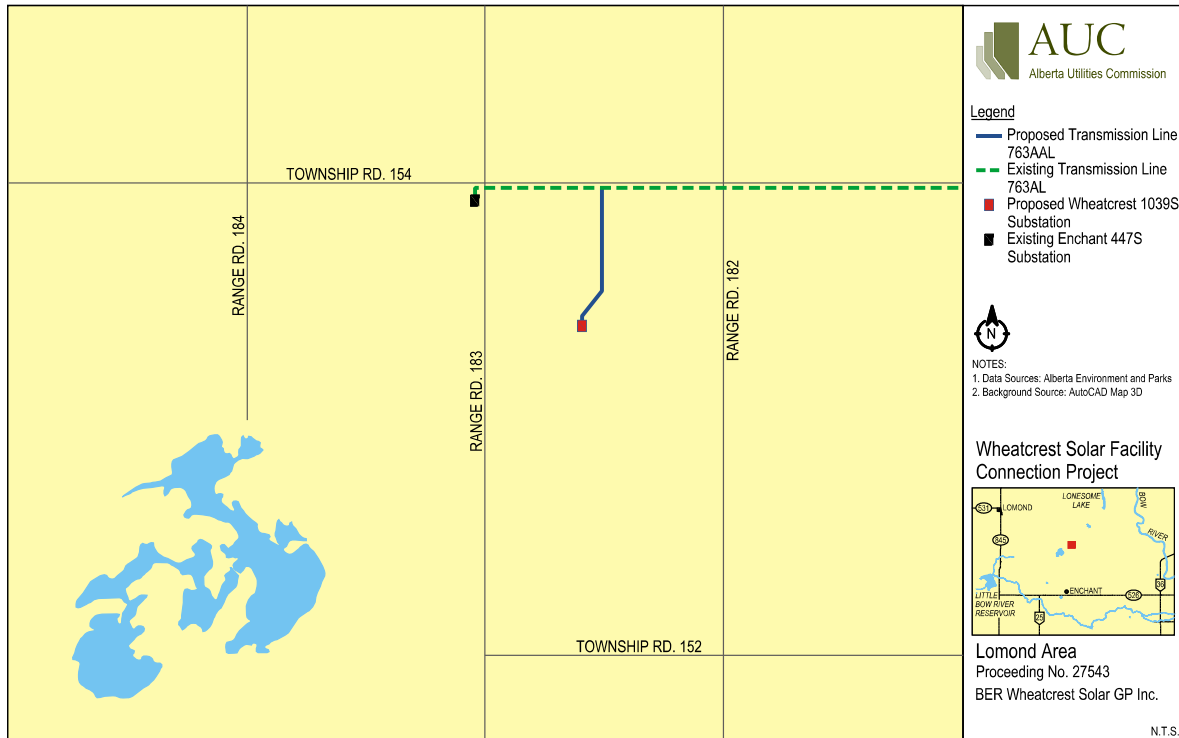
## **3      Applications**

### **3.1      BER Wheatcrest Solar GP Inc. facility applications**

5.      BER applied to the AUC for approval to construct and operate a new 138-kilovolt (kV), one-kilometre transmission line, designated as 763AAL, and a new substation, designated as Wheatcrest 1039S Substation. The proposed Transmission Line 763AAL would connect the solar project to AltaLink's existing Transmission Line 763AL through Wheatcrest 1039S Substation. Figure 1 shows the route of the proposed transmission line and the location of the proposed substation.

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<sup>1</sup> Power Plant Approval 27525-D02-2022, Proceeding 27525, Application 27525-A001, August 24, 2022.

**Figure 1: Proposed Transmission Line 763AAL and Wheatcrest 1039S Substation**

6. BER, as an electricity market participant under Section 24.31 of the *Transmission Regulation*, would jointly operate the proposed transmission line with AltaLink for approximately six months following construction completion. After this period of time, BER would transfer the ownership and operation of the proposed line to AltaLink.

7. BER's proposed substation is located centrally within the north portion of the solar project lands. The proposed Wheatcrest 1039S Substation will be in the southwest quarter of Section 22, Township 15, Range 18, west of the Fourth Meridian.

8. To select the route for the proposed transmission line, BER evaluated three routes. The proposed route was selected because it was the shortest route, was preferred by project landowners, and would reduce potential impacts to other nearby landowners. However, the proposed route would require one structure (Structure 3) to be located in a Class IV wetlands (Wetland 4). BER committed to make every effort to avoid placing the structure within the boundary of Wetland 4.

9. The transmission project would be located on agricultural lands and primarily sited on private property. BER stated that no concerns about the proposed transmission line route and substation location were raised by landowners.

### 3.2 Commission's findings on BER Wheatcrest Solar GP Inc. facility applications

10. The Commission finds that the facility applications filed by BER comply with the information requirements prescribed in Rule 007: *Applications for Power Plants, Substations,*

*Transmission Lines, Industrial System Designations, Hydro Developments and Gas Utility Pipelines* and meet the requirements of the AESO's functional specification.

11. The Commission is satisfied that BER's participant involvement program for the proposed transmission line and substation meets the requirements of Rule 007. BER sent a participant package to the interested parties and stakeholders within 800 metres of the project. BER confirmed that there are no outstanding concerns regarding this project. The Commission issued a notice of applications for BER's and AltaLink's applications in accordance with Rule 001: *Rules of Practice* and did not receive any submissions in response. Based on the foregoing, the Commission is satisfied that BER's participant involvement program met the objectives of effective consultation.

12. BER filed two noise impact assessments, one for the transmission line and one for the substation. The substation noise impact assessment identified that the most affected dwelling was located 900 metres northeast of the substation and predicted that the cumulative sound levels at this receptor would be 37 A-weighted decibels (dBA) nighttime and 45.2 dBA daytime, which is compliant with Rule 012: *Noise Control*. The transmission line noise impact assessment confirmed that there are no significant sound sources associated with the transmission line and BER stated that construction activities will not be conducted during the nighttime periods.

13. Based on the overall length of the proposed transmission line and the required distance between structures, BER determined that one structure may need to be placed in a Class IV wetland (Wetland 4). BER stated that the siting of Structure 3 was not finalized pending ongoing geotechnical work and BER will make every effort to avoid placing the structure within the boundary of the Wetland 4. And if it is not feasible to avoid the wetland, BER will implement mitigation measures including working during dry/frozen conditions, filing a *Water Act* code of practice and associated wetland assessment and impact form to Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP),<sup>2</sup> narrowing workspace disturbance, reclaiming temporarily disturbed wetland areas, clearly delineating wetland boundaries, and implementing erosion and sediment control measures.

14. The Commission encourages BER to avoid the Class IV wetland and if not feasible obtain and adhere to any *Water Act* requirements and consult with AEP to design and implement mitigation measures appropriate to minimize risk to the wetland habitat. Provided any *Water Act* requirements are adhered to and BER implements the appropriate mitigation measures in consultation with AEP, the Commission considers that there will be no significant adverse environmental effects on the wetland as a result of the project.

15. BER submitted that the proposed substation site avoids impacts to wetlands and is outside of the recommended setback buffers for wildlife features identified for the project.

16. The environmental evaluation report submitted with the application concluded that with the implementation of appropriate mitigation measures, the predicted residual effects on the

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<sup>2</sup> On October 24, 2022, the Ministry of Environment and Parks was renamed the Ministry of Environment and Protected Areas. Any references to AEP in Rule 033: *Post-approval monitoring requirements for wind and solar power plants* and elsewhere that relate to forward-looking obligations or commitments between the applicant and AEP should be interpreted as meaning Alberta Environment and Protected Areas.

environment are anticipated to be limited and not significant. The Commission accepts the findings of the environmental evaluation report.

17. Based on the foregoing, the Commission considers BER's applications to be in the public interest in accordance with Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

### **3.3 AltaLink Management Ltd. facility applications**

18. AltaLink applied for approval to alter its existing facilities to accommodate the connection of BER's proposed transmission line to the Alberta Interconnected Electric System. AltaLink requested approval to:

- Connect BER's proposed transmission line to AltaLink's existing Transmission Line 763AL.
- Add one new structure and modify two adjacent structures on Transmission Line 763AL, located in the northeast and northwest quarters of Section 22, Township 15, Range 18, west of the Fourth Meridian. The proposed new structure would be a wood or steel monopole structure, approximately 20 to 25 metres tall and located in the road allowance.
- Install approximately 900 metres of underground fibre optic cable from AltaLink's existing Enchant 447S Substation to BER's proposed Transmission Line 763AAL. The proposed fibre optic cable will be located primarily in the road allowance with a short length on private land in the right-of-way for BER's new transmission line.
- Replace the existing 30-metre-tall telecommunications tower at the Enchant 447S Substation with a 50-metre-tall tower. AltaLink stated that the tower will comply with Transport Canada's requirements regarding painting and lighting.
- Increase the height of two other structures<sup>3</sup> on Transmission Line 763AL by up to three metres to ensure that a safe clearance distance can be maintained. The modification of these two structures is required to meet the minimum line rating of 120 megavolt-ampere.

### **3.4 Commission's findings on AltaLink Management Ltd. facility applications**

19. The Commission finds that the facility applications filed by AltaLink comply with the information requirements prescribed in Rule 007 and meet the requirements of the AESO's functional specification.

20. The Commission is satisfied that AltaLink's participant involvement program met the objectives of effective consultation. AltaLink notified stakeholders located within 800 metres of the Enchant 447S Substation, 200 metres of the proposed modifications to Transmission Line 763AL and 100 metres of the proposed fibre optic cable. AltaLink consulted with stakeholders located within 100 metres of the Enchant 447S Substation and the proposed modifications to the Transmission Line 763AL and with stakeholders directly adjacent to the proposed fibre optic cable. AltaLink confirmed that there were no outstanding concerns regarding AltaLink's

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<sup>3</sup> Structures 763AL98 and 763AL99 located in the northwest quarter of Section 20, Township 15, Range 17, west of the Fourth Meridian.

proposed facilities. As mentioned previously, the Commission issued a notice of applications in accordance with Rule 001 and did not receive any submissions in response.

21. AltaLink committed to following the Municipal District of Taber's process for development of telecommunications towers and stated that it will satisfy Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's requirements prior to construction.

22. AltaLink provided a copy of the amphibian mitigation plan that was provided to AEP. However, because construction is scheduled to start in January 2023, AltaLink anticipates that no amphibian mitigation will be required. The Commission expects that construction will avoid the amphibian breeding period. If construction during the amphibian breeding period can not be avoided, then the Commission expects that the amphibian mitigation plan will be updated to reflect the approved footprint of the project and that AltaLink will implement the proposed mitigations to adequately mitigate risk to amphibians and amphibian habitat.

23. Based on the foregoing, the Commission considers AltaLink's applications to be in the public interest in accordance with Section 17 of the *Alberta Utilities Commission Act*.

#### 4 Decision

24. The Commission approves applications 27543-A001 and 27543-A002 under sections 14, 15 and 19 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, and grants BER Wheatcrest Solar GP Inc. the following approvals set out in appendixes to this decision:

- Transmission Line Permit and Licence 27543-D02-2022, to construct and operate Transmission Line 763AAL (Appendix 1).
- Substation Permit and Licence 27543-D03-2022, to construct and operate Wheatcrest 1039S Substation (Appendix 2).

25. The Commission approves applications 27543-A003, 27543-A004 and 27543-A005 under sections 14, 15, 18, 19 and 21 of the *Hydro and Electric Energy Act*, and grants AltaLink Management Ltd. the following approvals set out in appendixes to this decision:

- Transmission Line Permit and Licence 27543-D04-2022, to alter and operate Transmission Line 763AL (Appendix 3).
- Substation Permit and Licence 27543-D05-2022, to alter and operate Enchant 447S Substation (Appendix 4).
- Connection Order 27543-D06-2022, to connect Transmission Line 763AL to Transmission Line 763AAL (Appendix 5).

26. The appendixes will be distributed separately.

Dated on November 18, 2022.

**Alberta Utilities Commission**

*(original signed by)*

John McCarthy  
Acting Commission Member